Libraries Inspire

The strategic development framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.cymru.gov.uk

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternate language versions of this document are available on request.

Contact details

For further information contact:

Libraries Development Team

CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales

Welsh Government

Rhodfa Padarn

Llanbadarn Fawr

Aberystwyth

SY23 3UR

E-mail: cymal@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 062 2112

Web address: www.wales.gov.uk/cymal
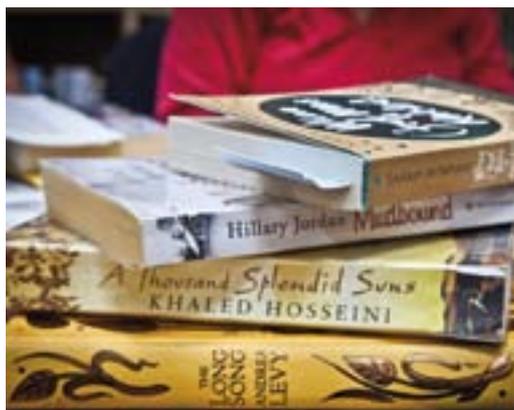
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" The library is fab and the staff are great and we get to do great things. "

(Blaenau Gwent library user, aged 11-15)

Foreword

I have always valued the role that libraries played in my life, from my childhood visits to Merthyr library to my university days. Libraries all over Wales inspire people of all ages to make a real difference to their lives. During my visits to libraries across Wales I have been impressed by the wide range of activities provided by libraries. From free book loans, helping people to use computers for the first time, the chance to learn new skills, a quiet spot to study, access to millions of online resources, community events, introducing children to picture books and stories, all this and more is happening in our libraries every day.

Through sustained Welsh Government investment in our libraries and the commitment of library staff, Wales is at the forefront of many innovative library developments in the UK and farther afield. Welsh success in raising the number of users of our public library services has been firmly rooted in our partnership with local authorities. Libraries Inspire will help deliver priorities outlined in the Welsh Government's Programme for Government such as literacy and other key skills, accessible digital opportunities, promoting our culture and helping to reduce inequalities.

Libraries Inspire supports effective and efficient service delivery at national, regional and local levels: through working in partnership libraries will continue to play a significant role in realising the aspirations of individuals and communities alike.

Libraries are needed now as much as ever and I am grateful to everyone who has contributed to the development of this Framework. Libraries inspire people, and I am delighted to be able to present this dynamic and forward looking strategy for Welsh libraries.

Huw Lewis AM

Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage

1. Introduction

1.1 Shared vision

Libraries will inspire the people of Wales to enjoy reading, enhance their knowledge and skills, to enrich their quality of life and empower them to realise their full potential.

Public, educational, and workplace libraries, are at the heart of their communities. The very reason for their existence is to inspire and assist people to make a positive difference to their lives. Libraries contribute to the social, educational, cultural and economic wellbeing of the people of Wales. They are inclusive places welcoming people from all social or economic backgrounds to benefit from generally free access to the rich and varied resources provided.

1.2 Libraries change lives

The role of libraries is even more important in a period of economic downturn. People need access to high quality impartial information, resources and assistance to enable them to take informed decisions, including, for a number of people, practical help to get back into work.

"The library makes a massive difference to my life, mainly concerning my children. We get an awful lot of books out, and it saves us an amazing amount of money, as I have 3 children. All the children of different ages can come to the library and not get bored, also with the children's area, do jigsaws and colouring. The children also gain confidence, asking for books or internet use." [1]

(Gwynedd library user, aged 26-49)

" I have been using the library to write CVs. The staff have helped and supported me all the way. I have been unemployed for a few years and have taken the opportunity to do some OCN qualifications through the Gateways scheme within the library – as a result I now have a new job, my life has been transformed! **"**

(Blaenau Gwent library user, aged 16-25)

1.3 Increasingly popular

The investment made by local authorities and educational institutions, working in partnership with the Welsh Government, has led to a general increase in recent years in the number of people both visiting their local libraries and taking advantage of library online services.

For two consecutive years, 2008-09 and 2009-10, there has been an increase in the number of visitors to Welsh public libraries. There was a 5.6 % increase in public library visitors in 2009-10 compared with the previous year.

There has also been a major growth in the use of online services provided by libraries, especially by education and research libraries. The National Library of Wales currently has over 1.44 million remote network users.

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[1] All library user quotes are from the Happy Days stories, available on http://librarywales.org/

1.4 Moving forward together

In order to sustain and develop library services, there is a need to ensure that all types of libraries, their parent bodies and the Welsh Government continue to work together to successfully deliver the **Libraries Inspire: the strategic development framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16** (the Framework). The value of a clear strategy was underlined by contributors to the evaluation of the Welsh Government's *Libraries for Life: Delivering a Modern Library Service for Wales 2008-11*.

> *"Libraries for Life has been the most effective driving force in developing library services in Wales during the last 20 years."* [2]

> *"Over 70% of staff surveyed agreed that Libraries for Life transformed the libraries of Wales."* [3]

The partnership between the libraries' sector and the Welsh Government in developing a single strategic document that draws together the strengths of different types of libraries is unique in the UK and rare in the rest of the world. The Framework will continue to build upon the strong foundation established in recent years.

1.5 Meeting people's needs

This Framework is based on an unprecedented level of consultation. The current and future needs of people of all ages are at the heart of this Framework. CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales division of the Welsh Government has worked with library services to gather views from focus groups of both users and, equally important, non–library users. Library staff and managers were also consulted.

