Libraries making a difference

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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The fifth quality framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-2017

Contents

Foreword

I know from my many visits and from meeting people at events that the public library is a very important and valued service at the heart of communities. It provides a friendly space for learning and leisure, for meeting people and taking part in events. The modern library is also available 24/7 through online services such as e-books, e-magazines, and other digital resources. In poorer parts of Wales, libraries provide vital free access to digital services including information about welfare benefits and jobs.

The economic forecast for the next three years represents a challenge for us all. I appreciate that local authorities will have to make difficult decisions about the services they provide. However, public libraries are a statutory service as laid out in the *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964*. For over a decade the Welsh Government has implemented successive assessment frameworks which have helped bring a more consistent level of public library provision across Wales. I want everyone in Wales to continue to benefit from effective and relevant public library services and resources.

April 2014 sees the start of the next assessment framework. It has been prepared in consultation with the library sector and local authorities and reflects not only the difficult economic future, but also sets some aspirational targets. The framework includes impact and outcome measures for the first time. This will help to reveal the wide range of benefits that can result from using the public library service such as improvements to people's literacy skills, digital skills and health and wellbeing.

I am therefore pleased to publish this fifth framework of the Welsh Public Library Standards and to also acknowledge the continuing partnership between the Welsh Government and local authorities. Together we can work to ensure that library services in Wales remain at the heart of our efforts to improve the lives of the people of Wales.

John Griffiths AM
Minister for Culture and Sport
April 2014

1. Introduction

"Public, educational, and workplace libraries, are at the heart of their communities. The very reason for their existence is to inspire and assist people to make a positive difference to their lives. Libraries contribute to the social, educational, cultural and economic well being of the people of Wales."[1]

1.1. The benefits of using public libraries

Library service engagement with individuals and with the wider community drives benefits in many of the Welsh Government's outcome areas such as literacy, digital inclusion, cohesive communities, poverty, and health and well being. How the library interacts with its stakeholders – chiefly the users (and potential users) of the service – is key to the provision of a quality service. User perceptions of the services available derive from their experiences. Libraries which engage appropriately with their customers will provide the maximum benefits both for individuals and the community. As well as providing training and learning support for individuals, libraries contribute to society in other ways, such as providing access to computers and e-government for digitally excluded members of the community.

The public library may be the only place in the community where users can spend time in a safe and neutral environment. Supporting job-seekers in their search for work contributes to the local – and national – economy. By providing specialist facilities and services for those in the community who might have special needs, libraries contribute to health and well-being. Such benefits will only be achieved if the library provides equality of access for all. Much information is now more easily accessible online, and some is only available online, and libraries are uniquely positioned to facilitate access to resources which may be too costly for individuals (e.g. the cost of the basic hardware, Internet access or the resource subscription).

Libraries play a key role in providing information, promoting knowledge and developing skills for people of all ages and all walks of life. From children's first steps in listening to stories and learning to read, to providing quiet spaces for study, and supporting older people in using new technologies, libraries contribute to the delivery of literacy targets, information literacy and digital inclusion.

Good libraries play an important part in shaping people's views of their local authority. In order to deliver quality, sustainable services to the public, libraries need active leadership and a programme for development enabling them to respond in a timely way to the changing information and cultural needs of their local communities. Staff must have the skills, knowledge and confidence to deliver services and meet customer needs, demonstrated by appropriate professional qualifications. Libraries have the opportunity to contribute to a range of wider local and national government agendas, but this will only happen if the library is pro-active in promoting its role, based on a strong vision linked to those agendas.

1.2. What this means for the people of Wales

The fifth framework of Welsh public library standards comprises 18 core entitlements and 16 quality indicators to monitor how well library services realise these benefits for the people of Wales. The mapping between benefits and indicators is not a simplistic one, as measuring outcomes and impacts at a service-wide level cannot be achieved directly, but must be inferred from broader indicators. The table below shows the indicators in this framework which are most directly related to some of the key benefits of using public libraries. Libraries which perform well on these indicators will be engaging appropriately with their customers to make a difference to their lives.

