



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY, COMMUNITIES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14th MARCH 2019

RHONDDA CYNON TAF'S WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS ASSESSMENT 2017-2018

REPORT OF DIRECTOR PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide information to the Public Service, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee on the feedback received from Welsh Government in respect of the Library Service's performance against the Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) for the period 2017-18.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Consider the content of the Annual Assessment Report received from Welsh Government;
- 2.2 Scrutinise in greater depth any matters contained in the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This is the first Report to be received under *Connected and Ambitious Libraries: The Sixth Quality Framework 2017-2020*.
- 3.2 The aims of the Sixth Quality Framework are to:
- Enable the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure to fulfil the statutory requirements of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 in respect of superintending the duty of

- Local Authorities to deliver a '*comprehensive and efficient*' library service;
- Provide a robust assessment of the performance of library services;
 - Have clear links to the Welsh Government's programme for government (*Taking Wales Forward 2016-21*) 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 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.

3.3 The Sixth Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards includes 12 core entitlements and 16 Quality Indicators designed to monitor how well library services provide for the people of Wales. The Quality Indicators fall into 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 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 the wider community.

3.4 The core entitlements stipulate that libraries in Wales will:

- Be free to join and open to all (WPLSCE1);
- Have friendly, knowledgeable and qualified staff on hand to help (WPLSCE2);
- 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, and community participation, and culture and recreation (WPLSCE3);
- Provide appropriate services, facilities and information resources for individuals and groups with special requirements (WPLSCE4);
- Provide appropriate, safe, attractive and accessible physical spaces with suitable staffed opening hours (WPLSCE5)

- Lend books for free and deliver free access to information, including online information sources available 24 hours a day (WPLSCE6);
 - Provide use of the internet and computers, including Wi-Fi;
 - Provide access to services, cultural activities and high quality resources in the Welsh language(WPLSCE8);
 - Work in partnership to share catalogues and facilitate access to the resources of all Welsh libraries (WPLSCE9);
 - Work with a range of partners to promote and deliver services to new and diverse audiences, enabling more people to benefit from those services (WPLSCE10);
 - Regularly consult users to gather their views on the service and information about their changing needs (WPLSCE11);
 - Provide access to the Library Service's Strategy, Policies, Objectives and Vision in print and on-line, in a range of languages appropriate for the community (WPLSCE12).
- 3.5 A copy of the quality indicators can be seen in the attached Welsh Public Library Standards Assessment at Appendix 1.
- 3.6 Local Authorities submit an Annual Return to the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division (MALD) of Welsh Government. An independent panel then assesses the return and the Library Service's performance against the core entitlements and quality indicators of the Framework. In addition the following are provided by the Library Service:
- Case studies which highlight the impact of the service on individuals and groups;
 - A narrative that demonstrates how the library service is contributing towards wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals;
 - A short statement about the future direction and plans for the library service.

These can be seen at Appendix 2.

4. RESULTS OF THE ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT 2017/18

4.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf's Library Service was assessed as follows:

- All 12 core entitlements were met in full;
- Of the 10 quality indicators that have outcome targets, the service met 5 in full, 1 in part and failed to meet 4;
- Reduction in staff hours and opening hours were identified as negatively affecting performance against the Quality Indicators;
- Overall the service was assessed as an average performer when compared with Library Services across Wales.

However, the proposed investment in new buildings was welcomed and it was recognised that outreach work, community engagement and mobile library provision has mitigated the closure of libraries that had taken place previously.

4.2 Previous assessments under the Fifth Quality Framework were as follows:

- In 2014-15 the service was assessed as having met all the 18 core entitlements and 3 quality indicators in full, 2 in part and failed to meet 2;
- In 2015-16 the service was assessed as having met all of the core entitlements and 3 quality indicators in full and 4 in part;
- In 2016/17 was assessed as having met all of the core entitlements and met 3 quality indicators in full, 3 in part and failed to meet 1.

The decision to reduce the opening hours of branch libraries by 3.5 hours each week, implemented in 2016, has meant that the Library Service no longer meets the quality indicator on opening hours. (It should be noted that many libraries are used outside of the official opening hours by tutors and community groups. However, this use cannot be counted as part of the return to Welsh Government as there is no librarian on site during these periods.)