Research has been carried out to identify future trends that will impact on library service provision, which include securing the benefits of new technology such as social media networks to further develop services to new audiences. Developments in mobile technology are providing increasing opportunities for libraries to deliver resources to library users wherever they are without the need to always visit a library or log on at home or at work.

1.6 What's on offer

For the first time this Framework defines the core offer of Welsh libraries encompassing both public and educational libraries.

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[2] Scotinform. (2010). *Evaluation of Libraries for Life mid term interim review report*. Available directly from CyMAL.

[3] Scotinform. (2011). *Evaluation of Libraries for Life Final Report*. Available from www.wales.gov.uk/cymal

Libraries in Wales will:

- Be open to all members of their communities
- Be free to join
- Lend books for free
- Deliver free access to information
- Provide free use of the Internet and computers
- Deliver free use of online information resources 24 hours a day
- Provide access to high quality resources in a range of formats, including those in the Welsh language, reflecting changing forms of publication
- Ensure friendly, knowledgeable and qualified staff are on hand to help
- Provide a safe, attractive and accessible physical space with suitable opening hours
- Stage a range of activities to support learning, enjoyment and enable users to obtain the maximum benefit from the available resources
- Work in partnership to open up access to the resources of all Welsh libraries
- Maintain a searchable catalogue of Welsh library resources
- Co-operate to create new bilingual digital content about Wales and its people
- Promote libraries to attract more people to benefit from their services
- Regularly consult users to gather their views on the service and information about their changing needs.

1.7 Framework priorities

This Framework will develop seven main action areas.

1.7.1 Sustainable models of service delivery

The Framework will support organisations to review their current models of service delivery in response to the current economic climate. The aim will be to develop new innovative, sustainable and collaborative models of delivery. Evidence of good practice will be identified and made available to managers and policy makers to drive this transformation forward.

1.7.2 Resources for all

People use libraries to access the wide range of resources they provide. Borrowing books is still the main reason for people to visit their local public library, but libraries need to respond to the increasing demand to be able to access resources online, including resources about Wales and in the Welsh language. The Framework will develop collaboration to procure and deliver improved access to resources, including online services.

1.7.3 Space for all

Libraries more than ever need to be places of inspiration and aspiration where people can come to access high quality resources, to learn/study, to enjoy, or to take part in activities in a safe relaxing environment. This Framework will support the continuing modernisation of library buildings to meet the changing needs of their users. Evidence shows that investing in modern libraries attracts more users and enables libraries to develop flexible spaces that can be utilised to provide a wider range of activities.

1.7.4 Skills for life

Libraries play a key role in developing people's skills and knowledge at all levels and at all ages, helping young children to take their first steps to literacy, supporting students in their studies and introducing older people to digital technologies. This Framework embraces a wide definition of literacy, recognising the vital contribution of libraries in delivering digital inclusion and information literacy (the ability to access, evaluate and use information).

1.7.5 Investing in people

Research has shown that library staff are key to providing a good library experience for users.[4] The Framework will continue to invest in developing the skills of library staff based on a detailed analysis of needs and a workforce development plan.

1.7.6 Attracting the audience

In order to justify continued public investment in our libraries it is essential that the maximum number of people benefit from the services provided. This Framework will support the development and implementation of a co-ordinated audience development programme across Wales.

1.7.7 Delivering a quality service

This Framework will support the development of high quality services assessed via Welsh Public Library Standards and encourage other libraries to develop and implement suitable benchmarking toolkits to improve performance management.

An evaluation framework will be established for Libraries Inspire from the outset to ensure that the delivery of the programme meets the objectives set by the strategic framework.

1.8 Delivery plan

The Framework will be accompanied by a detailed annual Delivery Plan outlining actions and the responsibilities of key stakeholders under each of the action areas.

In addition, the Delivery Plan will align the Libraries Inspire actions with priorities of key strategic documents including the Welsh Government's *Programme for Government*.[5]

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[4] Twelfth Man Ltd. (2009). *Mystery Shop: Welsh Library Service Mystery Shopper Report.* Available from www.wales.gov.uk/cymal
[5] Welsh Governent. (2011). *Programme for Government.*

2. Sustainable Models of Service Delivery

2.1 Reviewing service delivery

In challenging financial times, managers and parent bodies will face many difficult decisions. Library services in Wales are reviewing their current models of service delivery to maintain improvements to services made in recent years and to progress new opportunities.

The Welsh Government's report *Local, Regional, National: What services are best delivered where?*[6] (Simpson Report) on local authority service delivery highlighted examples of successful partnership working between public libraries across Wales. These include service delivery at a local, regional and national level.

2.1.1 Delivering local services

Library services are collaborating locally with other services to co-locate in the same building, thus sharing costs. For example, by sharing staffing and a building with a leisure centre, the Ogmore Vale Life Centre, Bridgend County Borough Council, has been able to provide extended public library opening hours that include extensive weekend opening. This model has been replicated by other public library services.

Some public libraries are enhancing their role as information providers by delivering council information services as part of their offer or tourist information services where practicable.

2.1.2 Delivering regional services

Public and academic libraries across Wales are to be commended on their work in opening up access to their collections on a local and regional basis. As a result, library users are able to view and borrow items from participating library services, enabling a member of the public to view or borrow items from both a public and an academic library in their region.

In the further education (FE) sector recent college mergers have led to larger library services. Resulting benefits include shared library management systems and in some cases the employment of professionally qualified library staff for the first time.