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[1] CyMAL (2011) *Libraries Inspire: The strategic development framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16*, p 7 Available at http://wales.gov.uk/topics/cultureandsport/museumsarchiveslibraries/cymal/libraries/librariesinspire/?lang=en

Outcomes and impacts	Core entitlements	Quality indicators
I am able to increase my knowledge/skills having used the library	1, 2, 3	1, 3, 4
I am able to take part in reading and other cultural events organised by the library service	3	8, 9
I feel part of a community using the library service	3, 15	1, 5, 6
I am able to take advantage of the opportunities offered in the digital world using the library service	1, 10, 11	8, 12, 13
My health and well-being is enhanced by using the library	3, 7	1
I can participate more fully in local affairs via the facilities in the library	3, 11	3, 12

Other core entitlements and quality indicators are concerned with the effective management of services, which underpins the effective delivery of the outcomes and impacts.

A short user guide for the public and local authority members is available from CyMAL.[2]

1.3. Fulfilling the statutory duty

The *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964*[3] makes it a duty of the relevant Welsh Ministers (currently the Minister for Culture and Sport) *"to superintend and promote the improvement of the public library service provided by local authorities…and to secure the proper discharge by local authorities of the functions in relation to libraries conferred upon them as library authorities under this Act"*. Under the same Act, library authorities are required to *"provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof"*.

Since 2002, the Welsh Ministers have fulfilled this duty through the Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS, or, the Standards). The first framework ran from 2002 to 2005 with subsequent frameworks covering the periods 2005-08, 2008-11 and 2011-14. Each individual framework evolved to reflect the changing needs and expectations of public library users. In addition to the fulfilment of statutory duties, the WPLS framework plays

a valuable role in supporting the development of public library services. There is general consensus among stakeholders concerned with the provision of public library services in Wales that these performance measurement frameworks, introduced and administered by the Welsh Government for the sector, have helped public library services to improve in a number of ways and in key areas. For example, as a result of the Standards, there have been significant improvements in service areas such as the delivery of requests and provision of ICT facilities and services, leading to enhanced outcomes for library customers.

Local authorities also have a statutory duty (under section 7 of the Act) to provide a library service and encourage both adults and children to make full use of that library service. The performance indicators listed here will assist the Welsh Government in assessing whether or not local authorities in Wales are complying with their duties under the 1964 Act, and in assessing the comprehensiveness and efficiency, in terms of the manner of delivery, of library services in Wales.

1.4. The fifth quality framework

The aims of this new, fifth, framework of Welsh Public Library Standards are to:

- enable the Minister for Culture and Sport to fulfil the statutory requirements of the 1964 Act in respect of superintending the provision of a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service by local authorities;

- provide a robust assessment of the performance of library services;

- have clear links to the Welsh Government's agenda, to ensure credibility across local government in Wales;

- be relevant and useful to all local authority library services in Wales;

- be transparent, easily understood and accepted by all stakeholders;

- incorporate outcome measures to show the benefits of using libraries;

- act as a driver for improvements to library services and local communities; and

- minimise the burden of data collection on library authorities.

Introduced at a time of budgetary constraint, this framework provides opportunities for libraries to deliver services in innovative ways and the flexibility to make best use of the resources available to them. The framework has been developed using a variety of quality performance models as a basis to create a unique framework for Wales, incorporating input and output measures, as well as qualitative and impact/outcome elements.

It will come into operation on 1st April 2014, and libraries will make their first report against its requirements in the summer of 2015. This document describes the new framework in detail. It is appreciated that some areas of the framework may be more or less relevant in particular authorities and it is appreciated that library services will need to regard local priorities.

