Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-17

Flintshire County Council

Annual Assessment Report 2016-17

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

1) Executive summary

Flintshire met 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full and partially met 1

Of the 7 quality indicators which have targets, Flintshire achieved 5 in full, 1 in part and could not provide data on one. This is an improvement on last year when only 2 were achieved in full.

The completion of the programme to consolidate resources in to 7 hub libraries has seen some improvements this year with the targets relating to individual development, online access and opening hours now being fully achieved. The service has done well to maintain performance in general during the last few years of change. The continuing decline in staffing levels is disappointing but the data does correspond to a time when there were vacancies, and so it is hoped that this will improve over the next year. Stability and ongoing investment in the service will help embed recent improvements for the future.

- Flintshire carried out an impact survey in November 2014. 92% of children thought that the library helped them to learn and find things out; 81% of adults and 69% of children felt that the library made a difference to their lives.

- Flintshire carried out a customer survey in November 2014, and achieved one of the highest levels of overall satisfaction, with 99% of adults rating the service as 'good' or very good'. Ratings on individual elements of the service compare less favourably to other authorities, however.

- Attendance at pre-arranged training sessions has more than doubled compared to last year, although the per capita level remains below the median for Wales.

- Physical visits have declined slightly over the last year, with the number of virtual visits experiencing only a slight increase so that both per capita levels remain below the median of Wales as a whole.

- Library membership has fallen significantly due to a cleansing of the data before the installation of a new LMS, with those members using only ICT facilities now included in the number of active borrowers which has resulted in an increase.

- Despite reductions over the last year, the per capita levels of both total acquisitions and materials expenditure are among the highest in Wales. The proportion of expenditure accounted for by materials at Flintshire is the third highest in Wales.

- Flintshire failed to meet the targets for both staffing levels overall and for

professional staff, although it was noted that there were professional staff vacancies. The target for opening hours has been met, which is an improvement on last year.

Considering the four areas in the framework (*Customers and communities; Access for all; Learning for life;* and *Leadership and development*) in comparison to the rest of Wales, Flintshire's performance is relatively poor, with some notable exceptions in customer satisfaction, staff training and collection development.

Compared to the previous year, there have been notable improvements in support for individual development, ICT provision and opening hours, but further falls in staffing are a cause for concern.

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 the core entitlements, the quality indicators which have targets, the quality indicators showing performance against others, and impact measures. A narrative assessment of the authority's performance is made in Section 3.

a) Core entitlements

Flintshire is meeting 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full and partially meeting 1. This is the same position as last year, although the detail has changed. Wi-Fi is now available in all service points; however the new library strategy is not yet available on the website, pending transfer to a Community Benefit Society (Aura Leisure and Libraries) later in 2017.

b) Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QI) within the framework. Of the 7 which have targets, Flintshire is achieving 5 in full, 1 in part and did not provide data for one of the indicators:

Quality Indicator	Met?	
QI 3 Individual development:		Met in full
a) ICT support	✔	
b) Skills training	✔	
c) Information literacy	✔	
d) E-government support	✔	
e) Reader development	✔	
QI 5 Location of service points	✔	Met in full
QI 8 Up-to-date reading material:		Met in full
a) Acquisitions per capita	✔	
<u>or</u> Materials spend per capita	✔	
b) Replenishment rate	✔	
QI 9 Appropriate reading material:		n/a
a) % of material budget on children		
b) % of material budget spent on Welsh		

Quality Indicator	Met?	
or Spend on Welsh per capita		
QI 10 Online access:		Met in full
a) All service points	✔	
Computers per capita	✔	
b) Wi-Fi provision	✔	
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications:		Partially met
a) Staff per capita	✘	
b) Professional staff per capita	✘	
c) Head of service qualification/training	✔	
d) CPD percentage	✔	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	✔	Met in full

There is an improvement since last year in QIs 3, 10 and 16 which are now all fully met.

c) Impact measures
The framework contains three indicators which seek to gather evidence of the impact that using the library service has on people's lives. Through these and other indicators it is possible to see how the library service is contributing towards educational, social, economic and health and wellbeing local and national agendas. These indicators do not have targets. Not all authorities collected data for the impact indicators, and ranks are included out of the numbers of respondents stated, where 1 is the highest scoring authority.