2.1.3 Delivering national online services

A notable success of previous Welsh library strategies has been the achievement of efficiency savings and improved consistency of service delivery to people across Wales by the all-Wales procurement of online services. The National Library of Wales, with funding from the Welsh Government, is co-ordinating the all-Wales procurement of online newspaper services for public and academic libraries. It has also procured family history online services for public libraries, local authority archive services and some museums on an all-Wales basis. Public, FE and HE (higher education) libraries are also involved in their own Wales-wide (and UK-wide) procurement initiatives.

[6] Welsh Government. (2011). *Local, Regional, National: What services are best delivered where?* Available from www.wales.gov.uk

2.2 Contributing towards a sustainable future

Sustainability is a central policy objective for the Welsh Government, encompassing economic improvement; the social and environmental well-being of people and communities; promoting fair and safe communities and equal opportunities; and supporting our natural, cultural and bilingual environments.

Libraries contribute towards an environmentally sustainable future in a number of ways. Recycling through sharing resources is central to all library services. In addition investment in new libraries and modernising existing libraries has resulted in major improvements in areas such as the energy efficiency of libraries and ensuring that buildings meet the current and future needs of disabled people.

In November 2010 the new Cardiff Central Library received The Royal Institute of British Architects' award for sustainability. Opened in March 2009, many of the library's purpose-built features have kept energy consumption low. Features include a grass roof that insulates the building and removes carbon dioxide, and energy efficient lighting. *The Sunday Times* Travel magazine voted Cardiff Central Library as one of the six best libraries in the world and the only one from the UK to feature on the list.

Libraries also contribute towards the sustainable development agenda through their provision of information on key topics such as climate change and carbon footprints. Their services can help individuals to learn new skills about behaviour changes necessary to adapt to changing environmental conditions.
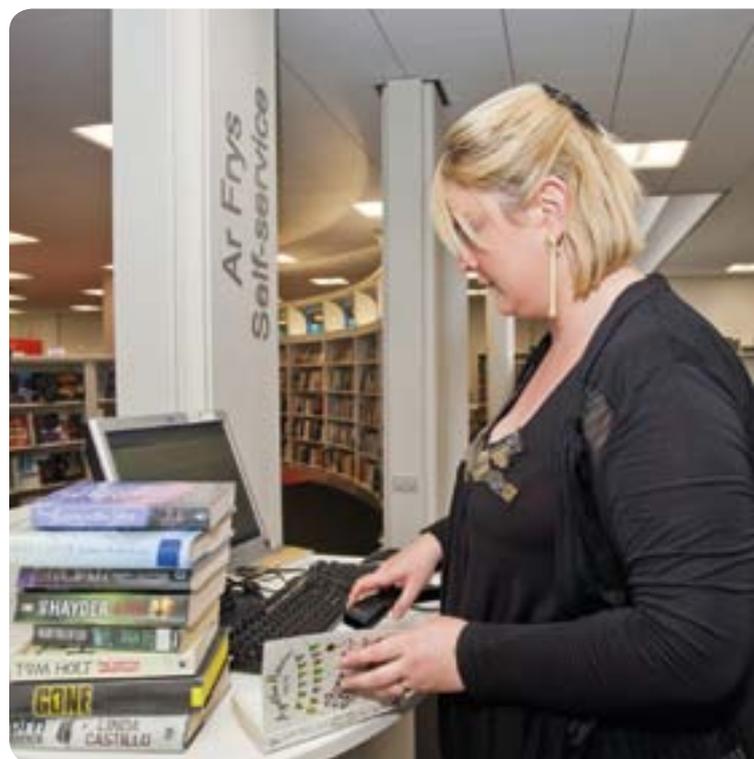
Eradicating child poverty is another core indicator in the Welsh Government's sustainability agenda. A key theme to emerge from the recent consultation on the Welsh Government's Child Poverty Strategy was the importance of libraries to low income families and disadvantaged communities. Being free at the point of delivery, libraries support families living in poverty by offering access to a wealth of resources and a range of information, and tackling child inequalities.

2.3 Promoting well-being

Libraries provide a neutral, safe location for local communities which delivers benefits far beyond those immediately apparent as opportunities for individual learning. Libraries contribute to achieving sustainable health and well-being for the people of Wales and can help address health inequities. Through participating in the services and activities that libraries offer, users remain actively involved in their communities, improving their individual life chances and contributing to healthier, happier communities and community cohesion.

"I need to draw your attention to the inequitable gaps in health and well-being that exist across the country. These require sustained commitment to ensure that where a person lives or their social circumstance, does not lead to a lesser quality of life and a premature death." [7]

Activities and projects within public libraries help to support the care and recovery of people with long-term illness. They also support older people to live independent lives. For example, the innovative Books Prescription Wales scheme began in Cardiff before expanding to an all-Wales service. It enables a GP to prescribe a book from an agreed list for the treatment of mild to moderate mental health and dementia conditions. With over 30,000 'prescriptions' each year, this is a cost-effective example of partnership working between the Welsh Government, health services and library services. Its success has been demonstrated in the adoption of this model by countries across the world.

"Libraries were always very quiet places to me – too quiet since I was deaf but if I hadn't gone [to the library] one day for information on hearing loss and implants, I would never have thought of asking my doctor about a cochlea implant. Now I sometimes just sit and listen to the rustle of newspapers, pages of books being flicked through, computer beeps and the chatter of people asking all sorts! Now again, I can use the listening (audio) books, CDs and DVDs. My library gave me the knowledge to change my life!"