Library services contribute to a range of Welsh Government outcomes such as literacy, skills and learning, digital inclusion, poverty, health and well-being. Library provision spans these outcomes, offering a range of services which often support two or more of the outcomes simultaneously. The new quality framework has therefore been themed around four core service aspects:

- customers and communities;

- access for all;

- learning for life; and

- leadership and development.

Each aspect has a number of core entitlements and quality indicators associated with it, and has been related to wider government agendas. The desired outcome of the fifth framework is that libraries offer all the services and facilities listed as core entitlements. In order to assess the quality of these services and facilities, a range of performance indicators and outcome-based impact measures are

described, to show how people are better off as a result of using the library service.

A set of **core library entitlements** for Welsh citizens is set out in *Libraries Inspire*, the strategic development framework for Welsh libraries for 2012-16. These have been formally incorporated into this fifth quality framework, and a small number of additional entitlements included. These additional entitlements will help to promote the wider societal role of public libraries, ensuring inclusivity and sustainability of the service.

The **quality indicators** included are of three broad types.

• Input indicators are concerned primarily with what the library service will provide for the citizens of Wales in key areas in order that the core entitlements described above can be delivered.

• Output indicators are concerned with levels of use. When considered alongside input indicators, they can give an indication of the efficiency of delivery of the service.

• Outcome and impact indicators measure the direct or indirect effects of the library service on its users, and on the wider community. They show the difference libraries make to people's lives.

Some indicators have been developed from previous frameworks; others are new, reflecting an increasing emphasis on the outcomes and impact of the public library service for the people of Wales. Most will be reported every year; some may be reported once in the three year period, for example, where user survey data are required. For some indicators, formal targets are set, although such targets are not appropriate in all cases. Libraries will be expected to compare their performance on all indicators with previous

years, and to meet the targets where these are set. Benchmarking of authorities will be possible when all results are available.

The nature of the geography, distribution of population and other factors within individual authorities can cause significant variations in the approaches necessary to the planning and delivery of library services. For this reason, Welsh library authorities are offered alternatives against which to measure their services in some of the indicators described, and should choose the most appropriate to reflect their circumstances.

Definitions of the various terms and methods of data collection are not specified in this document; however these will be included with the reporting template provided to library services, and are available on request.[4] In all cases, detailed guidance on data collection and calculation will be provided to

library authorities to ensure consistency and comparability. Existing data will be utilised wherever practicable. Where appropriate, international standard definitions and methods have been adopted.

A final section of this document details the reporting requirements, which include an element of self evaluation and descriptive reporting in addition to key service statistics and the performance indicators, and describes the monitoring and assessment process. A holistic view of assessment will be taken. Library performance will be judged on all the aspects of the framework, including compliance with the core entitlements, ranking on the quality indicators, how many performance targets are met, and the narrative providing evidence of the impact of the service on individuals and the community.

[4] See http://www.wales.gov.uk/cymal for details

2. Customers and communities

Entitlements and indicators in this service aspect are designed to ensure that the library service engages with its customers and potential users, providing opportunities for individual and community development.

2.1. Core entitlements

WPLSCE 1
Libraries in Wales will ensure friendly, knowledgeable and qualified staff are on hand to help.

WPLSCE 2
Libraries in Wales will stage a range of activities to support learning, enjoyment and enable users to obtain the maximum benefit from the available resources.

WPLSCE 3
Libraries in Wales will provide access to a range of services and resources to support lifelong learning, personal well being and development, and community participation.

2.2. Quality indicators

WPLSQI 1 Making a difference
This selection of indicators assesses the impact of library use on people's lives in a variety of ways. Although some are relevant to other areas of this framework, they are grouped together here as being key to the overall customer experience.

Authorities will report, at least once in the three year period:

a) the percentage of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills;

b) the percentage of children who think that the library helps them learn and find things out;

c) the percentage of adults who have found helpful information for health and well- being at the library;

d) the percentage of adults who experience the library as an enjoyable, safe and inclusive place;

e) the percentage of adults and the percentage of children who think that the library has made a difference to their lives.