4.3 Overall, the Welsh Government's narrative assessment of the performance of the Library Service was positive with recognition given to areas where improvements have been made and an acceptance that the service has reflected well on the reasons for the varying performance levels and that the issues are being addressed. The investment in static service points was welcomed with specific reference made to Rhydyfelin library, the new development under way at Taff Vale and the planned community hubs at Ferndale and Mountain Ash. The assessment concluded that '*in due course the benefits of this longer term investment should become apparent.*'

4.4 Performance in relation to the quality indicators on book stock has been mixed with the target for children's acquisitions being met, but the 4% target on Welsh-medium stock was not met as funding was carried over for stocking the new library at Rhydyfelin resulting in the percentage expenditure on Welsh-medium books in 2017/18 falling to just under 4%. Adult acquisitions have not reached the target. Reductions in the Book Fund in 2016 explains this result.

4.5 Significant development is noted in the use of volunteers. The positive impact of this development can be seen both in respect of the delivery of the Summer Reading Challenge – specifically the engagement of

young volunteers to support the programme; and in the digitisation of historical records.

- 4.6 There are reasons for the failure to achieve some of the quality indicators. In respect of ICT (QI11) the decision was taken not to invest in further public access computers or other digital equipment as only 24% of the time available was being used. A rise in the use of personal devices by customers has contributed to a further reduction in usage of public access PCs. In 2016/17 the number of hours of Wi-Fi usage in libraries was 105,974 hours; this increased to 881,070 hours in 2017/18. It would be irresponsible at a time of financial challenges for the Council to invest in equipment that was not required by customers just to meet a quality indicator.
- 4.7 Efforts have been made this year again to improve the speed at which requests are supplied and this has led to improvements in the supply of requests both within the 7 day and 14 day target, but this continues to be a problem area. However, it is pleasing to note that the assessment panel understands the reasons for this.
- 4.8 Staffing levels and opening hours are dictated by the budget allocated to the service, consequently it is not envisaged that the service will achieve these quality indicators in the medium term. The percentage of qualified staff within the service is a concern in relation to workforce development and succession planning. Only 10 members of the Library Service have professionally recognised library-related qualifications. However it is pleasing to record that funding has been made available to enrol 2 members of staff onto a professionally recognised course. The service has also benefitted from having 2 apprentices, one of whom has recently completed her training and is currently working within the @homelibraryservice.
- 4.9 A comparison of the performance of all Welsh Library Services against the core entitlements and quality indicators with outcome targets can be seen at Appendix 3. These should be handled with care as, over the past 5 years library services in Wales have developed differently and it can be difficult to make valid comparisons based solely on the achievement of the standards.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equality or diversity implications aligned to this report

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 There are no consultation implications aligned to this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 Public Libraries in England and Wales are governed by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. This legislation requires Local Authorities to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service. In Wales the Welsh Public Library Standards identify a range of core entitlements and quality indicators designed to provide guidance for library services.

9. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

9.1 The Library Service contributes to each of the Council's three key priorities and contributes to each of the Welsh Government's 7 well-being goals. These are clearly identified in the Welsh Government's Sixth Quality Framework.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 Although the Library Service's performance reduced slightly in respect of the number of quality indicators achieved in 2017/18 when compared to 2016/17, the latest assessment is more positive in respect of potential future developments and its recognition of improvements achieved in key areas such as community engagement and outreach provision.

10.2 It is notable that despite failing to meet the staffing target set by MALD that customer feedback indicates satisfaction rates of 99% ('very good' and 'good') for customer care which is an indication of the continued dedication of library staff to providing the best possible service for their customers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers

Back ground papers should be a List of documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the officers opinion will:

- a) Disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- b) Which have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report

But does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information

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Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Rhondda Cynon Taf

Annual Assessment Report 2017-18

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

1 Executive summary

Rhondda Cynon Taf met all of the 12 core entitlements in full.

Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Rhondda Cynon Taf achieved 5 in full, 1 in part and failed to achieve 4.

