

Welsh Public Library Standards Sixth Framework: Gwynedd

Annual Assessment Report 2022/2023

This report has been prepared based on information provided in Gwynedd's annual return, impact statements and narrative report submitted to the Culture Division of the Welsh Government.

1. Executive summary

Gwynedd met all of the 12 core entitlements in full. Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Gwynedd is achieving 8 in full and 2 in part.

Gwynedd Library Service performs well in many areas, including active borrowers, acquisitions and issues, in particular of Welsh language materials and adult books. The service is clearly highly committed to the promotion of Welsh language and culture through its resources and activities and its provision is particularly strong in this area. In addition, Gwynedd is engaged in a number of innovative activities, including the creation of a Library of Things. There are some gaps in the data provided in Gwynedd's return. Providing a fuller set of data in the coming years, including full adult and child user surveys during the three-year cycle contained in the guidance, will help shape a more comprehensive assessment of Gwynedd's performance.

- User training is rated highly; 100% of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals (Q15).
- The service is above the median for virtual visits and for active borrowers per capita (Q18).
- The service performs strongly in terms of issues; is in the top quartile of library authorities for adult book issues per capita and above the median for children's issues and e-issues per capita (Q18).
- Gwynedd meets the target for acquisitions spend per capita and is in the top quartile of library authorities for this measure (Q19).
- Welsh language stock is well-used; issues per capita Welsh speaker are in the top quartile of library authorities (Q110).

2. Performance against the standards

The standards framework comprises of core entitlements, quality indicators with targets, quality indicators with benchmarks and impact measures. Section 2 summarises achievements against these areas. A narrative assessment of the authority's performance is provided in Section 3.

2.1. Core entitlements

Gwynedd reported meeting all 12 of the Core Entitlements in full through self-assessment, providing detailed and helpful commentary within the return on each area covered. The independent assessor agreed with the self-assessment.

2.2. Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which 10 have constituent targets. Of these, Gwynedd is achieving 8 in full and 2 in part.

Quality Indicator	Met?	
QI 3 Support for individual development:		Met in full
a) ICT support	√	
b) Information literacy and skills training	√	
c) E-government support	√	
d) Reader development	√	
QI 4 (a) Support for health and well-being		Met in full
i) Book Prescription Wales scheme	√	
ii) Better with Books/Reading Well scheme	√	
iii) Designated health & well-being collection	√	
iv) Information about healthy lifestyles and behaviours	√	
v) Signposting to health & well-being services	√	
QI 6 all static service points offer events/activities for users with special requirements	√	Met in full
QI 7 Location of service points	√	Met in full
QI 9 Up-to-date and appropriate reading material		Met in full
Acquisitions per capita	√	
<u>or</u> Materials spend per capita	√	
QI 10 Welsh Language Resources		Met in full
% of material budget spent on Welsh	√	
<u>or</u> Spend on Welsh per capita	-	
QI 11 Online access:		Met in full
a) i) Public access to Internet	√	
ii) Wi-Fi provision	√	
QI 12 Supply of requests		Partially met
a) % of requests satisfied within 7 days	x	
b) % of requests satisfied within 15 days	√	
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications:		Partially met
i) Staff per capita	x	
ii) Qualified staff per capita	x	
iii) Head of service qualification/training	√	
iv) CPD percentage	Not provided	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	√	Met in full

2.3. Impact measures

The framework includes three indicators aimed at assessing the impact of library use on people's lives. These indicators do not have targets, and authorities were only required to carry out user surveys for QI1 once over the original three-year period of

the framework (2017-20). The summary figures (lowest, median and highest) are based on all authorities providing data in the 2022-23 return. Rankings reflect the numbers of respondents, where 1 is the highest scoring authority. However, it is important to bear in mind that some authorities have conducted surveys since 2020, whilst others report survey data from before the Covid pandemic. Some responses therefore reflect the situation several years ago, whilst others may have been affected by disruption during the pandemic period. As a result, there are limitations on the extent to which these data might be considered comparable.

