THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 16TH OCTOBER, 2025

REFERENCE FROM LIVE WELL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 9TH SEPTEMBER, 2025

"264   LIBRARIES ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25 (DLS) –

The Library and Cultural Services Manager attended the meeting in support of the report, the purpose of which was to provide an overview of how the Library Service operated, an evaluation of its key achievements and an evidence base for demonstrating the positive impact the Council's library services had made to Vale of Glamorgan communities, as well as how the service worked towards achieving Vale 2030.

The full Libraries Report was attached at Appendix 1 of the covering report, with the Welsh Public Libraries Standards Framework 6 at Appendix 2, the Welsh Public Libraries Standards Framework 7 at Appendix 3 and the Welsh Public Libraries Standards Annual Report at Appendix 4.

During the course of the debate, all Members commended the staff and volunteers involved in providing such a valuable and good quality service across all libraries in the Vale of Glamorgan area.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Morgan as to whether there was scope to re-introduce the use of mobile libraries, the Library and Cultural Services Manager advised that the service was continuingly adapting and open to new ways of working to the benefit of Vale of Glamorgan residents however, future projects would be subject to relevant funding and feasibility. Councillor Cave then noted how the use of mobile services would be beneficial to residents in the more rural areas of the Vale of Glamorgan and Councillor Thomas referred to the e-book borrowing scheme which was incredibly useful for individuals living in more rural areas of the Vale of Glamorgan, as well as individuals with limited mobility. Councillor Cave then raised a suggestion for Officers to consider for additional library resources to be included in the Cube equipment boxes already being made available across area.

Councillors Hennessy and Lloyd Selby then commented on how libraries had offered more warm spaces for vulnerable individuals and that it was wonderful to see how the service had developed into becoming a critical hub serving Vale of Glamorgan communities.

Councillor Hanks then sought further information in relation to the NHS blood pressure scheme expected to be rolled out within Vale of Glamorgan libraries. To which, the Library and Cultural Services Manager advised that in partnership with University Health Board colleagues, 180 blood pressure machines were due to be

rolled out across all libraries in the Vale of Glamorgan, to allow service users to access blood pressure machines more easily and readily to help them monitor their personal health. The scheme would be promoted over the upcoming winter months within the library warm spaces.

With the Committee's permission, Councillor Franks then advised of his involvement with Dinas Powys Community Library and echoed the comments of previous Members in relation to the excellent service provided however, also noted that the self-funding nature of libraries could be an overwhelming task especially in relation to ongoing maintenance.

The Chair then referred to the tablet loan scheme and enquired after the current engagement numbers for the scheme. In response, the Officer advised that both library staff and digital champions had recently been involved in refresher training in relation to the scheme, in order to help improve the levels of engagement that had seen a dip in recent months. It was the intention of the Library Service to showcase the tablet loan scheme further as well as the more recently introduced data SIM hire scheme.

The Leader of the Council echoed the positive comments received collectively from the Committee and noted how the current Library Service structure originated from decisions of the Council taken back in 2012/13. Therefore, it was wonderful to be able to look back, in hindsight, at how such forward thinking decisions had made a positive impact on local communities.

In conclusion, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources offered the Council's sincere thanks to all volunteers involved in dedicating thousands of hours and efforts to support fund raising events in order to make Library Services possible.

With no further comments or questions, the committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1)   T H A T the progress and outcomes, as set out in the Libraries Annual Report, be endorsed.

(2)   T H A T the report be referred to Cabinet along with the recommendation of the Live Well Scrutiny Committee as follows:

-     T H A T the Re-launch of the Tablet Loan Scheme, and recognition by Welsh Government as leaders in digital inclusion, be promoted as much as possible going forward.

(3)   T H A T any future iterations of the report be received by Committee Members via the For Information Scrutiny Reporting process.

Reasons for recommendations

(1)   Having regard to the contents of the report to brief Elected Members on the performance of the Libraries Service for the 2024/25 period.

(2)   To ensure that Cabinet has oversight of the performance of the Library Service, and its impact during the period, as well as supports the re-launch scheme to improve access to digital services for those without personal devices and help to reduce digital exclusion across Vale of Glamorgan communities.

(3)   To ensure that the Live Well Scrutiny Committee maintains effective oversight of library service delivery and its performance and impact over the reported period."

Attached as Appendix – Report to Live Well Scrutiny Committee: 9th September, 2025

Meeting of:	**Live Well Scrutiny Committee**
Date of Meeting:	**Tuesday, 09 September 2025**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Live Well Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Libraries Annual Report 2024/25
Purpose of Report:	To brief Elected Members on the performance of the Libraries Service for the period of 2024/25
Report Owner:	Elizabeth Jones, Director of Learning and Skills
Responsible Officer:	Jordan Forse – Libraries and Cultural Services Manager
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Councillor Rhiannon Birch, Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language
Policy Framework:	This report has been produced in line with the existing policy framework and budget.

Executive Summary:

- This report provides Elected Members with an overview of library services activity for the financial year 2024/25

- The purpose of the Libraries Annual Report is to provide an overview of how it operates, an evaluation of its key achievements and an evidence base for demonstrating the positive impact our library services has made to our communities. This annual report highlights how the Library services, as part of the Libraries and Cultural Services works towards Vale 2030.

- Full Libraries report attached in Appendix 1.

- Welsh Public Libraries Standards Framework 6 in Appendix 2.

- Welsh Public Libraries Standards Framework 7 in Appendix 3.

- Welsh Public Libraries Standards Annual Report, in Appendix 4.

Recommendations

1. T H A T the progress and outcomes, as set out in the Libraries Annual Report, be endorsed.

2. T H A T the report be referred to Cabinet along with any recommendations of the Live Well Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure that Live Well Scrutiny Committee maintains effective oversight of library service delivery and its performance and impact over the period.

2. To ensure that Cabinet has oversight of the performance of the Library Service and its impact during the period and takes into account any recommendations from the Live Well Scrutiny Committee.

1. Background

1.1 This is the first Libraries Annual Report the Live Well Committee has received.

1.2 This is the first report created by the Libraries and Cultural Services Manager, appointed in July 2024, a new role for the service.

1.3 This report provides Elected Members with an overview of Library Service activities for the period 2024/25.

1.4 The purpose of the report is to showcase the service's key achievements, how it operates and the impact library services has had on our communities. It reflects the service's progress in progressing and strengthening the Wellbeing Objectives set out in the Corporate Plan Vale 2030 and provides a strong evidence base for evaluating service delivery and for meeting requirements of the Welsh Public Library Standards.

1.5 As well as providing Elected Members with oversight of service delivery, the report has been written for a wider audience that includes residents, staff and partners.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

2.1 Strong Performance and Growth – Vale Libraries recorded 480,029 physical visits and 132,112 digital visits, reflecting year-on-year growth and increasing engagement across both in-person and online services.

2.2 Welsh Public Library Standards – Our 2024–25 submission identifies that Vale Libraries will achieve 13/13 Core Entitlements and 14/16 Quality Indicators, demonstrating strong performance against the national framework.

- The submission is currently being reviewed by Welsh Government, with the national report expected in November 2025. It should be noted that Welsh Government is also investigating an issue affecting reporting across all Local Authorities, most critically Quality Indicator 8 (Borrowing and Loan Figures).

2.3 Financial Position – The service continues to operate within significant economic pressures. Despite this, we secured nearly £80,000 Transforming Capital Grant for redevelopment at Penarth Library and maximised value through external funding, partnerships, and volunteer contributions. Ongoing focus remains on income generation, cost efficiency, and sustainability to support the long-term resilience of the service.

2.4 Key Achievements in 2024–25 – Highlights include:

- Re-launch of the Tablet Loan Scheme and recognition by Welsh Government as leaders in digital inclusion.

- Expansion of inclusive initiatives, including RNIB Communiplayers, sensory kits, and designation of all core libraries as Safe Spaces.

- National recognition for volunteers and staff through Libraries Connected and Community Libraries Network awards.

- A strong programme of events, cultural exhibitions, and community engagement, including *Changemakers* by Mohamed Amin MBE.

2.5 Community Impact – Libraries continue to provide vital Warm Welcome spaces, home library deliveries, children's learning sessions, and inclusive programmes with partners such as Vale Plus, helping reduce isolation, support families, and strengthen community connections.

2.6 Future Priorities (2025–26) –

- Developing a new Libraries and Culture Strategy aligned to Vale 2030.

- Delivering a Digital Sustainability Strategy to ensure efficient, green, and future-proofed services.

- Strengthening volunteering pathways and community-led delivery.

- Embedding inclusion, anti-racism, and environmental sustainability across all services.

- Expanding engagement with schools, families, and residents to ensure services remain accessible, resilient, and relevant.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

3.1 The work of Vale Libraries and Cultural Services has an intrinsic role in delivering the Council's Corporate Plan 2025–2030 and its Well-being Objectives of:

- Fairer and More Equal Vale: Libraries reduce digital exclusion (Tablet Loan Scheme, Digital Champions), support literacy for all ages, and provide inclusive services (sensory kits, RNIB devices, Safe Spaces).

- Greener and More Sustainable Vale: Delivering the Digital Sustainability project, LED lighting upgrades, and book reuse with Arts Factory contributes directly to Project Zero.

- Vibrant and Resilient Vale: Libraries act as cultural and community hubs, hosting exhibitions (Changemakers), author talks, job fairs, warm spaces, and volunteering opportunities.

- Proud and Ambitious Vale: Libraries showcase local heritage (Penarth redevelopment for Local History), support Welsh language resources, and raise the Vale's profile through national recognition and awards.

3.2 Libraries continue to provide welcoming, inclusive, and safe spaces where residents can connect, learn, and access support. They act as hubs for digital inclusion, cultural participation, and wellbeing activities, as well as creative spaces that foster innovation and lifelong learning.

3.3 The service evidences the Five Ways of Working as follows:

- Long-term: Investment in digital sustainability, energy efficiency, and infrastructure (e.g. Penarth Library redevelopment, Makerspace, digital exploration project) ensures services are future-proofed and responsive to changing community needs.

- Prevention: Libraries play a preventative role by tackling digital exclusion, supporting literacy from an early age, and providing safe, accessible spaces that help reduce isolation and support wellbeing.

- Integration: Our work is fully aligned to the Vale 2030 Well-being Objectives, the Future Generations Goals, and the Welsh Public Library Standards, ensuring that services support literacy, employment, inclusion, and cultural enrichment in an integrated way.

- Collaboration: We continue to collaborate with partners including schools, community organisations, Vale Plus, Arts Factory, and Welsh Government, to maximise opportunities for joint delivery, income generation, and cultural development.

- Involvement: Through volunteering programmes, community library partnerships, and ongoing public engagement, we involve residents directly in shaping and delivering services, ensuring they remain relevant and community-led.

3.4 Overall, libraries make a significant contribution to the 7 national Well-being Goals, particularly A More Equal Wales, A Healthier Wales, and A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language, while also supporting sustainability through Project Zero and green initiatives.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

4.1   There are no direct implications in relation to climate change arising from this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

<u>**Financial**</u>

5.1   The report sets out financial climate within with the Library Service is operating and provides oversight of the use of resources during the period. All aspects of work and activities highlighted within the Annual Report were delivered within existing budget and/or supported via grant funding and volunteer capacity. There are no direct financial considerations/implications as part of this Annual Report.

<u>**Employment**</u>

5.2   There are no direct workforce related implications associated with this report.

<u>**Legal (Including Equalities)**</u>

5.3   There are no direct legal or equality implications arising from this report. The report provides a retrospective overview of performance over the last reporting year, and as such there are no proposals contained within the report that would have a legal implication.

5.4   The Annual Report outlines how it has broadened access to vulnerable and socio-economically disadvantaged groups and in so doing provides an evidence base of how it is positively contributing to delivery of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and contributing to meeting the socio-economic duty as part of the Equality Act 2010.

6. Background Papers

- Welsh Public Libraries Standards Framework 6 (Relevant until end of reporting year 2024/25). Appendix 2 & 3

- Welsh Public Library Standards Welsh Government Annual Assessment Submission 2024/2026. Appendix 4

VALE OF GLAMORGAN LIBRARIES ANNUAL REPORT

'This is the best library I have seen in Wales'

Prif Weinidog Cymru
Elenud Morgan

24
25

Foreword

Jordan Forse
Libraries and Cultural Services Manager

As I reflect on the past year, I do so with both pride and perspective. This report marks not only a period of significant progress for the Vale of Glamorgan Libraries but also my first full year as Libraries and Cultural Services Manager. Stepping into the role has given me a clear view of the extraordinary dedication of our teams, volunteers, and partners, and the vital role our libraries play across our communities.

Over the last year, we have continued to provide spaces that support learning, digital inclusion, cultural engagement, and well-being. In a year shaped by economic pressures and changing user expectations, our libraries have continued to adapt, expanding digital services, exploring new ways to engage our communities, and ensuring that everyone has access to the opportunities libraries provide. We have strengthened our outreach, developed new partnerships, and adapted our services to meet changing needs—while remaining rooted in the values that make public libraries unique: free access, inclusivity, and community connection.

Our work directly supports the Vale Corporate Plan 2025–2030 and the ambitions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, ensuring that we contribute to a healthier, more resilient, and more vibrant Vale. From early years' literacy to digital skills for older residents, libraries continue to make a measurable difference in people's lives.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on innovation, sustainability, and accessibility. We will build on this year's achievements to ensure that our libraries—and the cultural opportunities they foster—continue to thrive and to respond to the needs of the communities we serve.
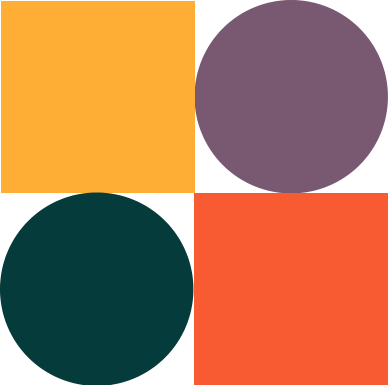
Vale Libraries:
at the Heart of Vale 2030

Libraries in the Vale of Glamorgan are a core part of delivering the Council's vision for "Strong Communities with a Bright Future" as set out in the Vale Corporate Plan 2025–2030.

They contribute directly to the five Well-being Objectives by:
- providing accessible cultural spaces and learning opportunities that strengthen community pride and cohesion;
- helping residents develop skills for life, education, and work, supporting digital inclusion and employability;
- creating opportunities for healthy lifestyles, volunteering, and social connection, reducing isolation and improving well-being;
- ensuring that services are sustainable, inclusive, and responsive to changing needs, including increased digital access and environmental awareness.

Libraries also play a crucial role in meeting the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act's seven goals. Our work supports:
- A Prosperous Wales – by improving literacy, digital skills, and lifelong learning.
- A Resilient Wales – through community-led programs that adapt to changing needs.
- A Healthier Wales – offering health information, safe social spaces, and well-being activities.
- A More Equal Wales – providing free access to resources, technology, and cultural opportunities.
- Cohesive Communities – serving as trusted local hubs where people connect.
- A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language – delivering bilingual services, events, and Welsh-language collections.
- A Globally Responsible Wales – promoting shared resources, recycling through borrowing, and efficient use of energy and materials.

Finally, the service continues to meet the Welsh Public Library Standards, ensuring that every resident has access to a "comprehensive and efficient" library service.
This includes:
- free membership, access to books, and digital resources;
- trained staff to support learning and inclusion;
- safe, welcoming spaces that are accessible to all;
- outreach and partnerships that extend library benefits into the wider community.

Vale Libraries:
Service Overview

Our library service provides a network of welcoming, accessible spaces that support learning, culture, digital inclusion, and community well-being across the Vale.

We Operate:
VOG Managed Libraries

Barry · Penarth · Cowbridge · Llantwit Major

We Support:
Community Managed Libraries

Dinas Powys · Wenvoe · Sully · Rhoose · St Athan

Together, they form a comprehensive service that ensures all residents regardless of age, background, or digital confidence, can access information, develop skills, and participate in cultural life.

Our Core Offer:

- **Books & Reading:** Wide-ranging collections in English and Welsh, including large print, audiobooks, and e-resources available both in and outside of our branches
- **Digital Access:** Public PCs, free Wi-Fi, printing, and tablet loans.
- **Events & Learning:** Regular story times, reading groups, cultural workshops, and digital skills sessions.
- **Community Support:** Safe spaces for study, social interaction, and direct access to information about local networks and support services.
- **Outreach Services:** Home library deliveries for those unable to visit, partnerships with schools, and specially developed programs for vulnerable groups.