Data will be collected from user surveys of adults and of children, which should be conducted in accordance with good statistical practice, at least once during the three year period of this framework. Authorities will be given guidance on the conduct of the survey and wording of questions to ensure comparability. Authorities may conduct annual surveys if they wish to do so and report accordingly.

WPLSQI 2 Customer satisfaction
Customer satisfaction is a key element of library performance. As with the indicators concerned with library impact (QI 1), some of these are relevant to other areas of this framework, but are grouped together here as being key to the overall customer experience.

Authorities will report:

a) the percentage of adults who think that the choice of books available in the library they use is 'very good' or 'good';

b) the percentage of adults who think that the standard of customer care in the library they use is 'very good' or 'good';

c) the percentage of adults who think that the library they use is 'very good' or 'good' overall;

d) the average overall rating out of ten awarded by users aged 16 or under for the library they use.

Data will be collected from user surveys of adults and of children, which should be conducted in accordance with good statistical practice, at least once in the three-year period of this framework. It is appreciated that not all authorities wish to use the CIPFA PLUS suite of survey instruments (from which the above indicators are drawn), and guidance will be issued to ensure that authorities which choose to use their own surveys will have comparable results. Authorities may conduct annual surveys if they wish to do so and report accordingly.

WPLSQI 3 Support for individual development

Libraries shall ensure that the following services are offered in all static service points open for 10 hours per week or more:

a) basic support in the use of the ICT infrastructure provided (including Wi-Fi) and in accessing the range of electronic information resources available;

b) training to improve literacy, numeracy, information and digital skills. Training programmes may be developed and delivered with appropriate partners outside the library service;

c) information literacy sessions for users (i.e. assistance in developing or enhancing capabilities to: identify and access appropriate resources efficiently and effectively; critically evaluate information; and apply information appropriately to further objectives, such as educational, employment, health and well-being);

d) support for users to access local and national e-government resources;

e) reader development programmes/activities for both adults and children.

The format of the support offered and frequency of any specific timetabled sessions should be appropriate both for the size of the service point and local community needs.

WPLSQI 4 User training

This indicator assesses the extent to which sessions offered match local need and would include: reader development sessions; literacy, numeracy, information and digital skills sessions; ICT sessions, etc., including sessions arranged in collaboration with partner agencies. User training may have a general audience, or be targeted towards specific sub-groups of the population e.g. children, carers, unemployed persons, etc. Sessions may require advance registration, or be open to all on a drop-in basis.

Authorities will report:

a) the total number of attendances at pre-arranged training sessions organised and/or hosted by the library service at its own service points or at other locations within the authority during the year, divided by the resident population, multiplied by 1,000;

b) the percentage of attendees at such sessions who said that attendance helped them to achieve their goals;

c) the number of customers helped by means of informal training during the year, divided by the resident population, multiplied by 1,000.

Part (b) of this indicator should be derived from a simple feedback form offered to all attendees. Part (c) of the indicator may be derived by sampling. Authorities will be provided with guidance to ensure consistency of reporting.

3. Access for all

Entitlements and indicators in this service aspect are designed to ensure that library services are delivered from buildings and facilities which are welcoming, inclusive and fit for purpose.

3.1. Core entitlements

WPLSCE 4
Libraries in Wales will be open to all members of their communities.

WPLSCE 5
Libraries in Wales will be free to join.

WPLSCE 6
Libraries in Wales will provide a safe, attractive and accessible physical space with suitable opening hours.

WPLSCE 7
Libraries in Wales will provide appropriate services, facilities and information resources for individuals and groups with special needs. Special needs can be caused by physical and health impairment, economic disadvantage (e.g. long term unemployment), cultural difference (e.g. language, new arrivals), educational background, or other circumstances that require special library services.