Flintshire carried out an impact survey in November 2014. The percentage of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals is based on a small sample of fewer than 100 feedback forms.

Performance indicator		*Rank*	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
b) % of children who think that the library helps them learn and find things out:	92%	*11/19*	68%	93%	100%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	81%	*14/19*	36%	86%	97%
% of children who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	69%	*11/17*	58%	82%	98%
QI 4 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	97%	*8/19*	80%	97%	100%

Flintshire provided two impact case studies:

- The success of the Deeside Library in attracting leisure centre users to the library, fostering a love of reading in previously reluctant readers.

- A digital volunteers scheme providing the volunteers with accreditation for their Welsh Baccalaureate as well as increasing the skills of users.

d) Quality performance indicators and benchmarks
The remaining indicators do not have targets, but allow performance to be compared

between authorities. The following table summarises Flintshire's position for 2016-17. 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 elements were not available to some authorities. Figures reported in respect of the first two years of the framework for QI 4 to QI 16 are repeated for convenience of comparison. Note that indicators 'per capita' are calculated per 1,000 population.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2015/16	Rank	2014/15	Rank
QI 1 Making a difference									
a) new skills	64%	13/19	23%	71%	93%				
c) health and well-being	46%	13/20	26%	56%	94%				
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	94%	18/19	93%	98%	100%				
QI 2 Customer satisfaction									
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	89%	12/20	74%	90%	98%				
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	96%	15/20	90%	99%	100%				
c) 'very good' or 'good' overall	99%	2/20	92%	97%	100%				
d) child rating out of ten	10.0	1/19	8.6	9.1	10.0				
QI 4 User training									
a) attendances per capita	29	15	3	34	248	11	20	5	21
c) informal training per capita	162	10/20	1	156	712	n/k		n/k	
QI 6 Library use									
a) visits per capita	3,935	12	2,453	4,033	6,751	3,963	12	4,317	10
b) virtual visits per capita	453	18/21	341	922	2,299	442	18	403	20
c) active borrowers per capita	127	16	77	153	235	105	20	122	17
QI 7 attendances at events per capita	151	16	62	214	496	131	16	152	14
QI 11 Use of ICT - % of available time used by the public									
a) equipment	16%	21/21	16%	32%	69%	20%	22	28%	19
QI 12 Supply of requests									
a) % available within 7 days	76%*	5/21	48%	70%	82%	70%	15	75%	6
b) % available within 15 days	82%*	15/21	65%	85%	96%	82%	16	88%	5
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications									
(v) a) total volunteers	26	10	0	24	209	9	17	0	17
b) total volunteer hours	386	16	0	798	5,156	116	20	0	17
QI 14 Operational expenditure									
a) total expenditure per capita	£10,281	17/21	£6,745	£11,979	£16,968	£11,188	16/21	£11,695	19
b) % on staff	59%	9/21	46%	58%	75%	61%	9/21	60%	9
% on information resources	21%	3/21	4%	13%	25%	22%	2/21	16%	5
% on equipment and buildings	5%	7/21	0%	4%	20%	5%	7/21	16%	4
% on other operational costs	15%	13/21	9%	22%	37%	13%	16/21	7%	20
c) capital expenditure per	£723	8/21	£0	£341	£16,692	£564	9/21	£0	16

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2015/16	Rank	2014/15	Rank
capita									
QI 15 Net cost per visit	£2.24	13/20	£1.50	£2.33	£3.30	£2.43	11 / 21	£2.35	8 / 11
QI 16 Opening hours *(see note)*									
(ii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.07%	5	0.00%	0.00%	0.48%	0.00%	12	0.10%	16
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0.37%	6 /19	0.00%	0.13%	8.33%	0.86%	12 / 19	0.42%	11 / 19

Note: Rankings here have been reversed, so that 1 is the lowest scoring (best performing) authority.
* By agreement with MALD, figures are based on the first three months of the year only due to the mid-year implementation of a new library management system.