(Conwy library user, aged 50-64)

Libraries enable community empowerment through improving public access to information relating to participation in a democratic society, consumer rights and citizens' entitlements and responsibilities. Libraries can strengthen public life by encouraging and supporting awareness and participation in local decision-making and wider civic and political engagement. They can also contribute to social justice in ensuring equal access to information about service delivery by local and national government.

2.4 What we will do

The library sector will work in partnerships with others to review models of library service delivery in order to create a more sustainable service in line with Recommendation 18 of the Simpson Report that states:

"We recommend that there be collaboration in library services leading to the procurement of shared information systems which support shared procurement, shared borrowing, and information services." [8]

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[7] Welsh Assembly Government. (2011). *Chief Medical Officer for Wales Annual Report 2009, quote on p.3 in Fairer Health Outcomes For All: Reducing Inequities in Health Strategic Action Plan.* Available from www.wales.gov.uk

[8] Welsh Government. (2011). *Local, Regional, National: What services are best delivered where?* Available from www.wales.gov.uk

- CyMAL and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) will engage with public library stakeholders on reviewing models of service delivery including:

  - Commissioning and disseminating evidence relating to good practice in Wales and beyond to assist library managers and parent bodies to make informed decisions

  - Providing available grant funding to support collaborative pilot projects to pioneer new delivery models

  - Identifying opportunities to support the wider roll-out of new collaborative service delivery models within local, regional and national contexts.

- The Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum (WHELF) will work towards achieving the partnership agenda outlined in the annual report for 2009-10:

Our vision is a holistic approach to higher education library services in Wales. All university students and staff in Wales will have access to the shared resources and services of a virtual academic library for Wales. This will be based on:

  - *Shared resources: As well as above 5 million print items, this will include e-resources and shared access to institutional repositories*

  - *Shared access: This will include access in person, reciprocal borrowing and document delivery*

- *Shared services: There will be a pilot project to share a single Library Management System between an initial cluster of universities, along with other shared services like an Electronic Resource Management system.*[9]

- The Community Learning Libraries programme will continue to promote environmental enhancements to library buildings by ensuring that any new building partly or fully funded by the Welsh Government must achieve these two construction standards:

  - *an overall "Excellent" rating under the BREEAM assessment framework, or a similar rating under an equivalent assessment framework*

  - *a minimum standard for recycled content. At least 10% of the total value of materials used should derive from recycled and reused content in the products and materials selected.*

- Libraries will seek to consult with their respective communities in future developments.

- Libraries will work in partnership with CyMAL to investigate the potential of joint library management system procurement.

- Libraries will work with partners to provide health information and activities that promote people's well-being.

- Libraries will collaborate to identify funding sources to help deliver new models of service delivery.

[9] Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum. (2010). *WHELF Annual Report 2009-10*. Available from http://whelf.ac.uk/

3. Resources for All

3.1 Why people use libraries

"My children and I love books, the library means that I have been able to get books for me to read to the children, so the children have books for their reading levels. The library has also been there for me to help me with my college course. Also medical knowledge. The world would not be the same without libraries. They are for children and adults now and the future."

(Flintshire library user, aged 26-49)

There are many reasons why people use libraries, but borrowing books continues to be the main reason for people to visit their library. A survey[10] of over 670 library users in Wales found that:

- 94% said the main reason for visiting a library is to borrow, renew or return books
- 54% had visited a library to use a computer
- 50% to access the Internet
- 48% to seek information
- 36% to borrow, renew or return films
- 27% to borrow, renew or return music/CDs
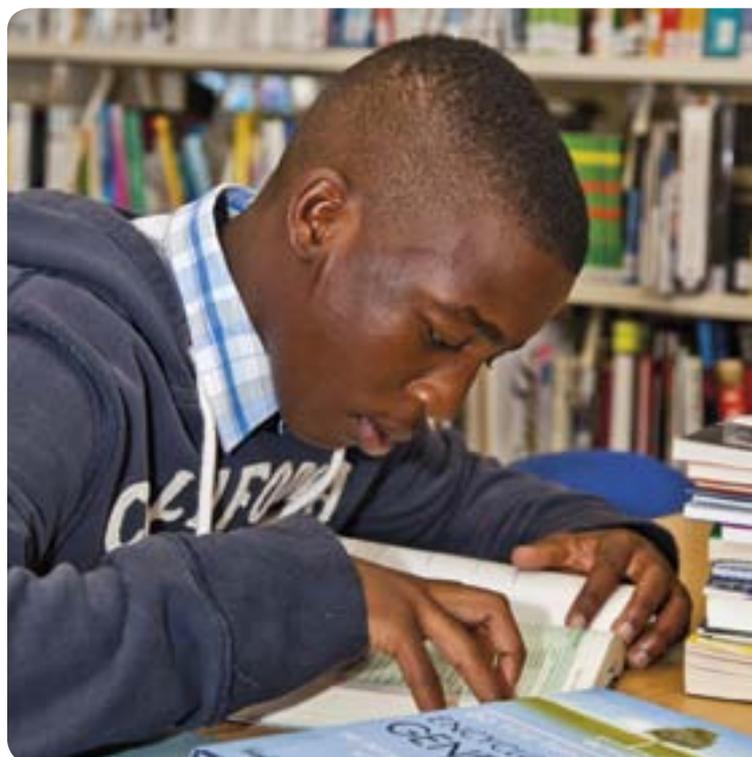- 27% to read newspapers and magazines.

3.2 A gateway to the world

It is a core requirement that libraries provide a suitable collection of resources in a variety of formats and languages, including those in the Welsh language, to meet the needs of users.