3.2. Quality indicators

WPLSQI 5 Location of service points
Authorities shall ensure that they meet the following criteria for the location of service points and mobile library stops, according to their population density:

No stipulation is made with regard to minimum opening hours of static libraries (on a site by site basis) however, authorities are asked to consider the viability of service points which are open for fewer than 10 hours per week. Equally, no stipulation is made with regard to length or frequency of mobile library stops, however it is expected that mobile libraries will visit each scheduled stop at least 12 times per year.

WPLSQI 6 Library use
Three measures of use of the library are required, covering the physical and the electronic resources provided. Together, they assess the library's success in attracting users to its services.

Authorities will report:

a) the total number of visits to library premises during the year divided by the resident population, multiplied by 1,000;

b) the total number of external visits to the library's website during the year divided by the resident population, multiplied by 1,000;

c) the total number of active borrowers divided by the resident population, multiplied by 1,000.

The data used should be those as reported to CIPFA for the public library actuals return. This is a performance indicator in the National Strategic Indicators, Leisure and Culture, for Wales (LCL/001), and the guidance for the collection of data and calculation of this

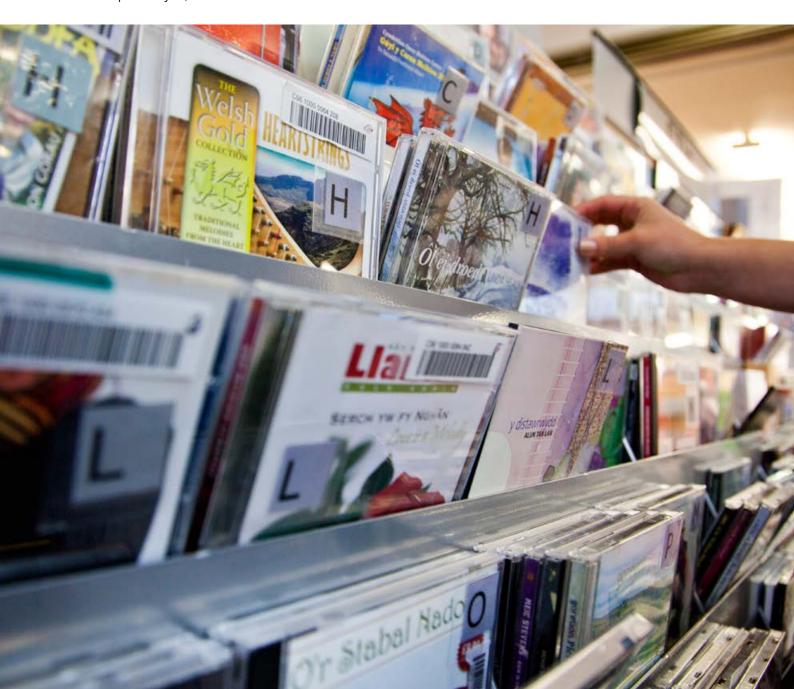| Population density	% of households	Distance from library
20 or more persons per hectare:	At least 95%	within 2 miles of a static service point
Between 1.1 and 19.9 persons per hectare:	At least 75%	within 2.5 miles (or 10 minutes travelling time by public transport) of a static service point, or within ¼ mile of a mobile library stop
1.0 person or fewer per hectare:	At least 70%	within 3 miles (or 15 minutes travelling time by public transport) of a static service point, or within ¼ mile of a mobile library stop

performance indicator is substantially the same for both frameworks.

WPLSQI 7 User attendances at library events per 1,000 population

The purpose of this indicator is to estimate the attraction of library events for the library's population to be served, and the extent to which such events meet local need.

Authorities will report:

- The total number of attendances at events and activities organised by the library service at its own service points or at other locations within the authority during the year, divided by the resident population, multiplied by 1,000.

Events include events with literary, cultural or educational intent, e.g. author visits, reading groups, literary discussions, digital and information literacy workshops, genealogy workshops, health literacy, financial literacy, job seeking etc. Events specifically for children are included, such as storytelling, poetry, music. Authorities may choose to report separately concerning events targeted at specific sections of the population, e.g. visually impaired readers; socially excluded groups.

