

# Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Caerphilly

## Annual Assessment Report 2018/19

This report has been prepared based on information provided in Caerphilly's annual return, case studies and narrative report submitted to the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division of the Welsh Government.

### 1 Executive summary

Caerphilly now meets all the 12 core entitlements in full.

Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Caerphilly achieved 8 in full, and 2 in part.

Caerphilly has continued to deliver effectively against the standards framework in 2018/19, maintaining strong performances in key areas, although with some evidence of declining usage. Some consideration regarding contrasting usage patterns and benchmark figures may aid future planning. The extension of Wi-Fi provision across all library services is a welcome development, ensuring that the core entitlement in this area is now met. The return does however anticipate difficulties in maintaining performances in a number of areas, with proposals to reduce resource and staffing budgets in 2019/20. The impact of funding constraints on service capacity and delivery is something the authority should consider carefully, in ensuring that the service still has access to the resources required to enable it to meet the needs of its local communities.

- All static service points provide a good range of support for skills development and health and well-being, with additional developments in 2018/19 in the provision of Dementia Friendly services.
- A fall in the number of physical visits and active borrowers, is matched by increases in virtual visits and library membership, which remains the highest per capita in Wales. Book issues (adult and children) have also fallen in 2018/19; while issues for adults are now well below the median level, performance per capita for children's book issues is still notably high in comparison with other authorities.
- A change in the approach to calculating acquisitions per capita (QI 9) means that the target here is partially met in 2018/19. However, the service continues to meet the targets for provision of materials in the Welsh language, and supply of requests.
- Traditional PC provision remains the highest in Wales, although usage is declining; Wi-Fi is now available across all 18 library service points.
- Professional staff numbers have been maintained at 2017/18 levels, although the overall staffing complement has fallen slightly, and neither target is met. The service anticipates that budget constraints may impact on performance here in future years.
- Caerphilly was able to provide full information on service expenditure in 2018/19, with the overall revenue budget amongst the highest per capita in Wales.

### 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

Caerphilly now meets all of the 12 core entitlements in full. CE 7 has been met for the first time with the extension of Wi-Fi provision to all 18 static service points. While the Library Service Strategic Action Plan for 2017-2020 is still not accessible online, a 2018/19 Strategic Action Plan is available and CE 12 is therefore regarded as met.

## 2.2 Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which ten have constituent targets. Of these, Caerphilly 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 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		Partially met
Acquisitions per capita	P	
<u>or</u> Materials spend per capita	x	
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		Met in full
a) % of requests satisfied within 7 days	✓	
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	✓	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	✓	Met in full

In 2018/19, to ensure consistency between authorities and to reflect individual service performance, centrally procured e-resources were excluded from reporting against acquisitions for QI 9 at the assessment stage. This has impacted on Caerphilly's performance, with the requirement not met by a small margin. It is noted that had the service been aware of this change to the assessment process, additional funding could have been sought to enable achievement, and QI 9 is therefore regarded as partially met to reflect this position. Improvements in Wi-Fi provision mean that QI 11 is now fully met.

### 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 are only required to carry out user surveys for QI 1 once over the three-year period of the framework. The summary figures (lowest, median and highest) are therefore based on those authorities indicating they completed their user survey during 2017/18 or 2018/19. Rankings reflect the numbers of respondents, where 1 is the highest scoring authority.

Caerphilly carried out its user survey of adults in May 2017, and of children in July 2018.