Rhondda Cynon Taf reports a somewhat mixed performance in the first year of the sixth framework, with improvements in some areas and declining figures in others. The return does however reflect well on the reasons for these varying performance levels, and indicates how issues are being addressed. A number of factors outside the immediate control of the service appear to have had a major influence on usage figures for 2017-18, and some improvement can therefore be anticipated in future years. The authority is continuing to invest in its service points, with the opening of the new facility at Rhydyfelin, the planned relocation of Pontypridd Library, and the development of Community Hubs at two further locations. In due course the benefits of this longer term investment should become apparent.

- Rhondda Cynon Taf submitted two case studies demonstrating the positive impact that the service makes. All service points provide a full range of support for individual development and for health and well-being.
- Attendance at formal training sessions has increased, with 98% of attendees supported to achieve their goals.
- Usage figures have generally fallen in 2017-18, but the reasons for this are well understood, and some improvement can be anticipated in future years.
- Investment in the materials budget increased slightly, although the service is still some way from achieving the stipulated targets and it is acknowledged that in the current financial climate further improvement is unlikely.
- The proportion of requests satisfied within 7 or 15 days have improved slightly, but are still below the required levels.
- Staffing levels have increased on 2016-17, and the service is continuing to invest in staff training and professional development, with funding specifically identified to support staff to achieve qualifications by distance learning.
- The authority is continuing to invest in its service points, with the opening of the new Rhydyfelin library in 2017-18, and plans for further developments at Pontypridd, Ferndale and Mountain Ash libraries.

2 Performance against the standards

The standards framework comprises of core entitlements, quality indicators with targets, quality indicators with benchmarks and impact measures. Section 2 summarises

achievements against these areas. A narrative assessment of the authority's performance is provided in Section 3.

2.1 Core entitlements

Rhondda Cynon Taf meets all 12 core entitlements in full. The authority strives to maintain a broad range of services and resources, operating a School Library Service, a Mobile Library Service and a Housebound Service. The service is a member of the Books4U Inter-Library Loan scheme, and was an early adopter of the all-Wales LMS. Consultation with users is undertaken on a regular basis, with three public meetings annually, and formal user surveys at least once every three years. Social media is also used, both to promote the service, and as a means of gathering informal feedback.

2.2 Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which ten have constituent targets. Of these, Rhondda Cynon Taf is achieving 5 in full, one in part and is failing to achieve 4 of the indicators.

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

Quality Indicator	Met?		
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications:		Partially met	
i) Staff per capita	x		
ii) Qualified staff per capita	x		
iii) Head of service qualification/training	✓		
iv) CPD percentage	✓		
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	x	Not Met	

There is some change on the last year of the fifth framework, with the target for the proportion of the materials budget spent on items in the Welsh language no longer met, and QI 11 fully met following the completion of the roll of Wi-Fi provision to all static libraries.

2.3 Impact measures

The framework includes three indicators aimed at assessing the impact of library use on people's lives. These indicators do not have targets, and authorities are only required to carry out user surveys for QI 1 once over the three-year period of the framework. The summary figures (lowest, median and highest) are therefore based on those authorities indicating they completed their user survey during this first year of the framework.

Rankings reflect the numbers of respondents, where 1 is the highest scoring authority.

Rhondda Cynon Taf has indicated they will be undertaking user surveys during 2018-19.

Performance indicator	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference				
b) % of young people who think that the library helps them learn and find things out:	n/a	73%	94%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	n/a	38%	90%	95%
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	98%	4/17	75%	98%
				100%

Authorities are also asked to provide up to four case studies describing the impact which the library service has had on an individual or on a group of individuals during the year. Rhondda Cynon Taf provided two such case studies:

- Work Placement – an individual on an initial work experience placement at Treorchy Library has improved his confidence, reading skills and well-being, and is now a regular volunteer with the service.
- ‘Scribblers’ Creative Writing Group – a self-organised writing group which meets weekly in Aberdare library. The library provides a relaxing and friendly atmosphere for the meetings, and inspiration from the resources on offer; producing a biennial anthology of local writers work to which the group contribute. The group has improved the well-being of its members, providing emotional and personal support.