4. Learning for life

Entitlements and indicators in this service area are designed to ensure that the library service provides a range of resources and services to meet people's needs.

4.1. Core entitlements

WPLSCE 8
Libraries in Wales will lend books for free.

WPLSCE 9
Libraries in Wales will deliver free access to information.

WPLSCE 10
Libraries in Wales will provide free use of the Internet and computers, including Wi-Fi.

WPLSCE 11
Libraries in Wales will deliver free use of online information resources 24 hours a day.

WPLSCE 12
Libraries in Wales will provide access to high quality resources in a range of formats, including those in the Welsh language, reflecting changing forms of publication.

WPLSCE 13
Libraries in Wales will share their catalogues, to enable a single search of all Welsh library resources.

4.2. Quality indicators

WPLSQI 8 Up-to-date reading material
a) Library authorities should achieve

either a minimum of 243 items acquired per 1,000 resident population

or a minimum spend of £2,180 per 1,000 resident population annually.

Books and e-books, periodicals, audio-visual material and electronic resources are all included.

b) Acquisitions during the year of materials for loan (including electronic materials for loan) should be equivalent to at least 11% of the lending stock at the start of the year.

WPLSQI 9 Appropriate reading material
This indicator is designed to ensure an appropriate balance of resources across various sections of the community.

a) The percentage of the material budget spent on resources for children should reflect the percentage of children in the resident population, within ±2 percentage points.

b) Either a minimum of 4% of the material budget,
or a minimum of £750 per 1,000 Welsh speaking resident population,

should be spent on the purchase of Welsh Language materials.

WPLSQI 10 Online access
a) Every static library and mobile library should provide a minimum of one device giving public access to the Internet and networked digital content. Authorities should achieve an aggregate total across the authority of no fewer than 9 such devices per 10,000 resident population. Computers, laptops, tablets, and other mobile devices are all included.

b) All static service points should provide Wi-Fi access for users to bring their own laptops or mobile devices.

WPLSQI 11 Use of ICT – % of available time used by the public
Authorities will report:

a) the percentage of available time allocated for use of public access ICT equipment (i.e. library-provided computers and other devices) actually taken up by users.

b) the percentage of time during which Wi-Fi services are available that they are used by the public.

This should be aggregated across all libraries in the authority, including mobiles.

WPLSQI 12 Supply of requests

This indicator measures the efficiency of the public library service in responding to requests for material which is not immediately available.

Authorities will report:

a) the percentage of requests for material which are notified to the user as being available within 7 calendar days of the request being made;

b) the percentage of requests for material which are notified to the user as being available within 15 calendar days of the request being made.

Requests for pre-publication material shall be counted from the date of publication. Material which is not owned by the library but must be acquired by purchase or by inter-library loan is included in the calculations.

5. Leadership and development

Entitlements and indicators in this service aspect are designed to ensure that the library service is professionally managed with adequate resources.

5.1. Core entitlements

WPLSCE 14
Libraries in Wales will promote libraries to attract more people to benefit from their services.

WPLSCE 15
Libraries in Wales will regularly consult users to gather their views on the service and information about their changing needs.

WPLSCE 16
Libraries in Wales will work in partnership to open up access to the resources of all Welsh libraries.

WPLSCE 17
Libraries in Wales will provide access to the library service's strategy, policies, objectives and vision, in print and online, in a range of languages appropriate for the community.

WPLSCE 18
Libraries in Wales will provide a clear, timely and transparent complaints process if things go wrong.