Gwynedd completed its adult user survey (providing responses to a limited number of questions) in 2022-23. No information is provided regarding a children’s user survey.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
b) % of young people who think that the library helps them learn and find things out:	Not provided	-	58%	90%	98%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	Not provided	-	41%	86.5%	96%
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	100%	=1/17	82%	96%	100%

Authorities are also asked to provide an impact statement describing the impact which the library service has had on an individual or on a group of individuals during the year. Gwynedd provided an impact statement on the role that the service plays in promoting awareness of Welsh culture and the use of the Welsh language, in order to support and reflect national identity and culture. In addition to working with Bangor University to enable them to run Welsh Language Learning courses in Gwynedd Libraries buildings free of charge, the library service is supporting Welsh learners through the establishment of an informal discussion group to practise conversation in Welsh. In 2022/23, in consultation with Bangor University's Welsh for Adults tutor co-ordinator, a ‘Cuppa and Chat’ scheme was developed at Barmouth, Cricieth and Caernarfon Libraries. The ‘Cuppa and Chat’ sessions at Cricieth Library are mainly aimed at learners (Foundation level upwards). The group has around seven members, most of which attend regularly. Sessions cover a range of different topics and content, including stories and poems, and emphasise the use of print and digital library resources. Positive feedback from one group member included: *“The session is informal and relaxed, which encourages us all to get involved and have a go, even if we are unsure”*.

2.4. Quality indicators and benchmarks

The remaining indicators do not have targets but allow services to monitor and benchmark their performance over time, in comparison with other authorities. The following table summarises Gwynedd’s position for 2022-23. Ranks are included out of 22, where 1 is the highest, and 22 the lowest scoring authority, unless stated otherwise. Indicators where fewer than 22 authorities supplied data are those where relevant data was not available from some authorities. Indicators ‘per capita’ are calculated per 1,000 population unless otherwise noted.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills	Not provided	-	24%	69.5%	90%
c) health and well-being	Not provided	-	35%	66.5%	94%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	Not provided	-	93%	97%	100%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction					
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	Not provided	-	80%	91%	99%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	98%	=9/17	92%	98%	100%
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	Not provided	-	65%	86%	99%
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall	98%	=5/17	94%	98%	100%
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	Not provided	-	8.0	9.3	9.7
QI 5 User training					
a) attendances per capita	2	=19/22	1	10.5	222
c) informal training per capita	Not provided	-	5	131	424
QI 6 attendances at events per capita					
	64	21/22	13	165	559
QI 8 Library use					
a) visits per capita	Not provided	-	781	2,106	4,814
b) virtual visits per capita	872	7/22	124	537.5	7,979
c) active borrowers per capita	143	3/22	43	106.5	167
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita					
	461	2/22	13	53	864
QI 11 Online access					
a) Computers per 10,000	7.52	13/22	3.32	7.99	16.99
b) % of available time used by the public	Not provided	-	7%	11%	77%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications¹					
(v) a) total volunteers	0	-	0	8	256
b) volunteer hours	0	-	0	583.5	14,014
QI 14 Operational expenditure					
a) total expenditure per capita	£19,150	2/21	£6,726	£11,476	£27,330
b) % on staff,	46%	21/21	46%	64%	78%
% on information resources	12%	=9/21	5%	12%	21%
% on equipment and buildings	7%	=5/21	1%	3%	29%
% on other operational costs;	35%	1/21	1%	15%	35%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£145	11/21	-£479	£145	£2,865

¹ Following discussion with the peer review group it was decided not to include rankings for volunteers as the implications of volunteer numbers are ambiguous.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 15 Net cost per visit ²	Not provided ³	-	£0.41	£2.76	£6.22
QI 16 Opening hours ⁴					
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0%	=1/22	0%	0.05%	0.95%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0%	=1/20	0%	0%	3.74%

3. Analysis of performance

The core entitlements and quality indicators can be divided into four key areas. This section of the report outlines performance under these areas.

3.1. Meeting customer needs (QI 1-5)

Gwynedd reports that five satisfaction survey exercises were conducted in 2022-2023, although these only covered two of the Customer satisfaction indicators (QI2). For customer care and overall satisfaction, Gwynedd is performing at the median level. No data is available in relation to Making a difference (QI1). The service achieves the targets for Support for individual development (QI3) and health and well-being (QI4) in full. Examples from Gwynedd's comprehensive description of health and well-being support include: the Warm Welcome offer, developed in response to the cost-of-living crisis; a partnership with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai to hold Meditation/ Mindfulness sessions at Caernarfon Library; a new well-being garden at Dyffryn Ogwen Library; and Booktrust Cymru's Storytime Pilot scheme which aims to reach hard-to-reach families.