2.4 Quality indicators and benchmarks

The remaining indicators do not have targets, but allow services to monitor and benchmark their performance over time, in comparison with other authorities. The following table

summarises Rhondda Cynon Taf's position for 2017-18. Ranks are included out of 22, where 1 is the highest, and 22 the lowest scoring authority, unless stated otherwise. Indicators where fewer than 22 authorities supplied data are those where relevant data was not available to some authorities. Where possible, figures from the last year of the fifth framework have also been included for comparison; however, in some cases a change in definition or the introduction of additional measures makes comparisons impractical. Indicators 'per capita' are calculated per 1,000 population unless otherwise noted.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2016/17
QI 1 Making a difference						
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills:	n/a		24%	83%	94%	84%
c) health and well-being	n/a		33%	65%	95%	59%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	n/a		90%	98%	100%	99%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction						
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	n/a		88%	91%	98%	94%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	n/a		93%	99%	100%	99%
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	n/a		74%	86%	94%	
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall;	n/a		93%	97%	99%	96%
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	n/a		8.5	9.1	9.2	x
QI 5 User training						
a) attendances per capita	41	9/22	10	32	238	35
c) informal training per capita	93	19/22	15	199	473	98
QI 6 attendances at events per capita	186	17/22	82	228	684	237
QI 8 Library use						
a) visits per capita	3,355	16/22	2,501	4,047	7,014	3,385
b) virtual visits per capita	243	22/22	243	866	2,211	534
c) active borrowers per capita	204	3/22	100	154	229	77
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita*	45	16/22	4	68	663	
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per capita ^A	8	17/22	5	9	14	8
c) % of available time used by the public	24%	15/22	14%	27%	67%	29%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications						
(v) a) total volunteers	22	15/21	3	31	196	48
b) total volunteer hours	2,442	6/21	40	1,346	11,939	1,333
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£9,994	17/21	£7,047	£11,915	£17,771	£9,249
b) % on staff,	68%	7/21	44%	63%	75%	75%
% on information resources	15%	7/21	4%	13%	25%	15%
% on equipment and buildings	4%	11/21	0%	4%	20%	0%
% on other operational costs;	14%	14/21	0%	18%	37%	10%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£203	11/20	£0	£338	£17,432	£1,178
QI 15 Net cost per visit	£2.20	5/21	£1.24	£1.82	£2.41	

QI 16 Opening hours [#]							
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.04%	13/21	0.00%	0.02%	1.28%	0.00%	
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	3.90%	18/20	0.00%	0.35%	11.24%	1.79%	

* per Welsh speaking resident population

[^]per 10,000 resident population

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

3 Analysis of performance

The core entitlements and quality indicators can be divided into four key areas. This section of the report outlines performance under these areas, and compares this performance (where applicable) with the final year of the fifth framework (2016-17).

3.1 Meeting customer needs (QI 1-5)

Rhondda Cynon Taf has yet to conduct its user surveys which are due to take place in 2018-19. All static libraries provide full support for individual development, and good support is provided for health and well-being, with the targets here both met. An increase in the number of formal training sessions held has seen a welcome rise in attendance, with performance above the median level, and 98% of attendees supported to achieve their goals. The number helped by means of informal training has however declined slightly, with performance here among the lowest in Wales per capita.

3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)

Rhondda Cynon Taf continues to meet the target for easy access to service points, with 13 static service points open 10+ hours per week. Usage figures generally fall below the medians for Wales however, with reported reductions in visitor numbers, attendance at events and book issues. This is attributed to changes in opening hours and severe weather during March, which saw visitor figures for that month fall by 25% on 2016-17. It is noted that the reported figure for book issues also only relates to 10 months, with data unavailable during the transfer to the all-Wales LMS. Reporting of virtual visits, which have also fallen significantly on 2016-17, was affected by the loss of web traffic data for a popular part of the website for half the year. In contrast there has been a notable rise in the number of active borrowers and library members reported – attributed to the greater accuracy of the all-Wales LMS.