5.2. Quality indicators

WPLSQI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications

a) Library authorities shall achieve total establishment staffing levels for the service of 3.6 (full time equivalent) per 10,000 resident population. Staff who do not work directly in service provision, e.g. cleaners, are excluded.

b) The total number of staff (full time equivalent) holding recognised qualifications in librarianship, information science or information management per 10,000 resident population should not fall below 0.65. Staff with qualifications in cognate areas, such as ICT, heritage or leisure management or education and learning may be included in the calculations if they occupy posts on the library staff establishment which require those qualifications, and when the qualifications held are relevant to their current roles and functions within the library service.

c) The designated operational manager of the library service shall,

   either be the holder of recognised qualifications in librarianship, information science or information management **or** have undertaken relevant library management training within the last 3 years.

   Authorities will also report:

   i. where this post sits within the local authority management structure;

   ii. the post held by the most senior professional librarian (where different); and

   iii. where that post sits within the local authority management structure.

d) A minimum of 1% of aggregate staff working hours should be spent in training and personal/professional development during the year. All library staff should be encouraged to undertake relevant training and development.

e) Library authorities may offer members of the community the opportunity to volunteer to support additional library services. Such opportunities can, for example, enhance the life skills and employability of individuals, contributing to tackling poverty outcomes.

Where there is community involvement in delivering the library service at a branch level, we expect there to be paid staffing working alongside the volunteers in the libraries.

Library authorities that use volunteer staff to deliver additional services shall ensure:

- a designated volunteer coordinator from the library service's permanent professional staff coordinates those parts of the service involving volunteer workers;

- each volunteer receives a written role description;

- legal requirements are met for each volunteer in relation to their role;

- both induction training and continuing training is provided for all volunteers;

- volunteers are appropriately supervised; and

- they have achieved, or are actively working towards, Investing in Volunteers accreditation.[5]

Authorities will report:

    i. the total number of volunteers

    ii. the total number of volunteer hours during the year

    iii. whether they have accreditation status relating to the NOS or are working towards this accreditation.

WPLSQI 14 Operational expenditure

In the current economic climate it is not thought appropriate to set a target for library expenditure, but spending on the public library service will continue to be scrutinised closely.

Authorities will report:

a) the total revenue expenditure per 1,000 resident population;

b) the percentages of this total spent on staff, materials and information resources, maintenance, repair and replacement of equipment and buildings, and other operational costs;

c) total capital expenditure per 1,000 resident population.

[5] See http://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/inyourcountry/iiv-wales for more information

WPLSQI 15 Cost per visit

This indicator is useful for justifying expenditure of public funds, giving a proxy for value for money, but it must be interpreted in conjunction with demographic indicators and quality indicators relating to use. It measures the cost of the library service related to the number of library visits, including virtual visits.

Authorities will report:

- The total revenue expenditure divided by the sum of the number of physical visits to library premises (including mobiles) plus the number of visits to the library web site during the year.

Authorities which complete the CIPFA public library actuals return should use the same data here.

WPLSQI 16 Opening hours

a) Welsh public libraries should achieve a level of aggregate opening hours across all service points administered by the authority (defined as those that provide access to materials, staff and a range of library services) of no less than 120 hours per annum per 1,000 resident population.

b) This part of the indicator is concerned with the adequacy of the library service's maintenance programme and staffing strategy.

Authorities will report:

i. the total number of hours of unplanned and emergency closure of static service points as a result of building failure or staff unavailability as a percentage of the total planned opening hours of all static service points during the year;

ii. the number of mobile library stops and/or home delivery services missed as a result of vehicle failure or staff unavailability, as a percentage of the total number of planned mobile library stops and/or home delivery services during the year.

Scheduled opening hours not open as a result of adverse weather conditions, or any other cause beyond the library's control, are not included.

6. Reporting, monitoring and assessment

The statutory requirements of public library service provision in Wales are enshrined in the *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.* The performance indicators listed here will assist the Welsh Government in assessing whether or not local authorities in Wales are complying with their duties under the 1964 Act, and in assessing the efficiency of the manner of delivery of library services in Wales.

6.1. Reporting requirements

Each year, local authorities will be required to report their performance against the various elements of the framework. The return will include a compliance rating against the core entitlements – indicating whether these are fully met, partially met, or not met, with appropriate description/explanation where relevant. For all entitlements which are not fully met, the return should also include a comparison to the previous year, and a plan for improvement in the following year.