Libraries also provide the material in a variety of formats to enable people with different access requirements to access and benefit from resources. Many libraries offer computers with assistive technology, as well as talking books and large print books.

The resources provided by libraries provide a free gateway to the world of information, education and recreation. They assist people to make a real difference to their lives.

"It's great to just browse and be able to sit and read awhile. … I booked my flights to Barcelona from the library when I was going there to follow a TEFL course for a month. That course led me to a year's work in Barcelona during which time I learnt Spanish. Now, back home, I regularly go to the branch to the language section and take out various Spanish text books to keep on the ball with producing current and fun lessons for my pupils."

(Rhondda Cynon Taf library user, aged 18-26)

[10] Scotinform. (2010). *Evaluation of Libraries for Life Final Report*. Available from www.wales.gov.uk/cymal

The Swansea University annual Library and Information Services (LIS) survey[11] for 2010 showed that:

> "Networked services are used most frequently, with 42.1 % of LIS networked services being accessed at least daily."

The previous two library strategies for Wales achieved considerable success in improving access to Welsh library resources by utilising new software developments and jointly procuring online resources:

- CatCymru - enables anyone to search over 50 library catalogues from Wales in one go. Led by the National Library of Wales, this development underpins the development of regional interlibrary loan services involving public and academic libraries across Wales to enable people to obtain the item they require.

- Librarywales.org is a single website portal for 'all things library' providing access to Welsh library catalogues via CatCymru, answering questions via the Ask Cymru enquiry service, finding out the opening hours of local libraries and accessing online newspapers.

- The National Library of Wales, on behalf of further and higher education libraries and public libraries, has procured access to an all-Wales online newspaper resource covering over 20 Welsh and 350 UK titles. The National Library has also procured online access in public libraries, archives services and some museums to popular family history online services.

3.3 The virtual world

Libraries are actively embracing the virtual world and in recent years there has been a consistent increase in the use of online resources in all types of libraries. The National Library of Wales has seen a rise in the number of remote network users from 280,000 in 2004/5 to over 1.44 million in 2009/10.

For education libraries in particular mobile technologies are rapidly become central to the delivery of services reflecting the changing learning and teaching approaches. Institutions are experimenting with podcasts of lectures, new e-learning environments and digital collections.

[11] Swansea University. (2010). *Library & Information Services Survey 2010.* Available from www.swan.ac.uk/lis/AboutLis/reports/

3.4 Creating new Welsh digital resources

Public, academic libraries and the National Library of Wales preserve and provide access to resources, including rare and unique collections that reflect the rich and diverse culture and heritage of Wales. The history and heritage around us can inspire people to find out more about where they live and to promote social cohesion.

Libraries strive to maintain suitable and stable environments for their special collections, developing good preventive conservation practice that substantially reduces the risk of deterioration to these collections ensuring their availability for future generations.

Digitisation of library resources provides libraries with an opportunity to improve access to these collections (copyright permitting) and to assist the preservation of the original copy by making

digital copies freely available on the Web. It also addresses the need to increase the amount of digital resources relating to Wales' culture and heritage on the Web. As a result, new valuable resources which support educational services, help raise Wales' profile internationally and substantially increase the amount of Welsh language material available on the Web.

In August 2010 a new bilingual website, The People's Collection Wales,[12] was launched. This is a truly groundbreaking service that will become the main entry point via computers and mobile technology for people interested in Wales' culture and heritage. It is also an example of co-operation between our national institutions the National Library of Wales, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and local libraries, museums and archives. The service utilises the latest Web 2.0 functionality to enable people to contribute their own collections to the website and to personalise and create their own resources, such as digital stories and e-tourist trails.

The National Library of Wales as part of its Theatre of Memory[13] initiative has embarked on the digitisation of 2 million pages of early Welsh newspapers and magazines. These pages will be freely available on the Web in 2013. This exciting development has been made possible by an investment of £2 million from the Welsh Government's Strategic Capital Investment Fund.

[12] People's Collection Wales: www.peoplescollectionwales.com

[13] The National Library of Wales (2011). *Theatre of Memory*. Available from www.llgc.org.uk

3.5 Embracing new technologies

Baseline research on the use of social media in Welsh libraries revealed that there is considerable enthusiasm among staff to engage with their current users, and seek new users, in innovative ways. Where possible, libraries are using blogs, microblogs (e.g. Twitter) and social networking sites to inform people of what is happening in the library, and to alert customers to new services or resources. Social media and social networking are likely to play an increasingly important part in the lives of students, the public, and library staff. During the period of the Framework this will have particular relevance for strategies for workforce skills (section 6) and attracting audiences (section 7).

Mobile technologies are becoming more important in providing information and resources.

They are changing learning and teaching practice. Academic libraries are experimenting with podcasts of lectures, new e-learning environments and enhanced remote access. The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) states that:

> *"Mobile and wireless technologies can provide flexible and timely access to learning resources, instantaneous communication, portability, active learning experiences and the empowerment and engagement of learners, particularly those in dispersed communities."* [14]

Upgrading the broadband connectivity of libraries will be crucial if more services are to be delivered digitally, and the Welsh Government's Public Service Broadband Aggregation initiative will play a key role in the coherent delivery of digital public services.

During the lifespan of this Framework further new technologies will be introduced that will provide opportunities for libraries to develop and personalise their services. A key challenge for the Framework through the annual Delivery Plans will be to embrace these developments where they demonstrate real potential to improve service delivery.