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:	60%	13/13	60%	94%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	38%	15/15	38%	88%	95%
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	99%	=4/20	80%	97%	100%

Authorities are also asked to provide up to four case studies describing the impact which the library service has had on an individual or on a group of individuals during the year. Caerphilly provided four such case studies, although stronger evidence from direct participants could have been included in some instances:

- Intergenerational Dementia Friend Engagement – extending an existing project conducting shared reading and poetry sessions with residents of local care homes with dementia related conditions. Local primary school children were invited to attend and interact with the residents following their own library visit. This has proved beneficial to both parties, improving social, communication and literacy skills, and more joint sessions are planned.
- Family Support – the role of the library in providing a welcoming place for one family to access resources and share activities which they otherwise cannot afford.
- RecRock Initiative – partnership with a recreational rock social enterprise at Bargoed Library, enabling community members to engage in a range of music-based activities. RecRock take over areas of the Library on a given day each week, with the library providing supporting resources. Participants have benefited from improvements in self-esteem and mental health, as well as learning new skills.
- Delivering Learning Opportunities – facilitating the work of partner services across Caerphilly providing learning activities for young people unable to work in a formal school setting. The libraries provide a safe learning environment and teaching space, and the professionalism and engagement of library staff, helps reinforce learning and skills development.

## 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 Caerphilly's position for 2018/19. 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 to some authorities. Figures from the first year of the sixth framework or relevant previous surveys have also been included for comparison. Indicators 'per capita' are calculated per 1,000 population unless otherwise noted.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2017/18
QI 1 Making a difference						[Framework 5]
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills	24%	15/15	24%	82%	96%	24%
c) health and well-being	33%	15/15	33%	62%	94%	26%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	99%	=2/15	90%	97%	100%	98%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction						[Framework 5]
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	94%	4/14	81%	91%	98%	94%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	99%	=3/14	93%	99%	100%	99%
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	92%	3/13	65%	91%	95%	93%
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall	99%	=1/14	93%	97%	99%	98%
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	9.4	=4/13	8.5	9.3	9.5	9.3
QI 5 User training						
a) attendances per capita	38	9/22	13	30	208	51
c) informal training per capita	78	21/22	15	199	433	69
QI 6 attendances at events per capita	377	5/22	91	295	689	330
QI 8 Library use <sup>1</sup>						
a) visits per capita	3,606	15/22	2,596	3,969	7,170*	4,291
b) virtual visits per capita	509	16/22	345	885	2,205	473
c) active borrowers per capita	209	3/22	58	150	251	220
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita <sup>2</sup>	903	6/22	95	602	1,424	685
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per capita <sup>3</sup>	14	1/22	5	10	14	14
c) % of available time used by the public	18%	19/22	14%	25%	63%	20%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications						
(v) a) total volunteers	28	=13/21	3	30	214	16
b) total volunteer hours	2,042	7/21	90	1,477	9,806	497
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£17,369	2/22	£7,181	£12,145	£19,449	n/a
b) % on staff,	49%	20/22	47%	62%	78%	n/a
% on information resources	11%	14/22	8%	13%	21%	n/a
% on equipment and buildings	25%	1/22	0.4%	4%	25%	n/a
% on other operational costs	15%	12/22	0.3%	16%	37%	n/a
c) capital expenditure per capita	£0	=17/22	£0	£467	£8,829	n/a
QI 15 Net cost per visit	£2.47	3/22	£1.18	£1.82	£2.52	n/a

<sup>1</sup> figures for co-located services are marked with an asterisk; performances for these services are likely to reflect higher footfall, and will not therefore be directly comparable with stand-alone library provision <sup>2</sup> per 1,000 Welsh speaking resident population; figures from 2017/18 reports corrected following a calculation error <sup>3</sup> per 10,000 resident population

QI 16 Opening hours <sup>4</sup>						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.00%	=1/22	0.00%	0.00%	0.25%	0.00%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0.00%	=1/20	0.00%	0.28%	7.99%	0.00%

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

### 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, and compares this performance with the first year of the sixth framework (2017/18).

#### 3.1 Meeting customer needs (QI 1-5)

Caerphilly completed its children's user survey in July 2018, demonstrating continuing high levels of overall satisfaction with the service, although there has been a decline in the number who think that the library helps them learn and find things out. The challenges of meeting the expectations of an increasingly digitally literate younger generation are noted here. All static libraries continue to provide the full range of support for individual development, although the service notes that this will become more challenging, as funding allocations impact on employee numbers. Support for health and well-being has also been sustained, with additional developments around the provision of Dementia Friendly services. Attendance at pre-arranged user training sessions has continued to fall, in large part due to reductions in digital course provision by key partners. The numbers helped by informal training have however increased, although performance here remains among the lowest per capita in Wales.