Gwynedd is below the median for user training attendance (although it is noted that third party sessions held in libraries are not included) and no data is provided for informal training. The service is in the top quartile of Welsh library authorities for the percentage of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals (QI5).

3.2. Access and use (QI 6-8)

Events and activities offered include Lego BricQ; Mama G sessions; Soup and Craft; and Cuppa and Chat for those learning Welsh. However, event attendance per capita at Gwynedd is in the bottom quartile of library authorities (QI6). No information is available for visits per capita. However, the service is above the median for virtual visits and for active borrowers per capita (QI8). Furthermore, the service is in the top quartile of library authorities for adult book issues per capita, and above the median for children's issues and e-issues per capita. In addition to more conventional types of loans, Gwynedd has transformed the interior space of Penygroes Library, creating a VR corner, along with space for the Things (Library of Things) project in Penygroes and Bethesda, where the service will be working with Benthg to provide a service borrowing everyday items to reduce waste and cost of living.

² Rankings here have been reversed, so that 1 is the lowest scoring (best performing) authority.

³ Gwynedd provided a figure for cost per online visit, but as physical visits were not included, this is not comparable with other services.

⁴ Rankings here have been reversed, so that 1 is the lowest scoring (best performing) authority.

3.3. Facilities and services (QI 9-12)

Gwynedd meets the target for acquisitions spend per capita and is in the top quartile of library authorities for this measure (QI9). It also comfortably meets the target for percentage of materials budget allocated to Welsh language resources, and issues per capita Welsh speaker are in the top quartile of library authorities (QI10).

Gwynedd is below the median for public PCs per capita, but no data is provided for available time used (QI11) so it is not possible to comment on levels of demand. The service is in the process of switching to a new PC management system so this data should be available in the future. The 7-day target for supply of requests is not met, but the service comfortably achieves the 15-day target (QI12).

3.4. Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)

Gwynedd does not meet the target for staffing per capita, although it is in the top quartile of library authorities for this measure (QI13). Similarly, it does not meet the target for qualified staff per capita, although it is also above the median for this measure. Gwynedd has a qualified operational manager, but no data is provided about the percentage of staff time spent on professional development. There are no volunteers at Gwynedd libraries. Gwynedd meets the target for opening hours (QI16).

4. Strategic context

As part of the return, authorities are asked to report on how the library service is contributing to wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals. Examples of the ways in which Gwynedd Libraries contribute to local and national Government priorities including the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 include the following:

- One to one Digital Support sessions offered in libraries and at home to support those who need help using digital technology
- Moving to electric vehicles, and providing a free on-demand library service to the home
- Providing opportunities for Welsh learners to benefit from sessions such as 'Cuppa and Chat' to practise their Welsh
- Supporting Welsh as the language of the household by encouraging the sharing of Welsh rhymes and songs
- Library of Things loan provision which reinforces the Welsh Government's priorities in terms of their Circular Economy Strategy.

5. Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year Gwynedd refer to their Libraries Plan – Living Libraries 2023-28, which sets out a vision for the next five years. The library service is committed to developing the goals in the areas of Reading; Health and Well-being; Welsh Language and Culture; and Information and Digital. The service will continue to develop partnerships, specifically with the Circular Economy Network and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai in the context of community education and the Library of Things. Nationally, Gwynedd will lead on obtaining a Library Management System for Welsh

Libraries that will improve quality and access to library resources and services across the board.

6. Conclusion

Gwynedd Library Service performs well in many areas, including active borrowers, acquisitions and issues, in particular of Welsh language materials and adult books. The service is clearly highly committed to the promotion of Welsh language and culture through its resources and activities and its provision is particularly strong amongst Welsh library authorities. In addition, Gwynedd is engaged in a number of innovative activities, including the creation of a Library of Things. There are some gaps in the data provided in Gwynedd's return. Providing a fuller set of data in the coming years, including full adult and child user surveys during the three-year cycle contained in the guidance, will help shape a more comprehensive assessment of Gwynedd's performance. It is acknowledged that there has been disruption due to Covid and variation in the precise reporting required over the last few years but providing a fuller set of data in the coming years, including full adult and children's user surveys, will assist in the production of a more comprehensive assessment of Gwynedd's performance.