3.6 What we will do

Libraries and the Welsh Government will work in partnership:

- To ensure that libraries work together to provide high quality resources, including interlibrary loans, that meets the needs of their community.

[14] JISC. (2010). *Mobile learning*. Available from www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/topics/mobilelearning.aspx

- With museums, archives, other services and the public to create new bilingual digital content that will be freely available on the Web.

- To develop a national online reference library service for Wales. This work will be led on behalf of Welsh libraries by the National Library of Wales.

- To enable public libraries to pilot new e-services such as e-books and music downloads to meet the changing needs of people.

- To further develop the all-Wales library portal librarywales.org and services such as CatCymru and Ask Cymru. This work will be led on behalf of Welsh libraries by the National Library of Wales.

- To identify at risk material and where appropriate, provide advice from accredited conservators. CyMAL will work with the relevant bodies to provide conservation advice and support.

- To continue to enhance accessibility to resources by people with disabilities.

- CyMAL will work with key external stakeholders and library services to address the various barriers to utilising social media opportunities to enhance services.

- To introduce the full Legal Deposit of non-print publications in line with new Regulations due in 2011/12.

4. Space for All

4.1 Creating inspirational spaces

"Walking through the library is like entering a haven of calm, tranquil décor, modern comfy furniture, space, a place to relax – find a book by my favourite author – sit down – switch off or on to a different world. The odd giggle from the children's corner makes you realise you are still on "this planet" but it adds to the fact that all ages can enjoy the 21st century style of the library."

(Swansea library user, aged 65+)

Libraries more than ever need to be places of inspiration and aspiration where people can come to access high quality resources, to learn/study, to enjoy, or to take part in activities in a safe relaxing environment. There has been significant investment in building new and in particular modernising Welsh libraries in recent years as the evidence of usage shows that visiting and using the facilities provided in public and academic libraries remains central to the library experience.

The Welsh Government has invested £9 million, with an additional £3.65m in match-funding from local authorities, to transform 68 public libraries across Wales as part of the Community Learning Libraries programme. A further 9 projects, receiving funding will be completed in 2011-12.

"We have been using the library again in Tredegar after years. The library staff went to my son's school, Tredegar Comprehensive and he encouraged us all to go. My whole family go now, every Saturday morning. My son uses the Internet, my six year old daughter is now an avid reader - she has come on in leaps and bounds in her reading. The library has a real friendly, family feel to it. It is a pleasure to go there."

(Blaenau Gwent library user feedback submitted in Progress Report to CyMAL for Tredegar Library which was modernised in 2008/9).

In addition many local authorities have also invested their own funding or accessed other sources to develop new libraries including the new Cardiff and Swansea Central Libraries. Swansea and Cardiff Central Library are not only the busiest libraries in Wales in 2009-10 with 590,552 issues and 485,895 visits, and 575,143 issues and 439,857 visits respectively, but both are in the top 10 of UK libraries for most items issued to borrowers.

Many academic libraries have also undergone their own modernisation programme, responding to changing student demands. They are creating more flexible spaces for group study and accommodating increased facilities to access remote services.

Libraries are responding to the changing needs of students and introducing areas for collaborative studying by groups of students alongside more traditional spaces. The newly created teen zone at Treorchy library was developed in direct consultation with a group of local teenagers, and they are now responsible for managing the very popular facility.

The National Library of Wales in modernising its main reading room has introduced dedicated spaces for group study, Wi-Fi and informal study areas.

4.2 Return on investment

Evaluation shows that new and modernised libraries deliver benefits to users and staff including:

- Increased visitor numbers
- Increased borrowing of items
- Raising the profile of the library
- Improved range of resources and services available to users, e.g. free Wi-Fi

- Flexible use of space to provide a wider range of activities
- Improved learning opportunities for users
- Attracted new partners to work with the libraries
- Improved staff working environment
- Changes to the way staff work
- Improved accessibility to the building and its resources for disabled people.

The changes made through modernisation reflect not just an improved physical space, but also reflect the changing patterns of use of libraries.

4.3 Reaching out into the community

It is important that library services reach out into the local community via the mobile library space. With mobile library services increasingly challenged by decreasing budgets it is essential that we maintain library services to rural and urban communities that do not have the benefit of a library building. New innovative models of mobile service delivery need to be investigated.

For example Ceredigion Library Service is piloting the Fan Hyn Fan Draw service. The pilot scheme uses the library van's visit as a mobile focus for a series of information, learning and culture services and activities. Public sector organisations collectively bring together activities and information which include Basic Skills work, Welsh for the Family provision, consultation events, health and care sessions, sessions on sustainability issues, physical recreation activities and various cultural activities.

Public libraries in Wales also provide delivery services to housebound users and make collections available in non library locations such as residential homes and prisons.

4.4 What we will do

The library sector will work in partnership with others to:

- Continue to modernise library buildings through the Community Learning Libraries programme.

- Develop attractive and flexible spaces to enable them to work with partners to stage a wider range of activities.

- Upgrade ICT infrastructure to next generation broadband.

- Increase the provision of free Wi-Fi access.

- Roll-out technological enhancements such as RFID which will assist service enhancements such as self-service.

- Maintain services for people who are unable to visit their library.