#### 3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)

Caerphilly continues to meet the target for easy access to service points, with 18 branches serving its local communities. Provision of events and activities for users with special requirements has been maintained at all branches, with overall attendance showing an increase on 2018/19, particularly for those aged 16 or under. Other usage indicators show a mixed picture, with a fall in the number of physical visits and active borrowers, but increases in virtual visits and library membership. There has been a notable decline in book issues however and particularly in children's book issues, although performances here are still among the highest per capita in Wales.

#### 3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)<sup>i</sup>

A change in assessment for acquisitions per capita (QI 9) means that the standard here is only partially met in 2018/19, with the service very close to meeting the target level. However, the service continues to meet the targets for provision of materials in the Welsh language (QI 10), with a strong commitment to its investment in Welsh language stock for adults and children, and an associated and significant rise in issues of these materials. The service is also still achieving the requirements for supply of requests, although it notes that projected resource reductions are likely to impact on performance in this area in 2019/20. Caerphilly continues to maintain the highest level of PC provision in Wales, however usage levels have fallen further in 2018/19, in part perhaps due to the increased availability of Wi-Fi across the library estate.

### **3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)**

Professional staff numbers have been maintained at 2017/18 levels, although the overall staffing complement has fallen slightly; in neither case is the stipulated target met. The service anticipates however that budgetary constraints may make maintaining the current levels of professional and managerial staffing difficult. Qualified leadership is in place, and the service continues to invest appropriately in staff training and professional development. Volunteer numbers / hours have risen further, with increased take-up of digital assistant roles by local college students. It is noted that the service has not yet considered any extensive move towards volunteer-led library provision.

Caerphilly was able to provide full information on service expenditure in 2018/19, with the overall revenue budget amongst the highest per capita in Wales. Opening hours continue to meet the target set, and there were no unplanned closures or interruptions to service.

## **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. Caerphilly provides a detailed statement highlighting the synergy between library service activities and both the Council's Well-being Objectives, and the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Key themes focus on improving education opportunities, enabling employment, supporting healthy lifestyles, and supporting independent living and improved well-being.

## **5 Future direction**

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, Caerphilly notes that it is working towards achieving its strategic goals, in line with annual Service Improvement Plans, and in support of the local authority's new Education Improvement Plan. Continued funding reductions are however anticipated, with proposals to make savings in 2019/20 by reducing the Resources Fund, and adopting single staffing at a number of the community library sites. It is anticipated that this will impact on service performance against the Standards Framework in 2019/20, with financial pressures likely to continue through the current Medium Term Financial Plan cycle (2019-23). It is noted that the local authority still remains committed to delivering the best public library provision possible, within these constraints.

## **6 Conclusion**

Caerphilly has continued to deliver effectively against the standards framework in 2018/19, maintaining strong performances in key areas, although with some evidence of declining usage. Some consideration regarding contrasting usage patterns and benchmark figures may aid future planning. The extension of Wi-Fi provision across all library services is a welcome development, ensuring that the core entitlement in this area is now met. The return does however anticipate difficulties in maintaining performances in a number of areas, with proposals to reduce resource and staffing budgets in 2019/20. The impact of funding constraints on service capacity and delivery is something the authority should consider carefully, in ensuring that the service still has access to the resources required to enable it to meet the needs of its local communities.

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<sup>i</sup> E-resources purchased through centrally-funded subscriptions have been excluded from acquisitions figures for QI 9 in 2018/19 to ensure that the standard accurately reflects individual authority strategy, investment and performance. In some cases this has impacted on achievement against the standard in comparison with 2017/18. CIPFA Statistics Returns continue to include figures for centrally-procured resources.