3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)

A small increase in the materials budget for 2017-18 is noted, the result of a lump sum investment in stock for the new Rhydyfelin library, although the service is still some way from meeting the requirements of QI 9. While investment in resources for children, and in the Welsh language, has been maintained in 2017-18, relative performance within the increased overall budget shows a reduction. As a result Rhondda Cynon Taf has fallen below the 4% threshold for investment in Welsh language materials in 2017-18, and fails to meet QI 10. PC provision has risen slightly, with new facilities at Rhydyfelin library, but ICT usage has fallen, a trend seen across Wales. Performance in relation to supply of requests has improved, but is still below the stipulated levels. The large number of requests for bestselling titles is identified as the main factor here; the service is now less pro-active in placing reservations and this has reduced the overall number of requests, other approaches to managing the issue are also under consideration.

3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)

Overall staffing levels have increased with the addition of two apprentice posts, and the number of qualified staff has been maintained – although neither staffing target is met. Funding has been identified to support staff to achieve qualifications by distance learning, and support for training / professional development has increased. Qualified leadership is in place, and the service continues to extend its use of volunteers, with a significant increase in volunteer hours, although from a smaller number of now long-term volunteers. The service is now at capacity in terms of the number of volunteers it can support.

Total revenue expenditure has increased slightly in 2017-18, but it is noted that this was mostly to cover maintenance work. Service budgets have otherwise largely been maintained, with no additional cuts, although total expenditure per capita remains below the median for Wales. Aggregate annual opening hours reflect reductions in opening hours implemented in 2016-17 – with Rhondda Cynon Taf now one of five library services not achieving the target. A cluster service model helps ensure that users can access a local library on 6 days of the week. An increase in missed mobile library stops is attributed to the age of the fleet – two new vehicles have now been purchased.

4 Strategic context

As part of the return authorities are asked to report on how the library service is contributing to wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals. Rhondda Cynon Taf reports on its contribution the Welsh Government's cross-cutting strategies: Prosperous and Secure, facilitating skills development, providing free access to IT facilities, and supporting volunteering; Healthy and Active, through support for bibliotherapy schemes; Ambitious and Learning, supporting reading promotions and initiatives; and United and Connected, supporting the development of digital skills.

5 Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, Rhondda Cynon Taf notes the continuing challenge of providing services that meet community needs, whilst dealing with service change and constrained budgets. The Service Delivery Plan identifies key priorities, particularly around service transformation and staff development, to ensure the future sustainability of the service. Proposed actions include the ongoing development of Community Hubs, working with local partners to improve facilities and services to the community, the relocation of Pontypridd Library, increased provision for digital access, and the introduction of self-service kiosks.

6 Conclusion

Rhondda Cynon Taf reports a somewhat mixed performance in the first year of the sixth framework, with improvements in some areas and declining figures in others. The return does however reflect well on the reasons for these varying performance levels, and indicates how issues are being addressed. A number of factors outside the immediate control of the service appear to have had a major influence on usage figures for 2017-18, and some improvement can therefore be anticipated in future years. The authority is continuing to invest in its service points, with the opening of the new facility at Rhydyfelin, the planned relocation of Pontypridd Library, and the development of Community Hubs at

two further locations. In due course the benefits of this longer term investment should become apparent.

Appendix 2 – case studies and additional strategic narrative

Good impact case studies are expected to include evidence that the library service has made a positive difference to an individual (or group of individuals). This would normally go beyond a description of services provided and their use, to show the outcome, and may include testimony from the customers concerned.

Authority: | **RHONDDA CYNON TAF** |

1. 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. Up to four case studies may be provided (indicative length: 500 words each).

Please indicate if permission for the Welsh Government to re-use and/or publish the case studies has been obtained or not: Yes - obtained / No – not obtained

- a) | **Case Study: Work Placement at Treorchy Library**

Background:

The library service provides work placements to aid people with their job prospects, to provide work experience, develop people skills or to help people back into the workplace after long term illness. As well as working with various third party agencies to provide placements the council also has a dedicated Work Experience Placement Officer who actively seeks placements across all council departments.

Personal Perspective:

Daniel initially came to Treorchy library after being placed with the service by the councils Work Experience Officer. The initial placement was for two days a week for a period of three months.