5. Skills for Life

Libraries play a key role in developing people's skills at all levels and at all ages: helping young children to take their first steps to literacy; supporting students in their studies; and enabling older people to embrace digital technologies. They are often the first port of call for people seeking information, or can signpost people to other sources of information e.g. for children the Clic Online website (http://www.cliconline.co.uk/).[15]

5.1 Supporting literacy

Libraries play an important role in promoting literacy by providing resources and activities that support the enjoyment of books and reading through other media. Increasing literacy levels is a strategic priority for the Welsh Government as outlined in the Welsh Government's new statutory National Literacy Programme.[16]

Programmes such as the Welsh Government funded *Dechrau Da* / Bookstart encourage parents and carers to share books with children from as early an age as possible. Families receive free bilingual Bookstart bags of books and guidance about book sharing at various developmental stages.

Basic Skills Cymru and Estyn recognise the important role of libraries in promoting literacy. An Estyn report suggests that regular planned opportunities for school pupils to use the library and gain information retrieval skills, and for staff to use the library and ICT as motivating resources, help pupils become enthusiastic readers and researchers of information which drives further improvement.[17]

5.2 Developing an information literacy strategy for Wales

"Information literacy is knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner."

Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP).

The definition of literacy used for the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests to map the educational achievement of 15-year-olds, organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), is much wider than what might traditionally be considered as reading skills. It includes understanding, using and reflecting on written information for a variety of purposes, i.e. information handling skills that are at the heart of information literacy.

With ever-changing and rapidly developing technologies and the introduction of new media and platforms, it is increasingly important that people have the right skills to access and use information to assist them with their everyday lives. The levels of information literacy within the population can impact on the economy of a country, the educational attainment of its learners and the social inclusion of its citizens.

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[15] The Framework contributes to the Welsh Government commitment to realising the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), particularly in relation to the rights of children and young people to have their voices heard, to have high quality information, access to education, play and leisure activities. (UNCRC Articles 12, 13, 29 & 31 refers).

[16] Welsh Government. (2011). *The National Literacy Programme.* Available from www.wales.gov.uk

[17] Estyn. (2009). *Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged five to seven years.* Available from www.estyn.gov.uk

The increasing importance of being able to find and use information in an age of "information overload" is recognised throughout formal learning. The *Skills Framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales*[18] states that ICT skills are among those that will:

> *"Enable learners of any age to become successful … and they need to be firmly embedded into the experience of learners across all their learning."*

Cardiff University is currently leading on an all-Wales project funded by the Welsh Government that aims to promote an understanding and development of information literacy in education, the workplace, and the wider community in Wales.

The project will report on information literacy provision in each library sector in Wales, identifying case studies of good practice and gaps requiring further enhancement. The Information Literacy Framework for Wales is intended to provide a consistent and joined up approach to information literacy across all sectors in Wales and includes a clear and integrated developmental structure for practitioners delivering information literacy at all levels. This will enable librarians, information literacy practitioners, teachers and trainers to support learners as they progress through levels of attainment.

5.3 Promoting digital inclusion

> *"At my age (69) I didn't have a clue on how to use a computer, but with the help I was given at my library I now have (3) OCN certificates, have bought my own laptop and am able to email my family in Canada and enjoy many other things on my laptop."*

(Blaenau Gwent library user, aged 65+)

Public libraries and libraries in schools, colleges and universities provide free access to computers, high quality content and assist people to develop their ICT skills to obtain the maximum benefit from the ICT provision. Libraries also have an increasing role to play in the future in facilitating access to online information and enabling people to interact with online services as the move towards 'digital first' delivery of services continues. Libraries are well placed to help make digital inclusion in Wales a reality.

The Welsh Government's strategy *Delivering Digital Inclusion: A Strategic Framework for Wales*[19] highlights the need to tackle the digital exclusion of 785,000 adults in Wales. It states that:

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[18] Welsh Government. (2008). *Skills Framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales.* Available from http://tinyurl.com/3da8yvj

[19] Welsh Government. (2010). *Delivering Digital Inclusion: A Strategic Framework for Wales.* Available from http://tinyurl.com/3wapboc

"Digital inclusion is about ensuring that people, both as citizens and consumers, benefit from the rapid pace of technological change that is taking place in our society. This especially applies with people being able to use the internet in ways that will enhance their lives and contribute to helping them overcome other disadvantages which they might face."

The Digital Inclusion framework highlights the contribution of libraries:

Libraries make a wide ranging contribution for citizens:

- *Access: citizens have free computer and Internet access in all Welsh public libraries through over 2,600 PC terminals in over 320 public library service points located across Wales. As a result of the Welsh Government's library modernisation programme, an increasing number of libraries are providing free Wi-Fi access.*

- *Developing ICT skills: individuals can develop ICT skills through informal or formal learning opportunities.*

- *Helping people get back into work: individuals can prepare their CV, and undertake e-learning to improve their skills.*

- *Access to information and entitlements: citizens can use libraries to access government e-services at both local and national level and get information about their rights and entitlements.*

- *Adaptive technology: people with specific needs, such as speech to text software to assist those with visual impairment, can access specialist computer software and hardware to help them in many libraries across Wales.*

5.4 Lifelong learning

"I have dyslexia and dyspraxia. I have gone to return to learn in my library. I have earned a GCSE English O (C) this encouraged me to try for a higher English grade. I earned a B in English GCSE. I am now doing History (A), (AS) most of my spare time is spent in the library studying history. I have to discipline myself because I have a hunger to learn I just want to read everything."

(Carmarthenshire library user, aged 50-64)

Offering access to a wide variety of resources and activities, libraries play a key role in attracting adults back into the world of learning. They work in partnership with local community learning initiatives and agencies such as Learndirect to provide a range of informal as well as formal learning opportunities.