Our People:

- A team of professional staff providing guidance, support, and expertise.
- Volunteers who enhance services and contribute to events, outreach, and community engagement.

Our Role in the Wider Cultural Service:

Libraries sit within the Council's wider Libraries and Cultural Services, which also include Penarth Pier Pavilion and Art Central Gallery.
Together, these services deliver cultural enrichment, promote well-being, and support the Vale's ambitions for a vibrant, connected community.

Performance Data

Our performance data reflects the scale of engagement with Vale of Glamorgan Libraries and demonstrates the essential role our service plays in supporting literacy, digital inclusion, cultural engagement, and community well-being. These figures highlight how residents use our libraries—both in person and online—and provide an evidence base for future planning and service improvement.

Library Visits

480,029 Physical visits to the Libraries

132,112 Digital visits to the Libraries

20% Increase in Digital Visits since last year, showcasing the rising popularity of digital and online tools in libraries.

Library Loans & Issues

433,278

- Adult book issues - **159,098**
- Children's book issues - **101,793**
- Audio-visual issues - **3,274**
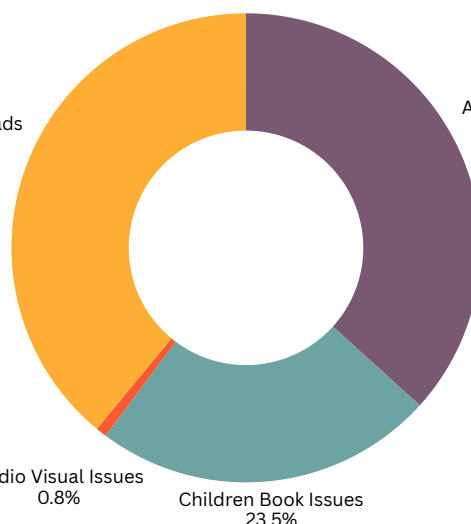- Electronic downloads - **169,113**

Of all our loans and issues 7,620 were Welsh language, equating to 2% of our total loans and issues.
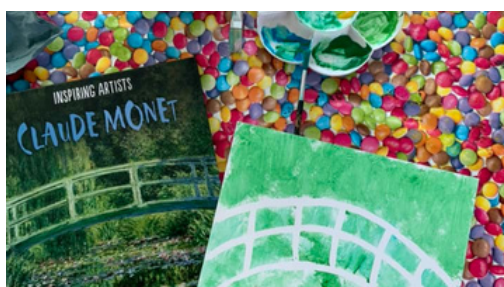
Electronic Downloads 39%

Adult Book Issues 36.7%

Audio Visual Issues 0.8%

Children Book Issues 23.5%

Events, Activities and Training

7802 Events across the service

73,185 attendances at events

9103 individuals trained or supported

Volunteering at Vale Libraries

Our volunteers are a cornerstone of our service. Their contribution not only adds measurable value to our service delivery but also underpins our wider strategic goal of building stronger, more resilient communities.

169 volunteers have supported nearly **23,000** hours across the Vale of Glamorgan library service

Annual Libraries Survey Results 2024

Over **800**

Adult's responses

45% visit our libraries once a week or more.

Over **80%** said our libraries made a difference to their life.

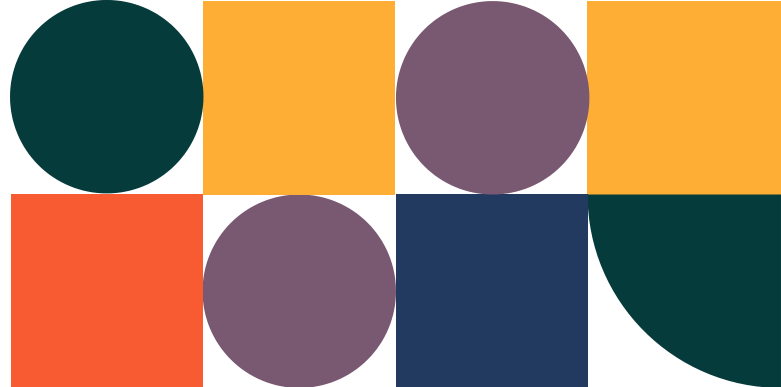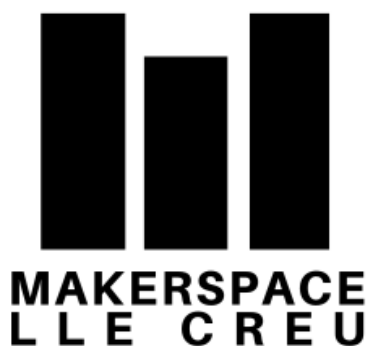**98%** stated libraries are safe, enjoyable and inclusive.

Over **55%** scored libraries a 10, with 10 being 'Very Good'.

Over **80%** state the library has helped improve reading.

Over **15%** used 'fun' in why they came to the library.

Over **200**

Children's responses

MAKERSPACE LLE CREU

The Vale Libraries Makerspace offers communities a place to explore creativity, develop new skills, and engage with technology in a hands-on way. Designed to inspire learning through making, it provides tools and resources for activities such as:

- **Creative writing workshops** – including sessions with established authors like Sophie Buchaillard, encouraging storytelling and literacy development.
- **Digital Arts and crafts projects** – promoting intergenerational learning and social connection.
- **STEM-based activities** – introducing coding, basic electronics, and design thinking.
- **Digital Exploration & Discovery** - support and operate clubs and classes for young people.


Over 2700 People Engaged

Consisting of creative and digital session attendances and practical digital project support. The Makerspace has become a hub for digital engagement and development, especially for artists, creatives, and young people. It supports Vale 2030's aim of creating opportunities for lifelong learning and helps residents gain confidence with both creative and digital tools.

Feedback

The Makerspace gave my child the chance to try something new. He loved creating and is already asking when we can come back." – Parent

'It was a fun and very informative course that fully met my expectations for a 2 hour sitting. And may I say (as a retired IT professional who has both attended and delivered very many training sessions and courses) that you did a really good job of delivering the session.' - Session Attendee.
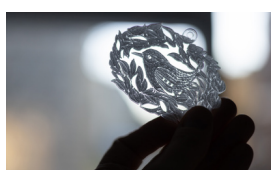
Find out more at:
**www.vogmakerspace.co.uk**

Key Highlights

This year we have expanded our role as a cultural, educational, and digital hub introducing new programs, strengthening partnerships, and investing in infrastructure that ensures libraries remain essential, accessible, and future-focused.

Building on this momentum, we've made meaningful strides in enhancing our services, deepening community engagement, and driving innovation across Vale Libraries. Through a diverse array of programs, strategic partnerships, and service improvements, we continue to align with the Vale Corporate Plan 2025–2030, placing resident well-being at the heart of everything we do.

Digital Inclusion & Innovation

- Re-launched the **Tablet Loan Scheme** to improve access to digital services for those without personal devices.
- Recognised by the **First Minister and Welsh Government** as a leading example of digitally innovative library spaces, helping reduce digital exclusion across our communities.
- Introduced a **new Library Management System**, improving user experience and operational efficiency.
- Expanded **Digital Champion volunteer support**, enabling more residents to develop essential online skills.
- Makerspace Development Officer led a practical shared learning session **Design – Create – Repeat: Makerspace Development in Public Libraries at Libraries Connected Innovation Gathering**, showcasing the innovative and sector changing approaches undertaken at the Vale of Glamorgan Libraries.
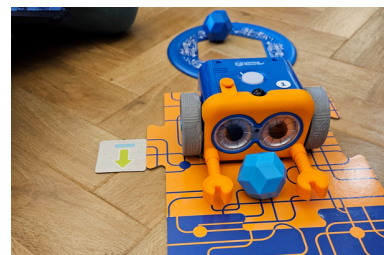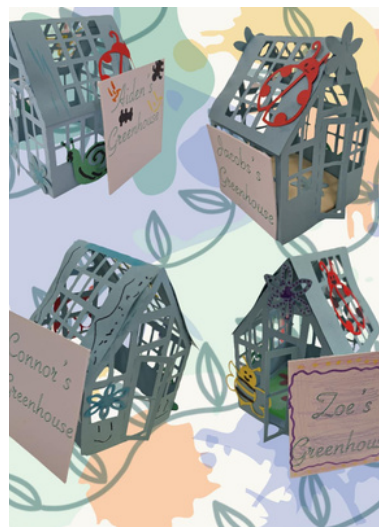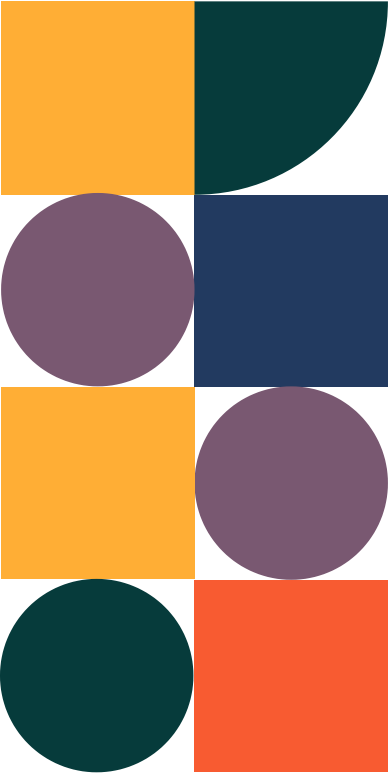
Infrastructure and Investment

- Secured **£80,000 Welsh Government Transforming Capital Grant** to redevelop Penarth Library's upper floor into a new **Local History and Student Study space**—strengthening opportunities for learning and cultural engagement.
- The Libraries and Cultural Services received **over £25,000 to support the Warm Welcome initiative**, supporting 11 safe and warm spaces, with over 6,000 people engaging with our offers.
- Identified all four core libraries as official **Safe Spaces**, providing reassurance and support for vulnerable residents.

Community Engagement and Events

- Delivered a vibrant cultural and educational programme. The programme included:
    - Author talks, creative writing workshops (including with Sophie Buchillard), and Thrive well-being events.
    - School and class visits, Vale Plus sessions, and Warm Welcome initiatives.
    - Job fairs, numerous exhibitions, and supported a Guinness World Record attempt.

Inclusion and Equality

This year we have expanded our work to ensure Vale Libraries remain accessible, welcoming, and representative for all members of our community. This included:

- Supporting people with visual impairments: Invested in **RNIB Communiplayer devices**, enabling residents to enjoy audio books independently. We host dedicated **reading groups and book clubs** and loan devices to those who need them.
- Creating **sensory-friendly spaces**: Introduced **on-site sensory** kits filled with calming aids to support neurodiverse visitors and those who may experience sensory overload.
- Championing **learning disability inclusion**: Delivered regular sessions with the **Vale Plus team**, combining craft, storytelling, and social interaction to build confidence and connection.
- **Celebrating cultural diversity** by hosting **Changemakers,** a major photography exhibition by Mohamed Amin, MBE.
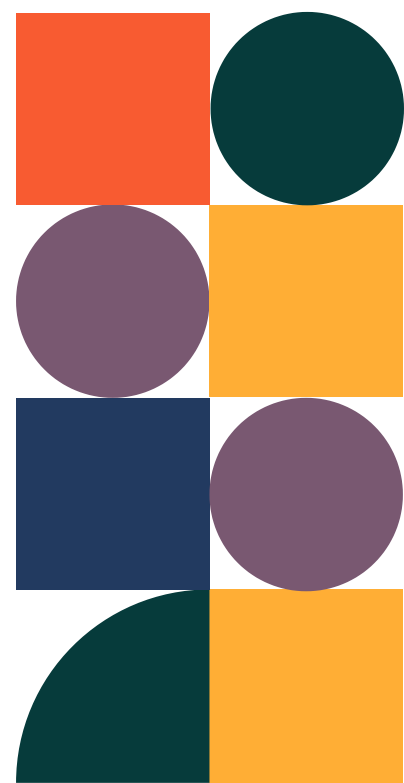
Environmental Sustainability

- **Greener technology:** We are reviewing and upgrading our digital tools to improve energy efficiency, reduce waste, and support both **Project Zero** and the Council **digital innovation** & **reshaping programme**.
- **Efficient lighting**: Surveys completed to replace older lighting with **low-energy LEDs**, reducing our carbon footprint.
- **Reusing withdrawn books:** In partnership with **Arts Factory**, removed stock is sold or donated, preventing landfill waste and supporting community projects for people from low-income and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Recognition and Staff Development

- **Volunteer Excellence:**
  - A volunteer shortlisted for the national Libraries Connected Children & Young People Award for her exceptional commitment.
  - A volunteer received recognition from the Community Libraries Network for her leadership in the Creative Libraries Project.
- **Professional Growth**: Three staff members are working towards **CILIP Chartership**.
- We have undertaken all staff training around our **Brilliant Basics**, and creating our own **bespoke training** for the service.
- Strengthened our team with the appointment of a **Digital Library Development Officer** to drive innovation and outreach.

Community Impact Case Studies

Beyond numbers and statistics, libraries change lives. This section highlights real stories that show how our services support individuals, foster inclusion, and strengthen communities across the Vale.

Reducing Digital Exclusion Tablet Loan Scheme

After borrowing a library tablet, a job seeker was able to complete online applications:
"I didn't have internet at home, but the tablet loan helped me apply for work and stay in touch with Universal Credit. I wouldn't have managed without it."

Inclusive Resources Sensory Kits

A parent of an autistic child described the value of our sensory kits at Llantwit Major:
"Having these tools available meant my son could stay longer in the library without feeling overwhelmed. It made our visit possible."
These resources were curated with our customers, with parents and carers supporting us in identifying useful resources for all of our branches.

Inclusive Resources – Inclusive collections

A parent wrote in to celebrate our inclusive collections embracing diversity in our communities
'We (me, my husband, and four children) especially love seeing the range of books that embrace diversity in our communities, whether that's about refugees and asylum seekers; the wonderful displays we see for LGBTQ+ people; seasonal, religious and non religious events; race; and different life experiences. Please keep buy, displaying, and promoting these wonderful books embracing all members of our community.'

Children Activities

Many of our events for families, have been kept low-cost or free to support new parents and families
"Library rhyme time is the only activity we can afford to do every week. It's free, welcoming, and helps my little boy learn.
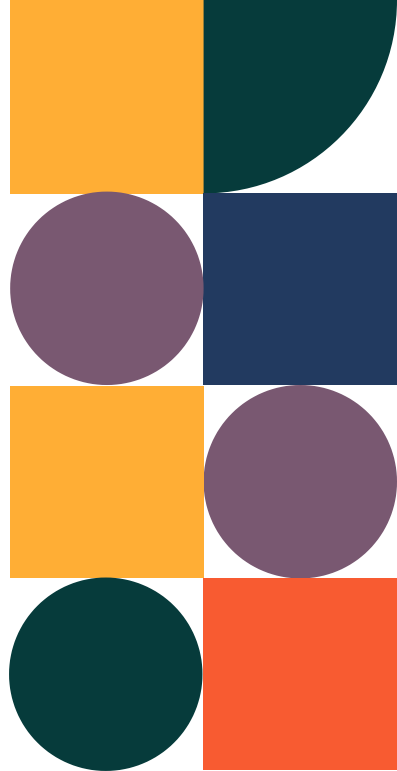
Warm Spaces

Warm Spaces have become a crucial part of our service, supporting those who are most isolated and often disengaged with activities outside of their home. It is also utilised by those who are able to access our other services on offer such as free wi-fi. Our Warm Spaces were well established for an older generation, but through careful planing, we can now support families.
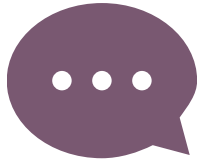
"I have three children, and the Warm Welcome space has been a lifesaver. We come after school, play board games, and spend time together without worrying about the heating at home. The kids look forward to it—it feels like our second living room."