The work placement was designed to give Daniel experience in working in a busy but friendly, relaxed and pleasant environment and to give him an overview of a wide range of skills from working with the public to basic IT. Daniel had expressed an interest in working in the library and felt the library would be a place where he would enjoy working.

During this initial placement Daniel began a project where he researched obituaries in local newspapers and entered these into an index in order that the obituaries could be found easily by other library users.

Daniel has said:

'It gets me out of the house for two days a week and is something to look forward to, it helps me improve my reading skills.'

The placement has helped Daniel with confidence and has greatly increased his wellbeing as:

'It feels good because it helps my reading skills.'

And

'I come to the library and read books, talk to people and improve my communication skills.'

Daniel enjoyed his placement with the library so much that once his placement ended he requested that he continue coming to the library and has now been a regular volunteer for over two years.

As well as providing this placement for Daniel, Treorchy library, as well as all other libraries in Rhondda Cynon Taff continue to provide work placements to on a regular basis along with regular week long school work experience and after school experience as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate.

b) **Case Study: 'Scribblers' Creative Writing Group**

Background:

In 2007 because of the success of an RCT Libraries local literature festival Rhondda Cynon Taf adult education department set up several creative writing sessions across the borough. One group at Aberdare was so successful that the group became a regular weekly event. When the adult education department had to withdraw support the group became self running and has continued for many years with great success, the group currently has fifteen regular members but welcomes new writers on a regular basis. The group is an opportunity for the members to get together with other amateur writers to swap ideas and find the confidence with their peers to express themselves in a relaxing, and friendly atmosphere.

Personal Perspective:

The group's members have found their weekly meeting invaluable to their personal wellbeing and feel that the library is a vital ingredient to its success:

I really enjoy it (the group) and have met some really good friends. It gives me something to look forward too.

(The library) is very important to the group; it gives me ideas when reading the books.

(The group has) made a big difference too my life, made friends which I needed since my husband died.

The Way Forward:

The group continues to meet at the library weekly and actively seeks new members to join and offers advice, encouragement and support to each other. The library service produces a biennial anthology of local writers work and many of the group's members have utilised this opportunity to make their work available to a wider audience. In many cases new and genuine friendships have been created offering members personal and emotional support both in and away from the group.

- |
2. Please provide a narrative that demonstrates how the library service is contributing towards wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals (indicative length: 500 - 1,000 words).

Rhondda Cynon Taf library service has worked hard in recent years to create libraries that respond to community needs and play a key role in the communities they serve. Our service provision is very broad as it is driven by the information and cultural requirements of the communities we serve. We provide community space that is free and accessible to everyone, access to a wide range of facilities including free internet and computer usage, easy access to information and advice, books and learning activities and very importantly we facilitate social interaction.

In 2015 the Welsh Government introduced the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act which is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. In addition to this the Welsh Government has produced a document entitled 'Taking Wales Forward 2016 -2021' which identifies four areas where the Welsh Government can have the biggest impact in obtaining the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. These include 'Prosperous and Secure', 'Healthy and Active', 'Ambitious and Learning' and 'United and Connected'. It can clearly be seen from the following that our library service contributes to each of these areas.

Prosperous and Secure: The Welsh Government states that it is committed to offering the skills and experiences people need to thrive and prosper in our times'. Our libraries facilitate this by not only offering the resources required for learning to take place but by providing informal and formal classes on a wide range of subjects. The availability of community meeting rooms and spaces with access to IT facilities makes us the ideal location for partnership work. Sessions offered in 2017/18 included Basic Skills Training, Job Clubs and Rathbone training sessions. We also continue to support volunteering by offering opportunities including Work Placements, Welsh Baccalaureate placements and identified Library Volunteer placements, e.g. local history and digitisation volunteers.

Healthy and Active: Users of our library service can benefit directly by making use of some of our 'Health Schemes' such as the Book Prescription Wales scheme' and the 'Better with Books scheme', by attending health and wellbeing events at libraries or by

simply picking up information about healthy lifestyles and behaviours. Our libraries are places that promote inclusion and prevent social isolation, they provide physical spaces within which people can socialise and interact thereby gaining a sense of social wellbeing. Specialised services such as the Schools Library Service and Housebound Service encourage literacy and serve some of the most isolated people in our communities.