Individual authority returns will also include data showing performance against the quality indicators included in this framework, together with a comparison for the previous year. Where performance has declined, the return should include the authority's strategy to halt the decline. Where targets are not met, the return should include a narrative outlining proposals and a timescale to achieve these targets. These data will be drawn together to provide an overview of Welsh public library services as a whole, to assist with identification of good practice, and of areas where action may be required to bring about improvements.

Measurement of the impact of public library services – the difference those services make to people's lives – is not easily quantifiable. For this reason, a qualitative element will be included in the reporting. Each authority's return should include at least one, but no more than four, specific case studies describing the impact which the library service has had on an individual, or on a group of individuals, during the year. This is expected to describe the use made of the service, and the difference that use made to the individuals or group. Guidance will be provided on the format of the case studies and appropriate material to include. Such case studies will build into a valuable source of evidence of impact and value, and will further promote the spread of good practice across Wales.

A second qualitative element of reporting will be a narrative that demonstrates how the library service is contributing towards both local authority agendas and wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals. The purpose of this strand of reporting is to encourage libraries to be aware of the wider social drivers (e.g. health and well-being; digital inclusion including information literacy; literacy, including reading and the connection with digital literacy; community engagement and community benefits, including families, children and young people, older people, welfare reform; Welsh language and culture), to which their service should be able to demonstrate a contribution, and to make explicit their relevance and value to policy makers at local, regional and national level.

Authorities will also be required to confirm that feedback in the form of opinion on the year's performances achieved by each library service has been adequately considered by the member with responsibility for library services and by the relevant management, scrutiny and performance monitoring procedures. A reporting template will be provided to authorities to ensure that reporting is consistent and comparable across Wales.

6.2. Monitoring and assessment procedures

The process of monitoring and assessing will be led by CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries division of the Welsh Government, and will follow the pattern established in earlier frameworks. Annual returns should be submitted by the deadline each year, and will be scrutinised for completeness by an

independent reviewer and a peer reference group. The independent reviewer will then prepare a formal written feedback report, covering all aspects of the framework, including all quality indicators and narrative elements, which will be delivered to each authority in the autumn, in time to address any issues raised as part of their formal service planning process. This feedback will be formally disseminated to library authority chief executives and also to council leaders, scrutiny officers or performance managers as well as to the managers of library services. The annual reports will be made public, via the CyMAL web pages.

The independent reviewer will prepare a summary overview each year, including an analysis of overall performances, and significant trends within those performances, against the entitlements and quality indicators. The highest, lowest and median performances in Wales will be calculated for each indicator. The overall analysis will be disseminated to all local authorities. At the end of the framework period a summary report will be published via the CyMAL web site.

The findings of these processes will be brought to the attention of the relevant Minister annually, highlighting achievements and trends and also problem areas, such as declining performances, incidences of non-compliance or recurring failure, together with a diagnosis of the causes wherever possible. Noteworthy improvements in performances and improving trends will also be drawn to the Minister's attention.

The core entitlements and quality indicators set out in this framework deal with aspects of the library service which are considered by the Welsh Government to be necessary – but are not necessarily sufficient – for the delivery of a comprehensive and efficient library service under the terms of Section 10 of the *Public Libraries Act 1964.*

As the ultimate sanction in the cases of failure to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service, the Welsh Government can institute an inquiry, issue a direction and transfer the library functions of a library authority to itself or to another authority/organisation. Sanctions would be invoked in cases where, for example, a significant number of the core entitlements and performance targets are not reached, there is a failure consistently to reach the average performance of comparable Welsh authorities with no evidence of improvement over time, or performance across the service as a whole is consistently falling year on year.

To date, it has not been necessary to implement any of these sanctions due to constructive discussion between the relevant parties.

Appendix: List of core entitlements and indicators