"I bring my son to the library after school, and while he reads, I can use the free Wi-Fi to catch up on work and emails. It's made our afternoons easier and means I don't need to rush home. We stay, relax, and both get what we need."
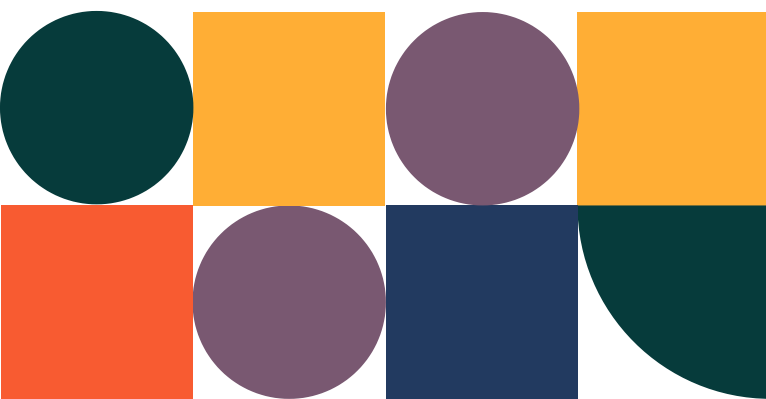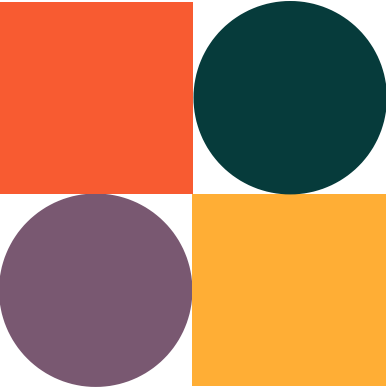
WPLS
Welsh Public Library Standards 2024-2025

We have now submitted our 24/25 submission for the Welsh Public Libraries Standards. This is the last submission we will make using Framework 6, and our next Submission will be made against Framework 7 – See Appendix 4.

This year has been a unique year with Local Authority submissions, with the All Wales Library Management System posing some challenges. Alike all local authorities in Wales, we have submit our self assessment, however a number of figures will be supported by Welsh Government as part of each authority Submission.

We are working with Welsh Government throughout this process, but final review and reports will be circulated in November, following which a report will be produced for your consideration and comment.

Our submission shows:

13/13
Core Entitlements

14/16
Quality Indicators

- Quality Indicator 8 is currently under review by Welsh Government, relating to our borrowing figures.
- Quality Indicator 13 is partially met, with us not meeting the target for FTE staffing.
- Quality 16 is not met, due to us not meeting the target set for library opening hours.

Our submission is currently in reviewed, and will most likely be ratified and confirmed in November 2025, when Welsh Government have undertaken assessments and panel review.

Public Libraries Supporting Sustainable and Connected Communities
The seventh quality framework of Welsh Public Libraries Standards
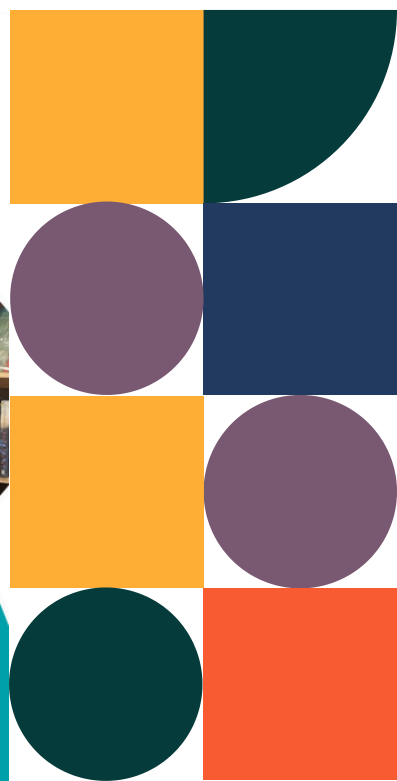
Finance and Resources

We continue to manage our finances and resources carefully to ensure library services remain sustainable and responsive to community needs, aligning with our reshaping strategies and the ambitions of Vale 2030. Rising costs and wider economic pressures have required us to focus on efficiency, secure external funding, and develop fair income-generating opportunities to protect our core offer.

As part of this, efficiency savings are attributed to the library service and its operations, and we continually review how we deliver services and make the best use of resources. Alongside this, there is a clear need to generate income from non-statutory elements and new services—including room hire, events, and cultural programmes. While this brings opportunities for innovation and stronger community partnerships, it also presents challenges in balancing financial sustainability with our statutory duties and core community priorities.

By prioritising value for money, efficiency, and responsible allocation, we aim to maintain high-quality services while planning for future challenges. Our staff remain central to this work, ensuring services adapt and evolve despite financial constraints.

Expenditure on Staff:	**£1,347,682**
Total Materials Expenditure:	**£153,190.25**
Expenditure on maintenance, repair & replacement of equipment & buildings :	**£87,555.20**
Total Other Operational Costs:	**£129,881.91**
Total Revenue Expenditure:	**£1,718,309.36**
Total Income Generated: (Revenue Only)	**£43,884.43**
Total Grant Funding:	**£38,129.50**
Total Revenue Budget:	**£1,761,625.00**
Total Capital Expenditure:	**£0**

36.6
Number of Staff FTEs

15
Number of Staff with Library or Cognate Qualifications

1670
Hours of Staff time in Training / CPD

169
Total active volunteers
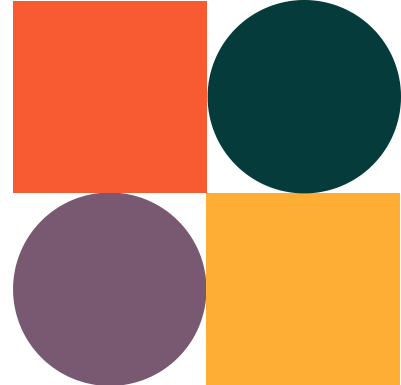
Looking Forward &
This Year's Priorities

As we reflect on a year of progress, our focus now turns to the future. Over the next twelve months, Libraries and Cultural Services will continue to deliver against the Vale of Glamorgan's Corporate Plan 2025–2030 and our Directorate's Learning and Skills priorities, ensuring that our services remain sustainable, inclusive, and impactful.
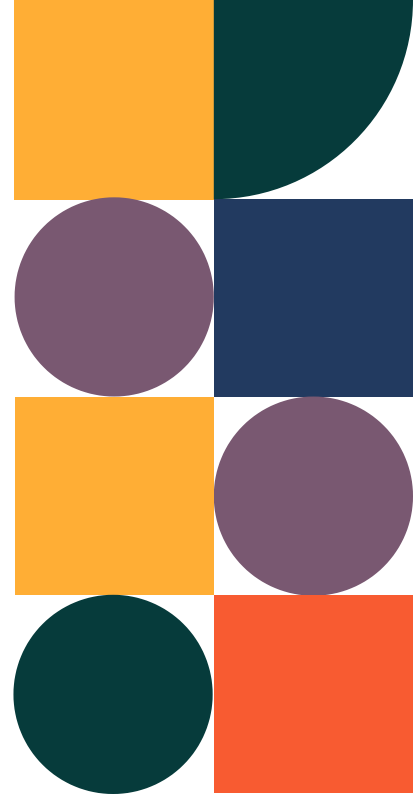
Our priorities for 2025/26:

Boost Literacy & Learning – Expand work with schools and families to inspire reading and creativity.
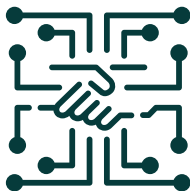
Drive Digital Innovation – Deliver a new Digital Sustainability Strategy and improve access to technology.

Empower Communities – Strengthen volunteering and co-create and design services with communities and residents at the heart.

Champion Inclusion – Embed anti-racist and inclusive practices across all libraries and cultural programmes.

Go Greener – Support Project Zero with energy-efficient upgrades and sustainable stock management.

Listen & Respond – Launch new engagement tools to ensure our communities help shape the future of services.
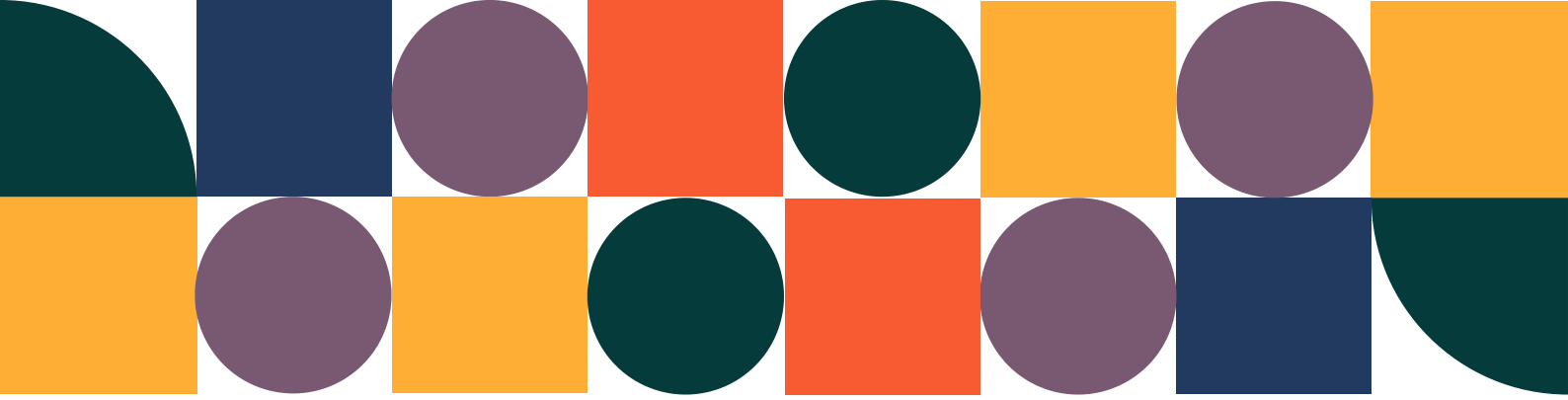
Visit your local library today!

www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/libraries

**Vale of Glamorgan Council
Libraries and Cultural Services**

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Connected and Ambitious Libraries:

The sixth quality framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020

Contents

Foreword

Public libraries connect people, information and culture. The Welsh Government and local authorities have an established record of working well together to achieve ambitious goals for our library services. I am delighted to be working collaboratively with local authorities on a new framework of Welsh Public Library Standards, to ensure that we continue to provide the citizens of Wales with high quality public library services.

As library users know, libraries provide everyone with a wealth of information, resources, activities and cultural opportunities. They are places of ambition and learning where people can gain new skills, leading to job success and prosperity; they encourage people to be active and healthy through a range of health information services and partnerships; and they connect and unite people, not only with each other and local communities, but also with culture and the world beyond Wales. They also make a valuable contribution to the seven goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

All parts of the public sector are facing considerable financial pressure, including public library services. The expectations of citizens, for a high quality library service, need to be balanced with what is practical and possible to deliver, alongside the statutory requirement to provide a "comprehensive and efficient" service as specified in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

The Welsh Public Library Standards framework provides a mechanism to enable service providers to plan their provision, and for the public to know what they can expect from their library service. The framework also enables me to assess provision and performance of Welsh public library services as part of my statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

I am pleased that this new framework increases the emphasis on outcome and impact measures to help identify the wider benefits of using the library service. In conjunction with promoting the Standards to make our library services as sustainable and efficient as possible, further consideration will also be given to the regional consortia model which was outlined in the Expert Review of Public Libraries and the Scoping a New Future for Welsh Public Libraries report.

I welcome this new framework of the Standards and the opportunities that it provides to continue the positive partnership between the Welsh Government and local authorities to continue to deliver an outstanding connected and ambitious public library service in Wales.

Ken Skates, AM

Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

1. Introduction

"**Freedom, Prosperity and the Development of society and individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.**

"**The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.**"[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 priority areas such as prosperity, resilience, equality, cohesive communities, culture, learning 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 has a key role in social inclusion. It 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 – indeed, 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 local government. 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 sixth framework of Welsh public library standards builds on the developments in the fifth framework. It comprises 12 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.

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

Other core entitlements and quality indicators are concerned with the effective management of services, which underpins the effective delivery of the outcomes and impacts. All can be related to one or more of the seven goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act; details are given in Section 5.

1.3. Fulfilling the statutory duty

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964[2] makes it a duty of the relevant Welsh Ministers (currently the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure) **"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".**

[2] Available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75/contents

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, 2011-14 and 2014-17. 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 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 fulfilling 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. Community managed libraries

Since about 2014 the number of independent and semi-independent libraries in Wales, frequently referred to as community managed libraries, has increased. Guidance issued by the Welsh Government in 2015 on community managed libraries has now been updated and is included here, at Section 6, rather than in a separate document, as previously. It includes criteria to be fulfilled in order that a community managed library might be included in the library service's annual return as part of the statutory service, and details of the data to be provided on all community managed libraries.

1.5. The sixth quality framework

The aims of this sixth framework of Welsh Public Library Standards are to:

- enable the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure 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 programme for government[3], 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.

[3] Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021, available at http://gov.wales/docs/strategies/160920-taking-wales-forward-en.pdf

The framework has been based largely on the fifth framework, updated to take account of the changed local authority environment within which library services must work, and continues to provide opportunities for libraries to deliver services in innovative ways and the flexibility to make best use of the resources available to them. It will come into operation on 1st April 2017, and libraries will make their first report against its requirements in the summer of 2018. This document describes the new framework in detail.

Section 2 lists the 12 core entitlements, and self-assessment prompts will be provided in the guidance for library staff.

Section 3 describes the 16 quality indicators, which 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 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.

Most indicators 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.

4 See http://gov.wales/topics/culture-tourism-sport/ museums-archives-libraries/?lang=en for details

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 guidance on 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.

Section 4 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 quality indicators are met in full and in part, and the narrative providing

evidence of the impact of the service on individuals and the community.

Library provision spans a range of Welsh Government outcomes, offering a range of services which often support two or more of the outcomes simultaneously. The Well-being of Future Generations Act[5] lists seven broad areas of priority, and **Section 5** of this framework document aligns the core entitlements and quality indicators with these areas, giving examples of the contribution the library service makes.

[5] See http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/ people/future-generations-act/?lang=en for details

2. Core entitlements

A set of core library entitlements for Welsh citizens was first incorporated into Making a Difference, the fifth quality framework of Welsh Public Library Standards. These entitlements have been revised and refocused for this sixth framework, to enable the public to know what they can expect from their public library service.

These entitlements are initially self-assessed by each authority. A number of questions are specified in the Guidance document, which the authority is required to take into account when making their self-assessment. It is not necessary to be able to answer every question positively to meet the core entitlement, but justification for the assessment, which could refer to other relevant provision, should be provided in the return. The self-assessment will be moderated by MALD, the Independent Adviser, and a small Reference Group of senior librarians to ensure consistency between authorities.

WPLSCE 1 Libraries in Wales will be free to join, and open to all.

WPLSCE 2 Libraries in Wales will ensure friendly, knowledgeable and qualified staff are on hand to help.

WPLSCE 3 Libraries in Wales will provide access to a range of services, activities and high quality resources in a range of formats to support lifelong learning, personal well-being and development, community participation, and culture and recreation.

WPLSCE 4 Libraries in Wales will provide appropriate services, facilities and information resources for individuals and groups with special requirements.

WPLSCE 5 Libraries in Wales will provide appropriate safe, attractive and accessible physical spaces with suitable staffed opening hours.

WPLSCE 6 Libraries in Wales will lend books for free, and deliver free access to information, including online information resources available 24 hours a day.

WPLSCE 7 Libraries in Wales will provide free use of the Internet and computers, including Wi-Fi.

WPLSCE 8 Libraries in Wales will provide access to services, cultural activities and high quality resources in the Welsh language.

WPLSCE 9 Libraries in Wales will work in partnership to share catalogues and facilitate access to the resources of all Welsh libraries.

WPLSCE 10 Libraries in Wales will work with a range of partners to promote and deliver services to new and diverse audiences, enabling more people to benefit from those services.

WPLSCE 11 Libraries in Wales will regularly consult users to gather their views on the service and information about their changing needs.

WPLSCE 12 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.

3. Quality indicators

The quality indicators in this sixth framework build on the previous framework, and include additional measures covering the outcomes and impact of the library service. They fall into two broad types; those which are provided for monitoring and benchmarking performance over time and between authorities, and those which have specific targets.

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 young people 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 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. Respondents answering 'not applicable' or 'don't know' should be excluded from the calculation.

Authorities may conduct more frequent 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 IT facilities provided in the library they use are 'very good' or 'good';

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

e) 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 more frequent 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, and 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.