Ambitious and Learning: Establishing an early foundation for reading skills has been identified by the Welsh Government as being a crucial factor in providing children with the best start in life. As well as providing access to literature that is targeted at children, young people, adults and users with poor literacy levels we run story time sessions, reading groups, host author visits and other literary based events. We also support reading promotions and strategies such as Bookstart, the Summer Reading Challenge and World Book Day.

United and Connected: The Welsh Government aims to help 95% of people gain at least the basic digital skills needed for the 21st century by 2021. We support this aim by the providing free internet access, ICT training sessions and informal advice and guidance by staff members, enabling residents without home computers the facility to access the internet. The introduction of Digital Friday sessions into all 13 of our libraries has contributed greatly to the digital inclusion strategy within RCT.

Our libraries continue to operate as a multi-purpose service open to all aspects of the community. They are places that people visit to choose books, use a computer and attend group meetings or classes and as such they are institutions that promote inclusion and prevent social isolation. As such they are instrumental in supporting and contributing to Welsh Government strategies and policies both at a national and local level. Continued investment in library services is required however if we are to sustain our contribution.

3. Please provide a short statement about the future direction and plans for the library service (indicative length 200 words).

Our challenge is to provide a library service that meets the needs of the people who live, work and study in our area, whilst dealing with significant service changes and constrained budgets. In order to achieve this we have identified the following priorities within our Service Delivery Plan:

1. Increase the number of visits to libraries by attracting new customers and further enhancing provision.
2. Continue to transform the service and re-model provision to make it more sustainable for the future.
3. Develop staff skills to better meet the future needs of the service.

4. Review the processes and procedures used by the service to ensure cost-effectiveness and clarity.

The Council has proposed a programme of investment in community services across the County Borough through the development of Community Hubs as part of the Council's approach to building resilient communities and early intervention and prevention. The library service will play a key part in the early phases of this development with the relocation of Ferndale Library and Mountain Ash Library into community hubs. In terms of development for the Library Service these moves provide an opportunity for us to improve facilities at two of our libraries by the addition of community meeting rooms and IT suites. It also allows us to work together with other partners including third sector organisations to provide effective services for the local community.

The relocation of Pontypridd Library into a purpose build library at the new Taff Vale development and increased provision of digitised services including the digitisation of local history collections and the introduction of self service kiosks are also high priorities.

Appendix 3: Wales Performance against the Welsh Public Library Standards 2017/18

Library Service	Core entitlements	Quality indicators met in full	Quality Indicators met in part	Quality Indicators not met	Number of static libraries	Mobile Libraries	At home service
Blaenau Gwent (Aneurin Leisure Trust)	12	7	1	2	6	x	v
Bridgend (Awen Cultural Trust)	11	7	1	2	11 (and 1 Family and Local history centre)	v	v
Caerphilly	10	8	2		18	x	v
Cardiff	11	7	2	1	19	v	v
Carmarthen	12	9	1		18	v	v
Ceredigion	10	9	1		6	v	v
Conwy	11	9	1		10	v Currently under consultation	v Currently under consultation
Denbighshire	11	8	1	1	8	x	v
Flint (Aura Leisure and Libraries Ltd)	12	9	1		7	v	
Gwynedd	12	9	1		13	v	v
Isle of Anglesey	12	7	2	1	8	v	v
Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust	12	9	1		5		v
Monmouthshire	10	7	1	2	6	x	x
Neath Port Talbot	12	6	1	3	8 (7 community run libraries not included in the assessment)	v	v
Newport	12	7	1	2	9	x	v

Pembrokeshire	11	7	1	2	13	✓	✓
Powys	11	5	1	4	18	✓	
Rhondda Cynon Taf	12	5	1	4	13	✓	✓
Swansea	11	7	1	2	17	x	✓
Torfaen	12	6	1	3	3	x	✓
Vale of Glamorgan	11	7	2	1	4 (5 community run libraries not included in the assessment)	x	✓
Wrexham	9	4	4	2	10	✓	✓