Data on Wi-Fi usage has only been provided by three authorities for 2016-17 and so is not included in the table above.

3) Analysis of performance
The core entitlements and quality indicators are divided into four key areas. This section of the report outlines performance against the quality indicators within these four areas, and compares results with those from the first two years of the framework.

a) Customers and communities
Flintshire carried out a customer survey in November 2014, and detailed comment was included in the 2014-15 report. The restructuring to concentrate resources in 7 hub libraries has now been completed and sees Flintshire meet the target with all service points providing the full range of services in support of individual development. Attendance at pre-arranged training sessions has more than doubled compared to last year, although the per capita level remains below the median for Wales as a whole.

b) Access for all
Flintshire meets the target for easy access to service points, but visits per capita have fallen slightly compared to 2015-16 so that the per capita levels remain below the median for Wales. The number of virtual visits per capita has increased slightly, however, the number of virtual visits per capita remains among the lowest in Wales. The introduction of a new LMS provided the opportunity to cleanse membership data, and as a result the number of library members has almost halved since last year. The number of active members has increased, however, and includes those users that have accessed the IT facilities in libraries only, although the per capita figure remains below the median for Wales.

c) Learning for life
Flintshire has met the targets for the number of acquisitions and materials expenditure in 2016-17, despite a 10% decrease in the latter. Acquisitions per capita were the third highest in Wales, with materials expenditure per capita the fourth highest. Detail was not provided on expenditure on those items for children or materials in the Welsh language due to changing to a new library management system during the year.

All libraries now provide ICT facilities, but these are not well used, with the lowest percentage take-up in Wales. Due to the adoption of a new LMS and the impact this had on the delivery of requests, data is only based on the first quarter (April-June). The

percentage of requests satisfied within 7 days appears to have improved compared to last year, and is the fifth highest in Wales.

d) Leadership and development

Staffing has been further reduced in 2016-17, and Flintshire fails to meet the targets for staffing levels overall and for professional staff, which remains an area of concern. However, the authority has indicated that on 31st March there were 2.5 FTE professional posts vacant. The head of the service is a Chartered Librarian. Despite a decrease of 18% over last year, Flintshire continues to meet the staff training target, and the proportion of staff hours spent in training remains above the median of Wales as a whole. The number of volunteers in Flintshire's libraries has almost trebled over last year, with 26 giving an average of 15 hours of service. Training was provided for all young volunteers supporting the Summer Reading Challenge and additional training was provided by Digital Communities Wales for the digital volunteers.

Total revenue expenditure has decreased by 8% over the last year, with all areas experiencing decreases, except for other operational costs which experienced a slight increase. Despite a decrease, the proportion of revenue expenditure accounted for by materials is the third highest in Wales at 59%. Aggregate opening hours have increased over the last year and it is noted that this is partially due to the inclusion of two libraries located within leisure centres which enabled the libraries to extend their opening hours.

4) Strategic context

Flintshire library service provided a detailed statement concerning its contribution to the strategic goals of the local authority and Welsh Government focusing on the areas of accessibility, lifelong learning, cohesive communities, health and wellbeing, and cultural heritage.

5) Future direction

Flintshire is preparing to transfer out of local authority control to a Community Benefit Society (Aura) from summer 2017. A 10% reduction in overall funding from the council will continue. In preparation, the service has been restructured, with a new libraries support officer post providing frontline staff with a channel for career progression and to instil succession planning throughout the staffing structure. The company will work co-operatively with the Council with a Partnership Board reviewing overall performance including against WPLS with the intent of sustaining library services and library performance.

6) Conclusion

The completion of the programme to consolidate resources in to 7 hub libraries has seen some improvements this year with the targets relating to individual development, online access and opening hours now being fully achieved. The service has done well to maintain performance in general during the last few years of change. The continuing decline in staffing levels is disappointing but the data does correspond to a time when there were vacancies, and so it is hoped that this will improve over the next year. Stability and ongoing investment in the service will help embed recent improvements for the future.