Training programmes may be developed and delivered with appropriate partners outside the library service;

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

d) 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 Support for health and well-being

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

   i.   Book Prescription Wales scheme

   ii. Better with Books scheme

iii. Designated health and well-being collection

iv. Information about healthier lifestyles and healthy behaviours - leaflets, books etc

v. Signposting to health and well-being services

b) Authorities will report the number of static service points open for 10 hours per week or more in which the following services are available on a regular basis

i. Shared Reading groups (reading aloud together)

ii. Book clubs (discussion of chosen book)

iii. Macmillan cancer or other health information partnerships

iv. Dementia Friendly services

v. Mental health awareness activities

WPLSQI 5 User training

This indicator assesses the extent to which sessions offered match local need, and the impact of those sessions for the participants. Reader development sessions; literacy, numeracy, information and digital skills sessions; ICT sessions, etc., should all be included. Include 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. Include sessions also reported under WPLSQI 4.

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;

a) 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.

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. Include events delivered by partner organisations in collaboration with the library service.

b) Libraries shall ensure that events or activities for those who have special requirements are offered in all static service points open for 10 hours per week or more. The events or activities may be promoted specifically for an intended group, or open to all, but with a clear target group in mind.

Special requirements can include physical and health impairment, economic disadvantage (e.g. long-term unemployed), cultural difference (e.g. non-native speakers, new arrivals), educational background, or other circumstances that require special library services. Authorities should provide specific examples of such events and list joint working with relevant social inclusion organisations and partners.

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 ideally be derived from a simple feedback form offered to all attendees, but may be based on sessions during one or more sample periods.

Part c) of the indicator may be derived by sampling. Authorities will be provided with guidance to ensure consistency of reporting.

WPLSQI 6 User attendances at library events

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.

WPLSQI 7 Location of service points

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.

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

Population density	% of households	Distance from library
20 or more persons per hectare	At least 95%	Within 2 miles of a static service point
More than 1 but fewer than 20 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 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

WPLSQI 8 Library use

Seven 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.

d) the total number of library members

e) the total number of book issues (adult and children separate)

f) the total number of audio-visual issues

g) the total number of electronic downloads

The data used should be those as reported to CIPFA for the public library actuals return.

WPLSQI 9 Up-to-date and appropriate reading material

This and the next indicator are designed to ensure adequate investment and an appropriate balance of resources across various sections of the community.

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.

Authorities should include their contribution to consortium purchases where relevant.

b) Library authorities will report

• The percentage of the material budget spent on resources for children.

WPLSQI 10 Welsh language resources

This indicator is designed to ensure materials in Welsh are provided in line with local requirements and the socio-demographic characteristics of the population.

a) Authorities should achieve:

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

Authorities will also report:

b) Total issues of resources in the Welsh language per 1,000 Welsh speaking resident population.

WPLSQI 11 Online access

a) Every static library should provide

    i. A minimum of one device giving public access to the Internet and networked digital content. Computers, laptops, tablets, and other mobile devices are all included.

    ii. Wi-Fi access for users to bring their own laptops or mobile devices.

b) Authorities will report the total number of devices giving public access to the Internet

    i. Available in static libraries, per 10,000 resident population

    ii. Available in mobile libraries.

Computers, laptops, tablets, and other mobile devices are all included.

c) Authorities will report the percentage of available time allocated for use of public access ICT equipment actually taken up by users. 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 should achieve:

a) A minimum of 64% of requests for material to be notified to the user as being available within 7 calendar days of the request being made;

b) A minimum of 79% of requests for material to be 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.

WPLSQI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications

    i. 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. Include only those staff paid from the library service budget.

    ii. 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.

Include only those staff paid from the library service budget.

iii.	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:

a)	where this post sits within the local authority management structure;

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

c)	where that post sits within the local authority management structure.

iv.	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 training and development relevant to their role and responsibilities, and to improve their skills.

v.	Library authorities may offer members of the community the opportunity to volunteer, to support additional services in libraries managed and run by the library authority. 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 staff working alongside the volunteers in the libraries, for some of the time.

Library authorities that use volunteers to deliver additional services 'in house' (as opposed to community managed libraries) 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[6].

Authorities will report:

a) the total number of volunteers across the year;

b) the total number of volunteer hours during the year;

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

Note that in order to meet this indicator in part, the service must achieve at least three of the five elements, including (iii), relating to the qualifications of the operational manager.

WPLSQI 14 Operational expenditure

In the current economic climate it is not thought appropriate to set a target for overall 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;

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

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

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

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 expenditure on library staff and materials, net of generated income, 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. The ratio will be automatically calculated from data provided for other indicators.

WPLSQI 16 Opening hours

i. Welsh public libraries should achieve a level of aggregate staffed (paid staff and/or volunteers) opening hours across all service points administered by the authority of no less than 120 hours per annum per 1,000 resident population.

ii. Authorities will report the total number of unstaffed opening hours across all service points administered by the authority per 1,000 resident population.

iii. This part of the indicator is concerned with the adequacy of the library service's maintenance programme and staffing strategy. Authorities will report:

a) 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;

b) 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.

4. 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 fulfilling their duties under the 1964 Act, and in assessing the efficiency of the manner of delivery of library services in Wales.

4.1. 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. For all entitlements which are not fully met, the return should also include a strategy 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 not only the service provided and the use made of that service, but also the outcomes for the individuals or members of group as a consequence. 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, including any relevant legislative frameworks. 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.

A short description of the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year will be included. 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.

4.2. Monitoring and assessment procedures

The process of monitoring and assessing will be led by MALD: 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 MALD 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 where this is possible. The overall analysis will be disseminated to all local authorities, usually during an annual seminar. At the end of the framework period a summary report will be published via the MALD 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 and Museums 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.

5. The Well-being of Future Generations Act

Libraries have a clear contribution to make to the seven goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

5.1. A prosperous Wales

Development of a skilled and well-educated population is a fundamental aspect of public libraries' activity. Examples of how this is achieved include providing access to a world of lifelong learning through relevant book stock and online information, and the provision of free IT equipment, broadband and Wi-Fi , which supports education, small businesses and job seeking. Core entitlements 2, 3, 6 and 7, and quality indicators 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 15 all monitor aspects of public libraries' contribution to this goal.

5.2. A resilient Wales

Social and economic resilience is supported by encouraging and promoting individual personal development, enabling people and society to adapt to changing circumstances.

Regular consultation with users ensures that the services themselves are resilient and able to adapt to changing needs. Two core entitlements are particularly pertinent here, 3 and 11, together with quality indicators 4, 11 and 14. Examples of how this is achieved in practice include support for greater community involvement in running library services, and book stock that encourages a more resilient lifestyle with access to IT so people can self-educate about the issues.

5.3. A healthier Wales

Physical and mental well-being is a key offer of public libraries, not only by providing information on which to base informed choices for the benefit of health in the future but also designated collections and schemes such as Book Prescription Wales titles loaned through libraries, which directly benefit individuals with health concerns. Relevant core entitlements for this goal are 3 and 4; quality indicators 1, 4, and 6 monitor activity.

5.4. A more equal Wales

Libraries are welcoming, inclusive and offer pro-active outreach and public engagement activities in deprived and socially excluded communities. Support for government initiatives such as Universal Jobmatch and Universal Credit enable those without IT skills or facilities to fulfil their potential. Core entitlements 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7, and quality indicators 3, 4, 11, 13 and 14, all monitor public libraries' contribution to this goal.

5.5. A Wales of cohesive communities

Libraries offer a safe neutral place within the community which provides opportunities for people to connect with each other. The one-stop-shop or hub model being developed in many areas further connects local communities with the services they need. Other examples include support for community involvement through the provision of information about the local area. Core entitlements 1, 3 and 5, and quality indicators 1, 6, 13 and 16 monitor aspects of public libraries' contribution to this goal.

5.6. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

With explicit provision in the current framework covering the provision of material in the Welsh language, libraries are well placed to contribute in this area. They promote and protect Welsh culture and language, and encourage participation in the arts and recreation through the availability of a good range of stock in Welsh, and a host of cultural events and activities. Core entitlements include 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 10, and quality indicators 2, 6, 8, 9 and particularly 10 are all relevant here.

5.7. A globally responsible Wales

A commitment to make the most efficient use of resources is embodied in the quality indicators. MALD works with the British Standards Institute and International Standards Organisation in developing and using quality indicators for libraries which conform to ISO 11620.

Further, the borrowing of books is a great recycling tool, reducing the impact on the environment. Libraries in Wales work together in book purchasing consortia, digital/e-book consortia and the All-Wales Library Management System. Core entitlement 12 is directly related to global good practice, while quality indictors 14 and 15 are related to the balance and efficiency of service provision.

6. Community managed libraries

Since about 2014 there has been a growing number of independent and semi-independent libraries in Wales, frequently referred to as community managed libraries. Guidance issued by the Welsh Government in 2015 on community managed libraries has now been updated and is included here rather than in a separate document, as previously.

Welsh Government guidance on community managed libraries recommends that for such libraries to be considered as part of the authority's statutory provision, they must meet the core entitlements contained within the Standards framework. For the purposes of the sixth framework of public library standards, community managed libraries which receive ongoing support from the local authority library service in terms of shared resources, qualified staff and a 'seamless' customer experience can be considered for inclusion in the return.

For example, libraries conforming to the following models may be eligible:

- Elements of resources and staff provided or co-ordinated by the local library service, with the building in community ownership and a contribution towards staffing from the community council with the staff employed by the library service.

- Limited resources and regular staffing (defined hours) provided by the local library service, the building in community ownership and assistance from volunteers.

Models involving the transfer of the building and resources to the community and entirely run by volunteers with minimal (or no) ongoing assistance from the local library service in managing the facility are not eligible for inclusion.

It is appreciated that different models may exist within a single authority, so that some community managed libraries may be included in the returns, while others may not. For full consideration of whether community managed libraries can be included in the statutory service, the following minimum criteria should be met, along with meeting all the core entitlements:

- A service level agreement with the local authority public library service to include resource sharing activities such as inter-library loans;

- Paid staff, whether funded by the local authority library service or from other sources (e.g. community councils) available for 50% of the library opening hours specified in the service level agreement;

- The provision of a range of material, e.g. books, multimedia/audio-visual, Internet access and staff to support access to and utilisation of these resources;

- Authority support for the ICT facilities, which should be free at the point of use;

- Full access to and use of the local authority's library catalogue including the ability to place reservations, for members of the public. Paid staff would be expected to have access to the LMS.

The purpose of these criteria is to ensure that the public receives a high quality, comprehensive and efficient public library service that is deemed worthy of the statutory service. It is possible for a community managed library to achieve all the proposed criteria outlined above, and if they meet these and the core entitlements, they could be considered for inclusion as part of the local authority's statutory provision of public library services.

As identified above, this is achievable by entering a partnership with their local authority public library service and/or working with community councils and groups.

6.1. Reporting and data collection

If community managed libraries are considered by the authority to be part of the statutory service and are included in the annual return, the guidance document on what data to gather and how applies to all the libraries. The same rigour should be used to gather data in community managed libraries as in other libraries.

In addition, the Welsh Government wishes to monitor the support and resources provided to community managed libraries within the authority, and the extent to which they have been included in the indicators in this framework.

All authorities will therefore be asked to provide the following information, as part of the contextual data in the return:

a) The number of community managed libraries for which the authority provides

   i.   Paid staff

   ii.   Full access to and use of the local authority's library catalogue for members of the public

   iii.   Support for the ICT facilities

   iv.   Shared and rotated stock services

   v.   A service level agreement including resource sharing activities such as inter-library loans

b) The total annual aggregate opening hours of community managed libraries within the authority.

c) The total number of staff hours per annum dedicated to supporting community managed libraries. Include front-line staffing and management support and administration time.

Separate figures for the above will be sought for those community managed libraries included in the return (i.e. those meeting all five bullet points above), and those not included, where available.

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Page 5: Top: Llanelli Library, Middle: Rhyl Library, Bottom: Torfaen Libraries

Page 7: Top: Computer training group, Prestatyn Library, Bottom: Cwmbran Library

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Page 11: Shared reading group at Ty Cae Nant Residential Home, Torfaen Libraries

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Public Libraries Supporting Sustainable and Connected Communities

The seventh quality framework of Welsh Public Libraries Standards

Contents

Ministerial Foreword

"

Public libraries are at the heart of our local communities in Wales. They are a precious resource providing everyone with free access to books and information in physical and increasingly in digital format, but they are also much more than this. They provide a safe and welcoming warm space for people of all ages to meet and participate in social activities, to access technology and, where needed, to receive support in navigating an increasingly digital world.

"

Jack Sargeant
Minister for Culture,
Skills and Social Partnership

Public libraries are an integral part of our social infrastructure and make a valuable contribution to the lives of individuals and communities. Becoming a library member can help to ease social isolation and loneliness, library services support health and well-being by guiding people to reliable, authentic sources of information and through partnerships with health service providers. They are often the first cultural activity that children experience and as children develop, libraries support their literacy skills, reading, and learning, and open the world up for them.

The Welsh Government and local authorities have a strong record of working together to deliver improvements to library services for the benefit of users. I am pleased that the Welsh Government and local authorities have been able to work together and collaborate to develop this new framework of standards, which ensures that libraries will continue to develop and to provide a high-quality service to their communities.

I am conscious that the provision of a library service needs to be balanced alongside other demands. Each local authority must consider carefully what is practical and possible to deliver, but always bear in mind the statutory requirement to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient service' as required by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The Welsh Public Library Standards provide the framework for the assessment of the level of provision. They are also a mechanism to enable planning and to support the improvement of library services, which is a requirement of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

This new framework provides more contextual information, which will enable Welsh Government to evaluate how services are developing over time and illustrate the breadth of the services on offer.

There is a stronger focus on targets that relate to the core aspects of the library service, namely resources, staff, place, and availability which are integral to the statutory requirements of a "comprehensive and efficient" service. There will also be an increased emphasis on the impact that libraries have on their communities.

I welcome this new framework of the Standards and the opportunities it provides to continue the positive partnership between Welsh Government and local authorities to deliver outstanding public library services for Wales.

Jack Sargeant
Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership

1. Introduction

> " Libraries can – and do – play a key role in tackling current societal issues be that adult literacy, digital isolation or early years learning. They can help people into employment, improve health and wellbeing and above all provide a safe, non-judgmental space for people of all ages, no matter who they are or where they are from.
>
> They are, in short, a vital part of our social infrastructure which is why we must be vigilant in protecting them for future generations.[1] "
>
> CILIP,
> Come rain or shine

1.1 The benefits of using public libraries

Using public libraries benefits both individuals and communities. They contribute to mental health and wellbeing, social inclusivity, and community cohesion. As well as supporting literacy and reading for pleasure, providing access to training, and learning support for individuals, libraries contribute to society in many ways such as:

— addressing digital exclusion by providing access to Wi-Fi, IT equipment and digital skills training to support digital inclusion

— the provision of warm, welcoming, and inclusive spaces

— access to health and wellbeing resources and activities

— providing access to cultural and creative opportunities in local communities

— supporting the circular economy through the loan of items through initiatives like library of things

— informing their communities on the climate challenge to improve Wales' response to the climate emergency; and

— providing confidential meeting spaces for other organisations e.g. banks and health services to meet with users.

Participation in library-led reading programmes such as the Summer Reading Challenge can assist with improving children's literacy levels, confidence and foster an ongoing love of reading. Research has shown that children who read regularly score higher in maths, vocabulary, and spelling tests.[2]

Public libraries form part of our social infrastructure. They have a key role in social inclusion, tackling poverty and alleviating loneliness. This can be through activities that encourage social interaction and communal learning or simply by providing an opportunity to interact with library staff and customers in an environment that demands nothing in return. The library may be the only place in the community where users can spend time in a safe, welcoming, non-judgmental, and neutral environment.

Increasingly public libraries are co-locating with other local authority services and using a community hub model. This allows their users to access or be directed to other services to support job seeking, accessing benefits, referrals to social services and health professionals at the same time as a visit to the library.

1.2 What this means for the people of Wales

Framework 7 of the Welsh Public Library Standards builds on the developments in the sixth framework. It comprises 13 Core Entitlements and five Quality Indicators with targets and six Quality Indicators without targets 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 to the right shows the indicators in this framework which are most directly related to some of the key benefits of using public libraries, as identified by Libraries Connected's Universal Library Offer framework.[3] Libraries which perform well on these indicators will be engaging appropriately with their customers to make a difference to their lives.

Other Core Entitlements and Quality Indicators are concerned with the management of services, which underpins the effective delivery of the outcomes and impacts. All can be related to one or more of the seven goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Improve digital access and literacy
Core Entitlements: 1, 2, 6, 7, 13
Quality Indicators: A2, A3, A4, B3, B5

Helping everyone achieve their full potential
Core Entitlements: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13
Quality Indicators: A1, A2, A3, B1, B3, B5

Healthier and happier lives
Core Entitlements: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8
Quality Indicators: A2, A3, B1, B4

Cultural and creative enrichment
Core Entitlements: 1, 2, 6, 8, 9
Quality Indicators: A1, A2, A3, A5

Greater prosperity
Core Entitlements: 1, 2, 11
Quality Indicators: A2, A3, B5

Increased reading and literacy
Core Entitlements: 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9
Quality Indicators: A1, A2, A3, A5

Stronger and more resilient communities
Core Entitlements: 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10
Quality Indicators: A2, A3, B1, B4

1.3 Fulfilling the statutory duty

The *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964*[4] (hereafter the Act) makes it a duty of the relevant Welsh Ministers (at the time of publication, the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership)

"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 a cycle of Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS, or the Standards). Framework 7 will cover the period 2025-2028. 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 a 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. For example, due to the Standards, there have been significant improvements in service areas such as Welsh language provision, and the provision of ICT services which have now become a core entitlement rather than a target for development.

Local authorities 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 local authorities in Wales are fulfilling their duties under the 1964 Act. They will also assess the comprehensiveness and efficiency, in terms of the manner of delivery, of library services in Wales.

1.4 Community-managed libraries

Guidance issued by the Welsh Government in 2015 on community managed libraries was updated for Framework 6 and is included here, at Section 6. It includes criteria to be fulfilled in order that a community managed library might be included in the library service's annual return as part of the statutory service, and details of the data to be provided on all community managed libraries.

1.5 The seventh quality framework

The aims of this seventh framework of Welsh Public Library Standards are to:

— enable the relevant Welsh Government Minister 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 and to "promote the improvement" of library services

— provide a means of robust assessment of the performance of public library services

— demonstrate clear links to Welsh Government and local authority priorities

— collect data that is relevant and useful to all local authority library services in Wales through the annual reporting activity

— be transparent, easily understood and accepted by all stakeholders

— incorporate outcome measures to show the benefits of using libraries

— utilise qualitative data to identify the impact of public library services on their communities

— act as a driver for improvements to library services and, as a result, their local communities; and

— minimise the burden of data collection on local authorities.

This new framework has been designed to take account of changes in the local authority environment within which library authorities work, provides opportunities for libraries to deliver services in innovative ways and the flexibility to make best use of the resources available to them. It will come into operation on 1 April 2025, and libraries will make their first report against its requirements in the summer of 2026. This document describes the new framework in detail.

Section 3 lists the 13 **Core Entitlements,** and the questions which authorities should consider when making their assessment against these.

Section 4 describes the 11 **Quality Indicators,** which 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 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; and

— **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.

Most indicators will be reported every year; some may be reported once in the three-year period, for example, where user survey data is 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.

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 guidance on 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.[5] 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.

Section 5 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 assessed on all the aspects of the framework, including compliance with the Core Entitlements, ranking on the Quality Indicators, how many Quality Indicators are met in full and in part, and the narrative providing evidence of the impact of the service on individuals and the community.

Library provision spans a range of Welsh Government outcomes, offering a range of services which often support two or more of the outcomes simultaneously. *The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act*[6] lists seven broad areas of priority, and the last section of this framework identifies this and the other relevant strategies that the framework aligns with. More detailed guidance is provided in the Definitions and Guidance document to help local authorities.

2. Context

The form in which library services are delivered across Wales varies both between and within authorities. This trend looks set to continue. As a result, it is important to collect contextual data about each service in order to help the Independent Assessor and Welsh Government situate the data from the returns as well as provide a baseline from which to assess how services are changing over time and the breadth of services that are provided across Wales.

In addition to the contextual information provided in previous frameworks on the number of service points, mobile service and population data, Framework 7 requires additional information on:

— a description outlining how the service is offered

— details of non-traditional loans offered e.g. toys, IT equipment, sports equipment

— the types of activities offered by the library; and

— the types of support and skills development offered by the service, including partnership work.

Details of volunteers and placement numbers and hours have been moved from the staffing quality indicator into the contextual information. The use of volunteers is at the discretion of the library authorities, and so is deemed contextual information rather than a quality indicator.

3. Core Entitlements

The Core Entitlements have been revised and refocused for Framework 7, to enable the public to know what they can expect from their public library service.

These entitlements are initially self-assessed by each authority. A number of questions are specified, which the authority is required to consider when making their self-assessment. It is not necessary to be able to answer every question positively to meet the core entitlement, but justification for the assessment, which could refer to other relevant provision, should be provided in the return. The self-assessment will be reviewed by the Independent Assessor and moderated by the Peer Reference Group to ensure consistency between authorities.

WPLSCE 1: Local authority library services are free to join, and open to all.

WPLSCE 2: Local authority library services ensure friendly, knowledgeable, and qualified staff are on hand to help customers.

WPLSCE 3: Local authority library services provide customers with access to a range of services, activities, and high-quality resources in a range of formats to support learning and information seeking throughout life, reading for pleasure, community participation, cultural experiences, recreation, and health and well-being.

WPLSCE 4: Local authority library services provide services, facilities, and information resources accessible to individuals and groups with particular needs.

WPLSCE 5: Local authority library services provide appropriate safe, attractive, and accessible spaces and offer suitable staffed opening hours.

WPLSCE 6: Local authority library services lend books for free, and deliver free access to information, including online resources (available remotely 24 hours a day) for people who live, work or study in the area.

WPLSCE 7: Local authority library services provide free use of the Internet including Wi-Fi, as well as access to digital equipment for people who live, work or study in the area.

WPLSCE 8: Local authority library services provide customers with access to services, cultural activities, and high-quality resources in the Welsh language.

WPLSCE 9: Local authority library services work in partnership to share catalogues and facilitate access to the resources of all Welsh public libraries.

WPLSCE 10: Local authority library services work with a range of partners to promote and deliver services to new and diverse audiences, enabling more people to benefit from those services.

WPLSCE 11: Local authority library services regularly consult customers to gather their views on the service and information about their changing needs.

WPLSCE 12: Local authority library services provide access to their library service strategy, policies, objectives, and vision, in print and online, in a range of languages appropriate for the community.

WPLSCE 13: Local authority library services provide support to help improve customers' digital skills and confidence.

THE READING AGENCY

Ar gael o'ch llyfrgell leol
Available at your local library

Darllen yn Well ar gyfer dementia

Llyfrau wedi eu hargymell a'u dewis gan bobl sy'n byw gyda dementia, gofalwyr a gweithwyr iechyd proffesiynol.

Reading Well for dementia

Recommended books chosen by people living with dementia, carers and health professionals.

reading-well.org.uk/cymru

All would be well if- if- if-
Say the green bells of Cardiff.
Why so worried, sisters, why?
Sang the silver bells of Wye

Oh, what will you give me?
Say the sad bells of Rhymney.

Idris Davies, The Bells of Rhymney, 1938.

Lles
Wellbeing

4. Quality Indicators

The Quality Indicators in Framework 7 build on the previous framework and include additional measures covering the outcomes and impact of the library service. They fall into two broad types:

— those with targets, and

— those which are provided for monitoring and benchmarking performance over time.

4.1 Quality Indicators with targets

Targets for each of the following indicators are highlighted in bold.

WPLSQI A1 Up-to-date and appropriate reading material

This indicator is designed to ensure adequate investment and an appropriate balance of resources across various sections of the community.

a. Library authorities should achieve a minimum acquisitions rate of:

population below 25000 = 250 per 1000/pa
population 25000 – 50000 = 225 per 1000/pa
population above 50000 = 200 per 1000/pa

b. Library authorities will also report the percentage of the material budget spent on resources for children.

c. Libraries authorities will report the percentage of spend on e-resources.

WPLSQI A2 Location of library service

No stipulation is made about 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 about length or frequency of mobile library stops, however it is expected that mobile libraries will visit each scheduled stop a minimum of 10 times per year.

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

Population Density	% of house holds	Distance from Library
20 or more persons per hectare	At least 95%	within 2 miles of a static service point
More than 1 but fewer than 20 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 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

If you think that you meet this Quality Indicator in other ways, please refer to the guidance which provides more information about how to report on this.

WPLSQI A3 Opening hours

a. **Welsh public libraries should achieve a level of paid staff opening hours across all static service points administered by the authority of no less than 120 hours per annum per 1,000 resident population.**

b. Authorities will report on the number of opening hours across all static service points where the service is delivered solely by volunteers.

c. Authorities will report the total number of unstaffed opening hours across all static service points administered, by the authority per 1,000 resident population (guidance to include eg Open+, book vending machines or similar self access systems).

Total hours per annum 1,000 resident population (including a, b, and c) will be calculated automatically and included in return.

WPLSQI A4 Staffing levels and qualifications

Library services need to meet targets a, b, c, and d to fully meet QI A4.

a. **Library authorities shall achieve total establishment staffing levels for the service of 3.0 (full time equivalent) per 10,000 resident population. Staff who do not work directly in service provision, e.g. cleaners, are excluded. Include only those staff paid from the library service budget.**

b. **The total number of staff (full time equivalent) in library professional roles holding recognised qualifications in librarianship, information science or information management per 10,000 resident population should not fall below 0.6. 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. Include only those staff paid from the library service budget.**

Authorities will also report total number of staff with library qualifications.

c. **The designated operational manager of the library service shall be the holder of recognised qualifications in librarianship, information science or information management, or an equivalent qualification.**

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)

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

d. **A minimum of 2% 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 training and development relevant to their role and responsibilities, and to improve their skills.**

WPLSQI A5 Welsh language resources

This indicator is designed to ensure materials in Welsh are provided in line with local requirements and the socio-demographic characteristics of the population.

Authorities should achieve:

a. **a minimum of 4% of the materials budget spent on Welsh language resources.**

Authorities will also report:

b. total issues of resources in the Welsh language per 1,000 Welsh speaking resident population.

4.2. QIs without targets

WPLSQI B1 Making a difference

This indicator assesses the positive impact of library use on people's lives.

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

a. the percentage of adults who think that the library has made a positive difference to their lives (with an open-ended option to provide an example).

b. The percentage of young people who think that the library makes their life better (with opened ended option to provide an example).

c. Libraries should include a selection of supporting comments from surveys in the return (see guidance).

d. Libraries should provide a supporting case study demonstrating the way in which the library service has made a positive difference to an individual or group of customers. It is recommended that libraries adopt a Most Significant Change approach to complete this case study (information about this is included in the guidance).

WPLSQI B2 Library use

The following 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 and any associated app, and library web pages on Council/Trust 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

d. the total number of library members

e. the total number of book issues (adult and children separate)

f. the total number of electronic downloads.(guidance to suggest looking across the range of resources available and using the download stats from each Welsh Government funded service eg e-books, e-audio, e-magazines, e-newspapers, family history resource and driving theory test as provided); and

g. The number of customers helped by means of informal support during the year divided by the resident population multiplied by 1000.

WPLSQI B3 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a key element of library performance. 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, at least once in the three-year reporting period:

a. the percentage of adults who think that the choice of books and other resources available in the library they use most often is 'very good' or 'good'

b. the percentage of adults who think that the choice of online resources available through their library service is 'very good' or 'good'

c. the percentage of adults who think that the standard of customer care they experience from the library service staff is 'very good' or 'good'

d. the percentage of adults who think that the IT provision within the library the use most often is 'very good' or 'good'

e. the percentage of adults who think that the online services provided by the library service are 'very good' or 'good'

f. the percentage of adults who think that overall, the library service they use is 'very good' or 'good'; and

g. the average overall rating out of ten awarded by users aged 16 or under for the library service 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. Guidance will be issued to ensure that authorities which choose to use their own surveys will have comparable results. Authorities may conduct more frequent surveys if they wish to do so and report accordingly.

WPLSQI B4 Support for health and well-being

Authorities will:

a. provide a brief description of the types of services, resources, and activities your library service provides to support individual and community health and wellbeing (e.g. Signposting to external health and well-being services; resources to support health and well-being within the library and online; activities to support health and wellbeing). Where applicable, please include images to support your written description

b. provide a short case study to illustrate the impact of one or more aspects of library health and wellbeing provision on an individual or group of library customers. (Further information is provided in the guidance); and

c. report the number of loans of titles from the Reading Well in Wales series.

WPLSQI B5 User attendances at library events

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:

a. 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.

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

— specifically for children, such as storytelling, poetry, music; and

— delivered by partner organisations in collaboration with the library service.

b. provide three examples of events and activities that are inclusive of those who have particular needs. The events or activities may be promoted specifically for an intended group, or open to all, but with a clear target group in mind. For each example provided, please provide a short description of the activity; indicate the target group it is intended for; and explain why this activity is suited to the needs of the target group.

Particular needs will vary depending on local populations, but may include factors such as disability, low literacy levels, homelessness, unemployment, caring responsibilities, and speakers of languages other than English/Welsh.

WPLSQI B6 Operational expenditure

Authorities will report:

a. the total revenue expenditure per 1,000 resident population

b. the percentage of this total spent on

— staff

— materials and information resources

— maintenance, repair and replacement of equipment and buildings; and

— other operational costs.

5. 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 local authorities in Wales are fulfilling their duties under the 1964 Act, and in assessing the efficiency of the manner of delivery of library services in Wales.

5.1 Reporting requirements

It is a requirement under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act for local authorities to "furnish such information" as required by Welsh Government to perform its duties.

Each year, all local authorities are required to report their performance against the various elements of the framework. A reporting template and guidance will be provided to authorities to ensure that reporting is consistent and comparable across Wales.

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

— data showing performance against the Quality Indicators included in this framework, together with a comparison for the previous year.

For all entitlements or targets which are not fully met or where performance has declined, the return must include a strategy for improvement in the following year.

The data will be drawn together to provide an overview of Welsh public library services, to assist with identification of good practice, and of areas where action may be required to bring about improvements.

5.1.1 Impact of public library services

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 two specific case studies describing the impact which the library service has had on an individual, or on a group of individuals, during the year. These case studies relate to WPLSQI B1 Making a difference and WPLSQI B4 Support for health and well-being.

Authorities are expected to describe not only the service provided and its use, but also the outcomes for the individuals or members of 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.

5.1.2 Strategic and future direction

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, including any relevant legislative frameworks.

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.

A concise description of the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year will be included in their submission. 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.

5.2 Monitoring and assessment procedures

5.2.1 Role of the Independent Assessor

The process of monitoring and assessing will be led by Welsh Government officials and will follow the pattern established in earlier frameworks. Annual returns should be submitted by the deadline each year and will be assessed by an independent assessor. The independent assessor will then prepare a formal written feedback report, covering all aspects of the framework, including all Quality Indicators and narrative elements.

The independent assessor will also 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 where this is possible. The overall analysis will be disseminated to all local authorities, usually during an annual seminar. At the end of the framework period a summary report detailing trends over the three years will be published via the Welsh Government web site[7].

5.2.2 Role of the Peer Reference Group

The reports will be moderated by the Peer Reference Group which will include senior public librarians and a representative from Welsh Local Government Association. Their role is to ensure consistency throughout the reports and represent the voice of the sector.

5.2.3 Dissemination of the reports

The reports 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 local authority chief executives and to council leaders, as well as to the managers of library services. The annual reports will be made public, via Welsh Government website.

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

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.

6. How public libraries contribute to Government priorities

Public library services contribute to the delivery of a wide range of Welsh Government priorities. The list of strategies opposite is illustrative not exhaustive. Other strategies and policies may come into effect during the lifetime of Framework 7 and should be considered where relevant. Further information on how these apply will be provided in the supporting Definitions and Guidance document to authorities.

— Wellbeing of Future Generations Act[8]

— Priorities for Culture – these are due to be published in 2025. Once published, the Priorities for Culture will provide an important strategic framework under which public libraries in Wales should operate, with annual returns reflecting how the Priorities for Culture are being delivered.

— Digital Strategy[9]

— Anti-racist Wales Action Plan[10]

— LGBTQ+ Action Plan[11]

— Age Friendly Wales[12]

— Loneliness and social isolation[13]

7. Community-managed libraries

Welsh Government guidance on community-managed libraries recommends that for such libraries to be considered as part of the authority's statutory provision, they must meet the Core Entitlements . For the purposes of Framework 7, community managed libraries which receive ongoing support from the local authority library service in terms of shared resources, qualified staff and a 'seamless' customer experience can be considered for inclusion in the return. For example, libraries conforming to the following models may be eligible:

— elements of resources and staff provided or co-ordinated by the local library service, with the building in community ownership and a contribution towards staffing from the community council with the staff employed by the library service; and

— limited resources and regular staffing (defined hours) provided by the local library service, the building in community ownership and assistance from volunteers.

Models involving the transfer of the building and resources to the community and entirely run by volunteers with minimal (or no) ongoing assistance from the local library service in managing the facility are not eligible for inclusion.

Different models may exist within a single authority, so that some community managed libraries may be included in the returns, while others may not.

For full consideration of whether community-managed libraries can be included in the statutory service, the following minimum criteria should be met, along with meeting all the Core Entitlements:

— a service level agreement with the local authority public library service to include resource sharing activities such as interlibrary loans

— paid staff, whether funded by the local authority library service or from other sources (e.g. community councils) available for 50% of the library opening hours specified in the service level agreement

— the provision of a range of material, e.g. books, multimedia/audio-visual, Internet access and staff to support access to and utilisation of these resources

— authority support for the ICT facilities, which should be free at the point of use; and

— full access to and use of the local authority's library catalogue including the ability to place reservations, for members of the public. Paid staff would be expected to have access to the LMS.

The purpose of these criteria is to ensure that the public receives a high quality, comprehensive and efficient public library service that is deemed worthy of the statutory service. It is possible for a community managed library to achieve all the proposed criteria outlined above, and if they meet these and the Core Entitlements, they could be considered for inclusion as part of the local authority's statutory provision of public library services. As identified above, this is achievable by entering a partnership with their local authority public library service and/or working with community councils and groups.

7.1 Reporting and data collection

If the authority considers community managed libraries to be part of the statutory service and are included in the annual return, the guidance document on what data to gather and how applies to all the libraries. The same rigour should be used to gather data in community managed libraries as in other libraries.

In addition, the Welsh Government wishes to monitor the support and resources provided to community managed libraries within the authority, and the extent to which they have been included in the indicators in this framework. All authorities will therefore be asked to provide the following information, as part of the contextual data in the return:

a. the number of community-managed libraries for which the authority provides:

   i. paid staff

   ii. full access to and use of the local authority's library catalogue for members of the public

   iii. support for the ICT facilities

   iv. shared and rotated stock services; and

   v. a service level agreement including resource sharing activities such as interlibrary loans; and

b. the total annual aggregate opening hours of community managed libraries within the authority.

Separate figures for the above will be sought for those community-managed libraries included in the return (i.e. those meeting all five bullet points above), and those not included, where available.

Endnotes

1   Shared Intelligence (2024). CILIP, Come Rain or Shine: Preparing public libraries for the future in an age of uncertainty. London, CILIP.

2   OECD (2010). PISA 2009 Results. Learning to learn: Student Engagement, Strategies and Practices (Volume III). PISA, OECD Publishing: Paris. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264083943-en.

3   Libraries Connected (2018). Universal Library Offers. Available at: www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/universal-library-offers

4   Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 Available at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75/contents

5   Email culture@gov.wales to request access to the definitions and guidance document.

6   The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: The Essentials. Available at: www.gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-act-essentials-html

7   Libraries and Archives. Available at: www.gov.wales/libraries-archives

8   Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: the essentials. Available at: www.gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-act-essentials-html

9   Digital strategy for Wales. Available at: www.gov.wales/digital-strategy-wales-html

10 Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. Available at: www.gov.wales/anti-racist-wales-action-plan

11 LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales. Available at: www.gov.wales/lgbtq-action-plan-wales

12 Age friendly Wales: our strategy for an ageing society Available at: www.gov.wales/age-friendly-wales-our-strategy-ageing-society

13 Loneliness and social isolation (connected communities). Available at: www.gov.wales/loneliness-and-social-isolation-connected-communities

Image Credits

Cover image 1: Bargoed Library. (Libraries Wales photo bank)

Cover image 2: Joseph Coelho with Summer Reading Challenge certificate. (Awen libraries)

Cover image 3: Llanfairfechan Library opening. (Conwy libraries)

Cover image 4: Mobile Library Ysbyty Ifan. (Conwy libraries)

Page 5: Craft session in Bangor Library. (Gwynedd libraries)

Page 6: Bridgend Library. (Libraries Wales photo bank)

Page 9: Carmarthen Library. (Libraries Wales photo bank)

Page 10: Finn with Summer Reading Challenge certificate. (Conwy libraries)

Page 11: Colwyn Bay staff on World Book Day. (Conwy libraries)

Page 12: Local group using the Wi-Fi in Tywyn Library. (Gwynedd libraries)

Page 13: Children's library in Neaudd Dwyfor. (Juanita Foster-Jones)

Page 14: Reading Well collection in Rhymney Library. (Bethan Lee)

Page 16: Yr Hobyd. (Conwy libraries)

Page 17: A group of learners enjoying a cuppa and a chat in Tywyn Library. (Gwynedd libraries)

Page 18: Weaving workshop at Barmouth Library. (Gwynedd libraries)

Page 19: Free SIM cards. (Awen libraries)

Page 22: Welsh for Meirionnydd Children at Tywyn Library. (Gwynedd libraries)

The extension to the sixth quality framework
for Welsh public libraries

Annual return pro-forma: Year ending 31 March 2025

Guidance notes

The return is to be made over three worksheets, together with a Word document. Authorities should take note of the following:

The *Definitions and guidelines for data collection and reporting* document provides guidance for completing the return.

Where data are included in the annual public library actuals return to CIPFA, the same figure should be used for this return.

Only those cells where data are required can be selected; other areas of the return are shaded. The tab key can be used to move to the next available cell.

Culture Division reserves the right to request evidence of the information provided in the return to assist with the assessment process.

Context

This sheet requires some descriptive details for the authority, and contact details for the person to whom any queries should be addressed.

Core entitlements

This sheet deals with the 13 core entitlements for the public. Authorities should select their (self-assessed) level of compliance from the drop-down box, and provide further information in the space provided.

Quality indicators

This sheet covers the 12 public library standard quality indicators. For some indicators authorities are required to enter the raw data from which quantitative standards are derived; calculation will then take place automatically.

For those standards with quantitative targets, values are compared to the target set, and an indication given of whether or not that standard has been met. Space has been provided for comment; authorities failing to meet targets will be prompted to use this space to detail any mitigating circumstances, and plans for future improvement.

A comparative figure for the year ending 31 March 2025 should be provided for each annually reported PI. Space is provided for authorities to comment on any decline in their performance over the previous year.

The most recent figures available should be given for those PIs which are required only once in the three year period, and the date of data collection given in the space provided.

Submission

When completed, the return should be submitted
via email to Culture Division: Culture@gov.wales

Closing date for receipt of returns: **20-Jun-25**

For more information please contact: Juanita Foster-Jones
                                                             juanita.foster-jones@gov.wales
                                                             0300 025 4836 (direct line)

Contextual data

Year ending 31 March 2025

	Vale of Glamorgan
Authority	
Resident population	134,733
Percentage of population aged under 16	18.4%
Percentage of population able to speak and read Welsh (see notes)	9.5%
No. of static service points open 10+ hours per week	4
No. of static service points open for less than 10 hours per week	0
No. of Mobiles	0
No. of Housebound delivery vans	
No. of libraries that have permanently closed	0
Community libraries open 10+ hours per week	4
No. of community managed libraries	
No. of community supported libraries	4
No. of commissioned libraries	
Community libraries open for less than 10 hours per week	1
No. of community managed libraries	
No. of community supported libraries	1
No. of commissioned libraries	
Authority to list names of community managed, supported and commissioned libraries	Dinas Powys Community Library Rhoose Community Library St Athan Community Library Sully and Lavernock Community Library Wenvoe Community Library
How many, if any, of these community libraries are included in this return (see notes)?	5
No. of Independent Community Libraries	1

Contact details for queries regarding this return

Name	Jordan Forse
Telephone	7751302705
Email	jforse@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Has this Annual Return been approved by the authority prior to its submission to Culture Division?

2

Entitlement	Compliance (please select)	Authority comments
1 Free to join, and open to all.	Fully met	We are proud to confirm that the Vale of Glamorgan Library and Information Service fully meets the core entitlement of being free to join and open to all. We place accessibility, inclusion, and community at the heart of everything we do. All our library branches are welcoming and inclusive, offering safe, child-friendly spaces designed to support families, young learners, and early years development. Our libraries regularly host Rhymetimes, story sessions, and after-school clubs, as well as seasonal activities that help engage children and families from all backgrounds. We continue to make the service easy to use for people in vulnerable circumstances. Our staff work with local partners to ensure everyone is treated with dignity and can benefit from the wide range of resources available. We are working on utilising our Social and demographic data that is collected within the local authority and regularly review this to help us better understand our users and target outreach. This includes engagement with underrepresented groups and analysis of postcode and membership data to identify communities most in need of support. We also monitor engagement with our digital inclusion programmes and Tablet Loan Scheme to help reduce the digital divide across the Vale. In short, the service is actively committed to being responsive, welcoming, and inclusive for all residents—regardless of age, background, or circumstance.

Entitlement	Compliance (please select)	Authority comments
2 Ensure friendly, knowledgeable and qualified staff are on hand to help.	Fully met	We are proud to confirm that this core entitlement is fully met across the Vale of Glamorgan Library and Information Service. Our team remains the backbone of our offer—delivering friendly, expert support to all who visit our libraries. Staff receive regular training and development opportunities, including recent sessions on customer care, safeguarding, and digital inclusion. Through our partnership with Digital Communities Wales, staff are also upskilled to support residents in developing digital confidence, including the use of devices, online forms, and essential services. Staff are actively encouraged to engage in CPD through in-house learning, webinars, and regional networks. We also promote a culture of shared learning, where staff can exchange knowledge and best practice across branches—particularly in areas such as family engagement, digital support, and community outreach. Our commitment to customer service is consistently reflected in user feedback and internal survey results, with high satisfaction levels reported across all sites. This feedback highlights the genuine warmth, helpfulness, and professionalism of our staff. This ongoing investment in staff knowledge and wellbeing ensures we continue to deliver an inclusive, responsive, and trusted service to all communities in the Vale.

Entitlement	Compliance (please select)	Authority comments
3 Libraries in Wales provide access to a range of services, activities, and high quality resources in a range of formats to support lifelong learning, personal health and well-being, community participation, cultural experiences, recreation, and reading for pleasure.	Fully met	We are pleased to confirm that this entitlement is fully met across the Vale of Glamorgan. Our libraries offer a rich programme of activities and services that support residents at every stage of life, and in many aspects of their wellbeing. Our weekly and seasonal programmes are designed with diverse audiences in mind, including sessions for babies and toddlers, reading and reminiscence groups for older adults, family craft and STEM workshops, coding clubs, wellbeing sessions, and author events. Services are also tailored to promote inclusion—for example, accessible resources, Books on Prescription, and targeted support for neurodivergent users. We offer a broad selection of high-quality resources in multiple formats, including print, large print, audiobooks, and e-resources, all promoted regularly through digital channels, in-library displays, and community networks. Staff are kept up to date with new resources and initiatives through regular team meetings and internal communications, and are actively involved in shaping local delivery. Library staff also contribute to regional development discussions to ensure good practice is shared and that we remain responsive to emerging needs. Work is currently taking place to improve our local studies collections and how they are utilised as actively work to promote them, offering residents valuable insight into their heritage and identity, while also supporting lifelong learning and intergenerational connection. These services are continually reviewed in partnership with community feedback, usage data, and staff input to ensure they remain relevant and impactful for the communities we serve.

Entitlement	Compliance (please select)	Authority comments
4 Provide appropriate services, facilities and information resources for individuals and groups with special requirements.	Fully met	We are pleased to confirm that this core entitlement is fully met. Our libraries are committed to ensuring that individuals and groups with additional or specific needs can access our services equitably, with dignity and ease. A wide range of inclusive and accessible resources is available across our sites, including large print and audiobooks, dyslexia-friendly titles, sensory storytime kits, Welsh-language materials, and books that support mental health and emotional wellbeing. These collections are promoted through displays, community links, and events aligned with national awareness campaigns. All libraries offer accessible entrances, toilets, and inclusive spaces designed to be welcoming and navigable for people with mobility challenges, neurodivergent visitors, and others requiring adjustments. Assistive technology, including accessible PCs and screen-reading software, is in place to support users with visual or cognitive impairments. We deliver tailored services such as the At Home Library Service for housebound residents, offering regular deliveries of curated materials by trained volunteers. We also work with partner organisations to support specific community groups—including people living with dementia, carers, asylum seekers, and young people with additional learning needs—through targeted events and engagement programmes. Our staff are committed to inclusive practice and regularly adapt service delivery to ensure no one is left behind. This commitment helps create welcoming, respectful spaces where everyone can participate and thrive.

Entitlement	Compliance (please select)	Authority comments
5 Provide a safe, attractive and accessible physical space with suitable staffed opening hours.	Fully met	We are proud to confirm that this core entitlement is fully met across our library service. Our physical library spaces are carefully maintained to be welcoming, safe, and accessible, providing inclusive environments that reflect the diverse needs of our communities. Regular Health and Safety checks, along with building risk assessments, ensure that our facilities remain safe and well-maintained. We are committed to maintaining a high standard of environment across all sites. Ongoing modernisation efforts include refreshed signage, furniture updates, and investment in digital infrastructure to support hybrid services and accessibility. Upcoming refurbishments, such as the transformation of Penarth Library, will create lighter, more flexible environments that better support events, study, and community use. Opening hours are being reviewed periodically in response to user feedback, footfall data, and community consultation. Our current timetable reflects a balance of daytime, evening, and weekend access across sites. We ensure a staffed presence during all open hours to support users, offer guidance, and maintain a secure and welcoming atmosphere. Monitoring tools—including visitor surveys, incident logs, and environmental checks—inform continual improvements. The physical estate and service hours meet national location and accessibility indicators, reaffirming our commitment to equitable service provision.

Entitlement	Compliance (please select)	Authority comments
6 Lend books for free, and deliver free access to information, including online information resources available 24 hours a day.	Fully met	We are pleased to confirm that we fully meet this entitlement, ensuring all library users can borrow books free of charge and access a wide range of high-quality information resources—both in-library and online—at no cost. Our core lending services are entirely free to users, including the reservation of items in stock and those sourced from within Wales through our participation in regional and national interlibrary loan schemes. This guarantees equitable access to books and resources, regardless of a user's location or personal circumstances. We provide 24/7 access to a wide range of digital content, including eBooks, eAudiobooks, digital magazines, and online newspapers. In addition, our website offers clear links to a curated suite of online reference tools and academic databases, including Access to Research, which we actively promote as a valuable resource for public access to academic journals. The digital offer is prominently featured on our website, with user-friendly navigation and guidance available for those accessing services remotely. Staff are on hand during opening hours to assist users in navigating these platforms, and digital skills sessions are periodically offered to increase confidence in using online resources. This provision supports our commitment to lifelong learning, digital inclusion, and equal access to information for all members of our community—regardless of time, location, or background.

Entitlement	Compliance (please select)	Authority comments
7 Libraries in Wales provide free use of the Internet including Wi-Fi, and access to digital equipment, in all service points.	Fully met	We are proud to confirm that we fully meet this entitlement. Free internet access, including public Wi-Fi, is available at all of our library service points, ensuring equitable access to digital connectivity for all members of our community. Our libraries provide desktop computers, printing and scanning facilities, and other digital equipment to support a wide range of user needs—from job searching and form-filling to creative and learning projects. Access to the internet is free of charge and is not time-limited, enabling users to complete tasks without undue pressure. Wi-Fi is freely available and promoted in all venues, allowing users to connect their own devices easily. Staff are trained to provide basic digital support and guidance, and signposting is in place for users requiring more in-depth digital skills training. Where possible, we work with partners to deliver or host digital inclusion sessions both within and outside of library buildings, extending our reach to vulnerable or digitally excluded groups across the Vale. This commitment to accessible digital services underpins our aim to reduce digital inequality and ensure our libraries remain welcoming, connected, and inclusive community spaces.

Entitlement	Compliance (please select)	Authority comments
8 Provide access to services, cultural activities and high quality resources in the Welsh language.	Fully met	We are pleased to confirm that we have fully met this entitlement. All Vale of Glamorgan library service points offer access to a broad range of resources, services, and cultural activities in the Welsh language, supporting both fluent speakers and learners. Our Welsh-language collections include fiction and non-fiction for all ages, newspapers and magazines, audio-visual materials, and digital resources. Stock is regularly reviewed to ensure it reflects the needs and interests of our local Welsh-speaking and bilingual communities. We work closely with local Welsh partners such as Menter Bro Morgannwg and adult learners via Learn Welsh providers, to promote resources and encourage engagement with the language in everyday use. In addition, bilingual signage and Welsh-speaking staff are available in our core libraries, with all digital communication and marketing delivered bilingually. Our programme of cultural events includes Welsh-language and bilingual activities such as storytimes, performances, and workshops, helping to promote the Welsh language in accessible and engaging ways for users of all ages. This work directly supports our contribution to the goal of a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and reflects our strategic commitment to Cymraeg 2050.
9 Work in partnership to share catalogues and facilitate access to the resources of all Welsh libraries.	Fully met	We are proud to have fully met the entitlement to work collaboratively in partnership with other Welsh libraries. By sharing catalogues and facilitating access to resources across the network, we ensure that our users benefit from a wide and diverse range of materials, enhancing the overall library experience and promoting resource sharing throughout Wales.

Entitlement	Compliance (please select)	Authority comments
10 Work with a range of partners to promote and deliver services to new and diverse audiences, enabling morepeople to benefit from their services.	Fully met	We are pleased to have fully met the entitlement to work with a wide range of partners to promote and deliver services to new and diverse audiences. Through these collaborative efforts, we have successfully expanded access to our library services, ensuring that more people across the community can benefit from the resources, programs, and support we offer. Our service participates in a regional inter-library loan (ILL) scheme and Books4U scheme, enabling users to borrow items from other libraries across the region, thus widening access to resources. We also promote the Walk In Access to the Reading Well scheme, facilitating further learning opportunities for our community members. Through these initiatives and partnerships, we continue to remove barriers and enable more diverse audiences to benefit fully from the rich array of library services available to them.
11 Regularly consult users to gather their views on the service and information about their changing needs.	Fully met	We are pleased to have fully met the entitlement to regularly consult our users to gather their views and understand their evolving needs. In October and November 2024, we conducted comprehensive adult and children's surveys, which provided valuable insights that have directly informed service improvements and program development. We remain committed to ongoing engagement with our communities to ensure our libraries continue to meet their expectations and adapt to changing demands. In addition to direct user consultation, our service actively promotes libraries to non-users through a variety of outreach efforts. Advertising materials are prominently displayed not only within our libraries but also in community centres, schools, and other public spaces to reach a broader audience. Our marketing plan is being updated and outlines strategic priorities and ensures coordinated promotion of library services across multiple channels. We make extensive use of social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, to engage with diverse audiences. Through these combined efforts of consultation and promotion, we continue to evolve our service offer to better serve both current users and new audiences.

Entitlement	Compliance (please select)	Authority comments
12 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.	Fully met	The Vale of Glamorgan Libraries Strategy 2022–2027, along with the Team Plan for the service, is publicly available both online via our website and in print at all our library locations. These documents clearly communicate our vision for the service, the range of our service offer, our strategic priorities, and the measures of success we aim to achieve over the five-year period.
		Both the strategy and Team Plan are accessible in English and Welsh, reflecting our commitment to bilingual service provision. Additionally, as part of our ongoing efforts to ensure inclusivity and accessibility, we are actively working towards offering these key documents in a broader range of community languages, as well as in large print and easy read formats.
		The documents can be accessed directly on our website, and in branch.
		This transparency supports community understanding and engagement with our library service's goals and developments, ensuring all users can access and benefit from our vision and plans.

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

WPLSQI 1 Making a difference	2024-25	Vale of Glamorgan	2023-24
Percentage of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills	58%		NA
Percentage of adults who have found helpful information for health and well-being at the library	45%		NA
Percentage of adults who experience the library as an enjoyable safe and inclusive place	93%		NA
Percentage of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives	79%		NA
Survey dates (month & year)	*Oct 24*		Oct-16

Authority comment:

We were pleased to launch our Adult Library User Survey this year, providing valuable insight into how our service is making a difference in the lives of our community. The level of engagement was encouraging, and the feedback we received has already sparked thoughtful discussions around future service development.

It was particularly heartening to see such high levels of satisfaction, with many users highlighting the library as a safe, enjoyable, and inclusive space. We are especially proud that a significant percentage of respondents felt the library had made a meaningful difference to their lives and supported them in developing new skills and accessing reliable health and wellbeing information.

These results affirm the vital role libraries play in supporting individuals and communities, and we are committed to building on this positive foundation.

	2024-25		2023-24
Percentage of children aged 7-16 who think that the library helps them learn and find things out	83%		89%
Survey dates (month & year)	*Oct 24*		Feb-20

Authority comment:

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

Alongside the adult survey, we also launched our Children's Survey—our first in several years—which was met with an excellent response rate and overwhelmingly positive feedback. Over 80% of children aged 7–16 reported that the library helps them learn and discover new things, which underscores the importance of our service in supporting educational development and curiosity among young people.

Conducting these surveys has been an invaluable exercise, and we are now committed to making them an annual feature to continually assess impact and ensure our services evolve in line with user needs.

WPLSQI 2 Customer satisfaction	2024-25	2023-24
Percentage of adults who think that the choice of books is 'very good' or 'good'	90%	
Percentage of adults who think that the standard of customer care is 'very good' or 'good'	97%	
Percentage of adults who think that the IT facilities provided are 'very good' or 'good'	60%	
Percentage of adults who think that the library is 'very good' or 'good' overall	99%	
Survey dates (month & year)	Oct 24	Oct-16

Authority comment:

The adult survey provided us with a wealth of valuable feedback and a clear picture of how our services are being used and appreciated. We are especially proud that 99% of respondents rated our library service as 'Very Good' or 'Good' overall, with 97% expressing a similarly high level of satisfaction with our customer care. These figures are a testament to the dedication and professionalism of our staff.

However, we also acknowledge that there is room for improvement in relation to our IT facilities, where only 60% of users rated them positively. This feedback has highlighted the need for investment in our digital infrastructure and enhanced support to help users access the wide range of online resources available. Plans are already in motion to address this as part of our wider digital development strategy.

	2024-25	2023-24
Average overall rating out of ten awarded by users aged 7-16 for the library they use	8.7	9.0
Survey dates (month & year)	Oct 24	Feb-20

Authority comment:

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

We were pleased to receive a strong response to our children's survey, with an encouraging average rating of 8.7 out of 10 from users aged 7–16. While this is a positive outcome, feedback from our younger users also echoed adult responses in identifying digital equipment as an area for improvement.

Informed by these survey results and our recent internal digital review, we are now undertaking a phased upgrade of our IT facilities and equipment. These improvements will enhance access, usability, and learning opportunities for all users—particularly young people—ensuring our libraries remain relevant and inclusive spaces for the future.

WPLSQI 4 Support for health & wellbeing	2024-25	% of total	2023-24
Number of static service points open for 10 hours per week or more providing:			
Reading well scheme	9	100%	100%
Designated health & wellbeing collection	9	100%	100%
Information abour healthy lifestyles & behaviours	9	100%	100%
Signposting to health & wellbeing services	9	100%	100%
Number of static service points open for 10 hours per week or more providing:			
Shared Reading groups	6		0
Book clubs	6		7
Health information partnerships	5		4
Other services such as mental health support, support for Carers, and other groups, Dementia Friendly services	6		8
Storytimes and Baby Rhyme Time.	7		8
Number of loans from Reading Well in Wales series	SEPERATE		463
Are any staff are identified as the health and wellbeing co-ordinator for the service, with this included in their job description?	Yes		

Senior Librarian for Cowbridge and Llantwit Major is identified as the Health and Wellebing Co-ordinator for our service.

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

Authority comment:

Our service remains committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of our communities through a range of targeted services and resources. In 2024–25, all nine of our static service points actively provided the core elements of the Reading Well scheme, including designated health and wellbeing collections, healthy lifestyle information, and signposting to relevant services.

We continue to offer a broad programme of activities that promote social inclusion and emotional wellbeing, including Shared Reading groups, book clubs, and support for specific groups such as carers and individuals affected by dementia. Our storytimes and Baby Rhyme Times also support early years development and family wellbeing.

A Senior Librarian is formally designated as our Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator, ensuring that this area of work is embedded across our service delivery and staff development. We are proud of the role our libraries play in contributing to Vale 2030, including driven by our wellbeing objectives and will continue to develop partnerships and responsive services that meet community needs.

WPLSQI 5 User support	2024-25	Per 1,000 pop'n		2023-24
Total number of attendances at formal user training sessions organised by the library	4,570	34	per 1000 pop'n	18
Percentage of attendees who said that attendance helped them to achieve their goals	98.7		%	98%
Please indicate the method used to calculate this figure	Full count			
Approximate number of feedback forms distributed	161			
Number of feedback forms included in the calculation	159			
Number of customers helped by means of informal support during the year	4533	34	per 1000 pop'n	79

Authority comment (including note on the method used to calculate the results):

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

User support remains a core focus of our library service, and we are pleased to report strong engagement with both formal and informal training opportunities over the past year. A total of 4,570 attendances were recorded at formal training sessions, equating to 34 per 1,000 population. These sessions covered a wide range of topics—from digital literacy and job-seeking skills to support with online services.

To assess impact, we distributed 161 feedback forms, of which 159 were returned and included in the calculation, providing a reliable data sample. An impressive 98.7% of respondents reported that the training helped them to achieve their personal goals, demonstrating the effectiveness and relevance of our sessions.

In addition to formal training, our staff provided informal support to 4,533 users throughout the year, ensuring accessible, one-to-one assistance for those needing help with everyday information tasks, digital access, or library resources.

All figures were calculated using a full count method, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the data reported.

WPLSQI 6 User attendances at library events	2024-25			2023-24
Total number of attendances at events and activities organised by the library	73,185	543	per 1000 pop'n	537
Number of static service points open for 10 hours per week or more providing events or activities for users with special requirements	9	100%		100%

This target has been met.

Authority comment, including examples of events:

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

We are delighted to report a total of 73,185 attendances at events and activities organised by the library during 2024–25, equating to 543 attendances per 1,000 population. This reflects the continued popularity and community value of our diverse and inclusive events programme.

All nine of our static service points open for 10 hours per week or more provided activities tailored to users with special requirements, meeting our target of 100%. These activities included Dementia Friendly coffee mornings, sensory storytimes for children with additional needs, Carers' drop-in sessions, and digital support tailored for older adults and those with accessibility requirements.

In addition to targeted events, our libraries hosted a wide range of community-focused activities such as author talks, craft workshops, coding clubs, baby rhyme times, and seasonal events that encouraged intergenerational participation and learning.

Our events programme continues to evolve in response to community needs and feedback, and we are proud of the inclusive and welcoming environment our libraries provide for all residents.

WPLSQI 7 Location of service points	2024-25		2023-24
Population density (persons per hectare)	4.1		4.0
% of households 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	94%	%	94%

This target has been met.

WPLSQI 8 Library use	2024-25	Per 1,000 pop'n	2023-24 Per 1,000 pop'n
Total number of external visits to the library's web site during the year	155,230	1,152	872
Total number of active borrowers during the year	38,552	286	128
Total number of library members	44,183	328	306
Total number of adult book issues	159,098	1,181	1,219
Total number of children's book issues	101,793	756	790
Total number of audio-visual issues	3,274	24	34
Total number of electronic downloads	169,113	1,255	677

Authority comment (include date of last membership data cleanse):

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

Last data cleanse: Dec 2024 @ migration to Spydus. Still awaiting implementation of uLibrary LCF connector, which will have impacted any new users joining to use that service (and existing users who need to re-login at any point). Incorrect GA4 tags originally applied by Civica to our new OPAC pages means we only have a few days' worth of site visit data for Q4 from the end of March (2,871 sessions), when this was corrected. OPAC use showed a marked decline immediately post go-live with the new LMS as users familiarise them with the new system.

77 - Includes our VOG Website Session Visits.

Active Borrowers -
We have been hoping to be able to gain a correct figure, but following the calculations we are unable to come to a correct answer. Currently, the figures we hold Quarterly and Monthly are:
Looking at the quarterly figures:
24/25 Q1 (Jun) 9,334
24/25 Q2 (Sep) 10,435
24/25 Q3 (Dec) 9,414
Spydus (14/12-31/3): 9,369
- Total - 38,552

Monthly figures (Apr-Nov)
Apr 6,661
May 6,389
Jun 6,340
Jul 7,130
Aug 7,339
Sep 7,027
Oct 7,034
Nov 6,593
- Total - 54,513

WPLSQI 9 Up-to-date and appropriate reading material	2024-25	Per 1,000 pop'n	2023-24 Per 1,000 pop'n
Total number of items acquired	34,238	254	219
Total materials expenditure (from WPLSQI 14)	£235,989		
Population (From Context)	>50,000		

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

Please check the values in cell C87 to see if you have met the target for this indicator: If population <25000, target Acquisitions per 1,000 pop = 250. If population is between 25,000 and 50,000, target acquisitions per 1000 pop = 225. If population is >50,000 target acquisitions per 1,000 pop = 200. If you do not meet the target please add comments below

Based on the above we have met the target acquisitions.

Total expenditure on material purchased for children	24,551.03		£	22,682
Does this figure include expenditure on a Schools Library Service?	No			
	£0			
Percentage of materials expenditure for children	**10%**		%	12%
Total expenditure on e-resources	39,498.75		£	13,925
Percentage of materials expenditure for e-resources	**17%**		%	7%

WPLSQI 10 Welsh language resources	2024-25	Per 1,000 pop'n		2023-24
Total expenditure on materials in the Welsh language	11,910.51		£	8,905
Percentage of materials exenditure on materials in the Welsh language	5%		%	5%
	£931			

This target has been met.

This has been provided in the seperate tab underneath, but I have included here, as despite the issues faced, the target has still been met.

Total number of issues of Welsh language material	7,620	595		762
Authority comment				

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

We are pleased to report that the target for Welsh language resources has once again been met, with 5% of our total materials expenditure—amounting to £11,910.51—dedicated to Welsh language stock. This represents an increase from the previous year and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to supporting the Welsh Government's vision for a bilingual Wales.

Despite wider challenges across the sector, including supply chain and budgetary pressures, we have maintained strong investment in Welsh language materials across all age groups and formats. This has helped us ensure that our collections remain relevant, accessible, and reflective of our Welsh-speaking communities.

A total of 7,620 issues of Welsh language material were recorded during the year, with 595 issues per 1,000 population—showing consistent demand and engagement. Our libraries continue to promote the use of Welsh through dedicated displays, bilingual storytimes, and support for national campaigns such as Diwrnod Shwmae Su'mae and Welsh Language Music Day.

We remain committed to expanding our Welsh language offer and continuing to celebrate and support the language through both resources and programming.

Number of requests which are notified to the user as being available within 15 calendar days of the request being made

WPLSQI 13 Staffing levels & qualifications	2024-25	Per 10,000 pop'n	2023-24 Per 10,000 pop'n
Total number of staff (FTE)	36.6	2.72	2.48

This target has not been met. Please add any comments below:

Authority comment (including information about shared staff):

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

The library service within the Vale of Glamorgan is appropriately staffed for the Local Authority-managed branches, based on both size and footfall. These four branches—located in our main towns—serve approximately 72% of the county's population. Within this context, current staffing levels are sufficient to meet community needs and maintain service quality.

However, the overall staffing figure does not meet the national target when calculated per 10,000 population, primarily due to the structure of our service. Five of our nine branches are community-managed libraries, which serve around 23% of the population—approximately 38,000 people. These branches are operated independently with volunteer support and are not included in the FTE staffing figures for this return.

To meet the target based purely on population coverage, we would need to create over 10 additional FTE posts across these community branches—an increase that is not financially viable under current budget constraints. Nonetheless, we continue to support our community-managed partners to ensure consistent service quality and access across the Vale.

	15.0		*0.45*
Number of staff holding recognised library related qualifications (FTE) (including cognate areas)		**1.11**	

This target has been met.

This has been met, and we are pleased to have qualified staff within our service. We have 11 staff who have qualifications specifically in library related areas, and 4 within cognate areas.

Number of staff holding qualifications in cognate areas (FTE)	4.0		0.0
Number of posts which require a library qualification	6.0		6.0
Number of staff with library qualifications in posts which do not require a library qualification (FTE)	9.0		2.0

Authority comment :

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

We are pleased to report a strong level of professional expertise within our library service. Currently, 4.0 FTE staff hold qualifications in cognate areas, and 9.0 FTE qualified staff are employed in posts that do not formally require a library qualification—demonstrating the depth of knowledge and skill embedded across our wider team.

We also have 6.0 posts where a library qualification is essential, ensuring that key areas of service delivery are underpinned by professional standards. In addition, several members of staff are actively working towards professional accreditation through CILIP Chartership, which is expected to be achieved by the time of our next return.

This ongoing commitment to staff development not only strengthens our service but also reflects our dedication to maintaining a high standard of service provision and supporting career progression within the sector.

Does the designated operational manager of library services hold a formal qualification in librarianship or information science or information management?	**No**
Please give details of current qualifications held:	
The Libraries and Cultural Service Manager holds a PGCE, Post Graduate Qualification in Theatre, BA Hons in Theatre and Drama, and currently undertaking Librarian Chartership.	
Has s/he undertaken relevant library management training within the last three years?	**Yes**
Please give details of training undertaken	
The Libraries and Cultural Service Manager is currently undertaking Chartership to support the operational management of the library service in the Vale.	
This target has been met.	
Where does this post sit within the local authority management structure?	The Libraries and Cultural Services Manager sits on the Directorate Management Team for the Learning and Skills Directorate, directly line managed by the Head of Service of Strategy, Resources and Community Learning.
What is the post held by the most senior professional librarian (if different from the above)?	Senior Librarians of which there are four, 3 of which are branch managers, and one is responsible for the resources and systems.

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

Where does the post held by the most senior professional librarian sit within the local authority management structure (if different from the above)?	These roles are strategically managed by the Libraries and Cultural Services Manager, and line managed by the head of service.		

Total staff working hours during the year	72,358		63753
Number of staff hours spent in training & personal/professional development	1,670		1512
% of time spent in training & personal/professional development	**2.3%**	2023-24	2.4%

This target has been met.

Total number of volunteers active during the year	**169**	2023-24	**247**
Total number of volunteer working hours during the year	**22,706**	2023-24	**20,176**
Do you have Investors in Volunteers acreditation relating to the NOS?	**No**		

Briefly describe the training and support offered to volunteers.

Volunteers are offered a plethora of training opportunities, which inlcudes a series of e-Learning modules that focus on our corporate responsibilities as a library service including GDPR, Safeguarding and other core modules.
Volunteers have also been able to attend training on Digital Transformation and Inclusion this includes operating iPad / Tablet Loans. All volunteers undertook an extensive training programme towards using the new LMS, which is an ongoing opportunity led by our Peripetetic Librarians.
Other training that has been offered has come through Libraries Connected and similar services.

Authority comment:

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

The Vale of Glamorgan library service is appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the Local Authority-managed branches, which serve approximately 72% of the population across four main town locations. Staffing levels in these branches are sufficient to maintain service quality and respond effectively to community demand.

However, the overall staffing target per 10,000 population is not met due to the service structure. Five community-managed libraries, which serve just under 23% of the population (around 38,000 people), operate independently with volunteer support and are not included in the FTE staffing figures submitted. Meeting the national target based solely on population would require the creation of over 10 additional FTE posts across these community branches, a level of resourcing that is currently not financially viable. Nevertheless, we continue to actively support our community-managed libraries to ensure consistent service quality and access across the Vale.

We are pleased to report a strong level of professional expertise within the service, with 15.0 FTE staff holding recognised library-related or cognate qualifications, exceeding the target. There are six posts requiring a library qualification, all filled appropriately, and nine qualified staff employed in posts not requiring such qualifications—reflecting the breadth of skills within the team. Many staff are actively working towards CILIP Chartership, further strengthening our professional capacity.

The Libraries and Cultural Service Manager, who sits on the Directorate Management Team, holds a PGCE, a BA Hons in Theatre and Drama, and is currently undertaking professional librarian chartership to enhance operational management expertise. Senior librarians hold key management roles, ensuring strategic oversight and professional leadership.

Training and professional development remain a priority, with 2.3% of total staff hours dedicated to these activities, maintaining a strong culture of continuous learning and service improvement.

Volunteers play a vital role in our service, with 169 active volunteers contributing over 22,700 hours this year. They receive comprehensive training, including modules on GDPR, safeguarding, digital inclusion, and new library management systems, supported by both internal and external programmes.

Note: Staff working hours are currently estimated and will be finalised by 24th June 2025 due to circumstances beyond the Library Service's control.

WPLSQI 14 Operational expenditure	2024-25	% of total	2023-24	% of total
Expenditure on staff	£1,347,682	76%	£ 1,228,685	59%
Total materials expenditure	£235,989	13%	£ 187,410	9%
Expenditure on maintenance, repair & replacement of equipment & buildings	£65,189	4%	£ 135,660	7%
Total other operational costs	£117,561	7%	£ 515,632	25%

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

Total revenue expenditure	£1,766,421	*100%*	£	*2,067,387*	*100%*

Authority comment:

The operational expenditure for 2024-25 demonstrates a thoughtful and strategic approach to managing resources within the Vale of Glamorgan library service. Compared to the previous year, we have realigned our budget to focus more heavily on staffing and materials, which are critical to delivering high-quality services that meet community needs.

Staff costs have increased both in absolute terms and as a proportion of total expenditure, rising to £1,347,682 (76%) from £1,228,685 (59%) in 2023-24. This increase highlights our ongoing commitment to investing in skilled, professional staff who are essential to providing accessible and engaging library experiences.

Materials expenditure has also grown to £235,989 (13%), up from £187,410 (9%) last year, enabling us to enrich our collections and ensure they remain relevant and diverse for all users.

Conversely, expenditure on maintenance, repair, and replacement of equipment and buildings has decreased to £65,189 (4%) from £135,660 (7%), reflecting a reduced need for capital works this year. Other operational costs have similarly been reduced to £117,561 (7%) from £515,632 (25%), illustrating careful budget management and a focus on prioritizing direct service delivery.

Overall, total revenue expenditure has decreased from £2,067,387 in 2023-24 to £1,766,421 in 2024-25, indicating prudent financial stewardship while maintaining investment in key service areas.

Looking forward, we will continue to balance financial sustainability with the need to provide a high-quality, user-focused library service. This includes ongoing support for staff development and maintaining strong collections, ensuring the Vale of Glamorgan's libraries remain vibrant, welcoming, and responsive to the evolving needs of our communities.

Total number of visits to library premises during the year

Total number of external visits to the library's web site during the year	155,230

Authority comment:

Welsh Public Library Quality Indicators

WPLSQI 16 Opening hours	2024-25	Per 1,000 pop'n	2023-24 Per 1,000 pop'n
Aggregate annual opening hours for all service points	15229	**113**	*101*

This target has not been met. Please add any comments below:

We recognise that given the make up of our service areas, it is significantly challenging for us to be able to meet this target with only 9 libraries covering 134,000 residents, of which only 4 are not community managed branches. We have one site that has operated under 10 hours per week - This does impact this figure significantly.

Total number of unstaffed opening hours for all service points	0		*0*

Authority comment:

We acknowledge that the target for aggregate annual opening hours has not been met. With only nine libraries serving a population of approximately 134,000—of which five are community-managed branches—it is inherently challenging to meet this target. Only four branches are fully Local Authority managed, and one community library site currently operates under 10 hours per week, which significantly impacts the overall figure.

We have no unstaffed opening hours across our service points, ensuring all open hours are staffed.

Extending opening hours remains a key priority as we continue to develop the service. Our four core branches are open full time, while the community-managed libraries operate with more limited hours—only two are open six days a week, and none on a full-time basis. However, from April 2025, two community libraries have increased their opening hours, which we anticipate will improve our performance against this target in the coming year.

WPLSQI 4 Support for health & wellbeing
Number of loans from Reading Well in Wales series

WPLSQI 8 Library use
Total number of active borrowers during the year
Total number of library members
Total number of adult book issues
Total number of children's book issues
Total number of audio-visual issues
Authority comment (include date of last membership data cleanse):
Last data cleanse: Dec 2024 @ migration to Spydus. Still awaiting implementation of uLibrary LCF connector, which will have impacted any new users joining to use that service (and existing users who need to re-login at any point). Incorrect GA4 tags originally applied by Civica to our new OPAC pages means we only have a few days' worth of site visit data for Q4 from the end of March (2,871 sessions), when this was corrected. OPAC use showed a marked decline immediately post go-live with the new LMS as users familiarise them with the new system.

77 - Includes VOG Website Session Figures.

Active Borrowers -
We have been hoping to be able to gain a correct figure, but following the calculations we are unable to come to a correct answer. Currently, the figures we hold Quarterly and Monthly are:
Looking at the quarterly figures:
24/25 Q1 (Jun) 9,334
24/25 Q2 (Sep) 10,435
24/25 Q3 (Dec) 9,414
Spydus (14/12-31/3): 9,369
- Total - 38,552

Monthly figures (Apr-Nov)
Apr 6,661
May 6,389
Jun 6,340
Jul 7,130
Aug 7,339
Sep 7,027
Oct 7,034
Nov 6,593
- Total - 54,513

WPLSQI 9 Up-to-date and appropriate reading material
Population (From Context)

Total expenditure on material purchased for children

WPLSQI 10 Welsh language resources
Total expenditure on materials in the Welsh language
Percentage of materials exenditure on materials in the Welsh language

WPLSQI 14 Operational expenditure
Expenditure on staff
Total materials expenditure
Expenditure on maintenance, repair & replacement of equipment & buildings
Total other operational costs
Total revenue expenditure

1347682	% of total		2023-24
409			463

1347682	#REF!		#REF!
38,552	286		128
44,183	328		306
159,098	1,181		1,219
101,793	756		790
3,274	24		34

1347682	Per 1,000 pop'n		2023-24
>50,000			
24,551.03		£	22,682

0	Per 1,000 pop'n		#REF!
11,910.51		£	8,905
27%		%	5%
#REF!			

£235,989	#REF!		0	% of total
£1,347,682		£	1,228,685	59%
£235,989		£	187,410	9%
£65,189		£	135,660	7%
£117,561		£	515,632	25%
£1,766,421		£	2,067,387	100%

Authority: Vale of Glamorgan

The impact which the library has had on an individual, or on a group of individuals, during the year. Describe the use made of the service, and the difference that use made to the individual or group concerned.

Indicative length 300 words

Please indicate if permission for the Welsh Government to re-use and/or publish the impact statement has been obtained or not: Yes – obtained

The Vale of Glamorgan Library Service continues to lead the way in tackling digital exclusion, promoting sustainability, and supporting skills development across our communities.

Our innovative Makerspaces at Barry and Penarth Libraries have become creative, hands-on digital learning environments. We are currently working with a local college to deliver a bespoke programme for learners facing barriers to education and employment. These sessions focus on building confidence, digital exploration, and employability skills, offering learners the chance to engage with tools like 3D printers and Cricut machines in a supportive, informal setting. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants reporting improved motivation, confidence, and digital awareness.

In parallel, our Tablet Loan Scheme continues to support digitally excluded residents by providing access to devices and connectivity. This is paired with one-to-one assistance from trained library staff and partners such as Digital Communities Wales, who also help ensure our teams are equipped with the latest skills to provide inclusive, high-quality digital support.

We are also proud to partner with the Barry Repair Café, whose sessions at Barry Library promote sustainability and community resilience by encouraging residents to repair rather than replace everyday items. This grassroots initiative aligns with our commitment to environmental responsibility and community empowerment.

Our library service is proud to be monumental in developing a collection of photographs of the Vale, dating back to the 19th and 21st century, collated and curated by Libraries in the Vale, digitised by staff and volunteers, hosted on People's Collection Wales.

The recent visit from the First Minister recognised the library's leadership in digital inclusion. Her praise for our services highlighted the vital role libraries play in equipping people with the skills and tools they need to thrive in a digital world.

Question 2:

Please provide a narrative that demonstrates how the library service is contributing

towards wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals

(indicative length: 500 words).

The Vale of Glamorgan Library Service plays a vital role in supporting Welsh Government priorities by promoting cultural well-being, reducing inequalities, and championing digital inclusion and the Welsh language. Our four statutory libraries—Barry, Penarth, Cowbridge, and Llantwit Major—alongside five volunteer-led community libraries, provide inclusive, trusted spaces that underpin the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, particularly a more equal Wales, a healthier Wales, and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

Our libraries are hubs for both community learning and cultural engagement. We offer a vibrant and evolving programme of cultural activities, including author talks, live performances, exhibitions, reading groups, and creative workshops for adults and children. These initiatives are often delivered in partnership with our Arts Development Officer and local organisations, contributing to a thriving local cultural offer and helping to combat isolation, promote mental wellbeing, and foster a sense of belonging. Regular family-friendly sessions such as Baby Rhyme Time and seasonal craft activities encourage early literacy and creativity while reinforcing intergenerational community ties.

In partnership with Digital Communities Wales, and in line with A Healthier Wales and Education in Wales: Our National Mission, we are committed to tackling digital exclusion and promoting digital equity. Our libraries provide free public access to IT, one-to-one digital support sessions, and outreach to priority groups. Our Tablet Loan Scheme enables digitally excluded residents to borrow internet-enabled devices and receive wraparound support, helping people stay connected, access services, and develop their digital confidence. The quality and innovation of our digital inclusion work—including our interactive MakerSpace at Barry Library—was recently recognised during a visit by the First Minister, who praised the service for delivering accessible and engaging digital experiences for the community.

The service also plays an active role in delivering the aims of Cymraeg 2050, normalising the use of Welsh through bilingual signage, resources, and digital content. We offer Welsh-medium storytimes, author events, and craft sessions, and promote Welsh-language books and e-resources across our venues and platforms. Our team is supported with Welsh language training and works closely with Welsh-medium schools to support early language development.

We are committed to inclusive growth and employability in line with Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales: A Plan for Employability and Skills. Our libraries provide volunteering and work placement opportunities, digital skills development, and support for adult learners. In 2024–2025, we are expanding our youth engagement through targeted skills-based programmes and creative workshops, aligned with the Youth Guarantee and the goal of engaging every young person in education, training, or work.

As a welcoming, responsive, and forward-thinking service, the Vale of Glamorgan Library Service not only delivers statutory provision but makes a meaningful, everyday impact on people's lives. By placing culture, learning, language, and digital inclusion at the heart of our work, we contribute directly to the Welsh Government's wider well-being objectives and help ensure the Vale's communities are informed, connected, and culturally enriched.

Question 3:

Please provide a short statement about the future direction and plans for the library

service

(indicative length 200 words).

The Vale of Glamorgan Library Service is focused on building a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready service that continues to meet the evolving needs of our communities. Our strategic priorities over the coming years centre on three key areas: increasing access and inclusion, strengthening our cultural and digital offer, and supporting community wellbeing.

We will continue to invest in digital inclusion through the expansion of our Tablet Loan Scheme, enhanced digital skills training, and the development of our MakerSpace at across our Libraries, ensuring residents of all ages and abilities can confidently engage with technology. Our cultural programming will grow in partnership with the Council's

Arts Development team and other stakeholders, embedding libraries as creative community hubs and supporting mental health, learning, and creative expression.

A key priority is to strengthen our role in improving literacy across the Vale. We will deepen engagement with schools through class visits, reading challenges, and targeted outreach, while working closely with families and community partners to promote early years literacy, support reluctant readers, and encourage lifelong reading habits.

We are also committed to widening access and modernising the service through improved outreach, refreshed spaces, and a strong bilingual digital presence. In 2025–2026, we aim to develop a new Library Strategy aligned with the Council's Vale 2030 vision and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, co-designed with our communities to ensure services are relevant, equitable and sustainable.

The future of the service is rooted in innovation, partnership, and community voice—ensuring libraries remain essential to life in the Vale.