A survey of over 870 people carried out in partnership with Learndirect in South East Wales in 2008 regarding public libraries and community learning found that "93.1% think that the library would be a good place to learn" and "58.8% do not have access to a computer at home".

An important aspect of the Welsh Government's Community Learning Libraries programme is to provide improved facilities for local lifelong learning providers to utilise the network of local access points that public libraries provide across Wales.

In enabling opportunities for people of different ages to interact together in meaningful activities, libraries support family learning, multi- and intergenerational learning, helping to break down barriers within communities and overcome negative stereotypes. The Welsh Government's strategic document *Getting on Together: A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales* highlights the link between learning and community cohesion. It states that:

> *"Learning has the potential to be a very powerful tool in promoting integration and mutual respect….Learning not only brings the benefits of increased skills and building confidence, the act of simply participating in learning can have very positive benefits in helping to promote cohesion."* [20]

Welsh academic libraries are increasingly opening up their collections to the public as well as their students in their region and thereby playing an important role in supporting people with their studies.

5.5 What we will do

- Libraries and the Welsh Government will work with educational partners to develop libraries' support for lifelong learning.

- Libraries will work with partners to widen opportunities to participate in informal and accredited learning opportunities.

- Libraries and CyMAL will co-operate to contribute to the delivery of the National Literacy Programme.

- CyMAL will continue to work closely with *Dechrau Da* / Bookstart to encourage an enjoyment of books and reading in very young children and their families.

- CyMAL will work with key stakeholders and libraries to promote and deliver the Information Literacy strategy for Wales.

- Libraries will work with CyMAL, Communities 2.0 and the Society of Chief Librarians Wales to deliver ICT taster sessions, including participating in the BBC First Click campaign.

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[20] Welsh Government. (2009). *Getting on Together: A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales.* Available from http://tinyurl.com/469dj9c

6. Investing in People

6.1 Knowledgable staff

"My local library has helped me on many occasions for many different reasons in the past year. The library staff have always been kind, warm and friendly and willing to have a chat or give me any help I need. They graciously allowed me to work in the library as part of my Duke of Edinburgh, which helped me learn new skills and complete my award."

(Neath Port Talbot library user, aged 11-15)

The 'mystery shopper' exercise undertaken in Welsh libraries in 2009 demonstrated that the reasons given for continuing to visit libraries were predominantly about the helpful and friendly staff. The report concluded that the staff's "importance in the customer experience has been confirmed"[21]. Investing in the continued development of staff in libraries in Wales is therefore vital.

Schemes that have successfully supported staff development under Libraries for Life will continue - bursaries for vocational and academic library qualifications; practical training courses offered locally, regionally and nationally; and supporting the development of new courses, such as the first UK Foundation Degree courses in Library and Information Studies. There will also be a focus on investing in the future and encouraging management and leadership skills, along with career progression, succession planning and role development. Initial scoping work will be undertaken of the potential benefits for the use of volunteers in maintaining library services in line with recommendations of the SCL(Wales) Position Statement on Volunteering in Public Libraries (Feb 2011).

" *The Learning Resource Centre [in a local FE College] staff are always helpful and friendly, and never make me feel silly for asking questions. Their support has been instrumental in passing my coursework and making my work easier and more fun to complete. Nothing is ever too much bother, and I really appreciate their help – e.g. ordering in books.* "

(Rhondda Cynon Taf library user, aged 16-25)

Training needs will be identified to establish key areas for investment. These will also be linked to the priority areas identified within the Framework, such as information literacy and social media. Library staff are also ideally placed to contribute to promoting the safe use of the Web and it is essential that opportunities for library staff to update their knowledge are provided.

6.2 What we will do

- CyMAL will work in partnership with other key organisations, such as CILIP Wales, SCL (W), WHELF, Colegau Cymru / Colleges Wales, School Library Association and Careers Wales to research and develop a workforce development plan.

- Work in partnership to finance and provide a range of opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills of staff.

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[21] Twelfth Man. (2009). *Mystery Shop: Welsh Library Service Mystery Shopper Report.* Available from www.wales.gov.uk/cymal

- CyMAL will work with employers to provide funding to assist staff to obtain professional and vocational qualifications.

- Provide a mixture of online and face to face training.

- CyMAL will work with employers, sector skills councils and educational/training providers to develop new pathways into the profession.

- CyMAL's volunteer training programme will provide support to organisations who wish to offer volunteers the opportunity to help deliver its strategic aims- such as increasing community engagement or promoting skills development among users e.g. IT Buddies.

7. Attracting the Audience

In order to justify the continued public investment in our libraries it is essential that the maximum number of people benefit from the services provided. Research by Scotinform has identified that lapsed users or library non-users are less aware of the facilities and services available in libraries and the benefits of using libraries compared to library users. For example, only 40 % of non-users were aware of free access to online services compared to 69 % of users.[22]

However, the survey also showed that a significant proportion of the non-users surveyed said they would be interested in using a library in the future with 48 % interested in borrowing books for free and 32 % interested in the free computers. These are the potential audiences that libraries need to engage with to attract new users to their services, as well as to maintain the loyalty of their existing customers.

In order to attract and maintain new audiences, the Framework will look to address areas of library service delivery which may currently act as barriers hindering access or usage of libraries e.g. streamlining joining procedures and introducing a single library card for Wales.

7.1 All-Wales promotion

In order to reach new and existing audiences a variety of marketing and promotional activities need to be undertaken by libraries. Previous library strategies in Wales identified significant advantages in providing a central all-Wales bilingual marketing initiative supported by local delivery and this approach will be maintained for the future. This approach ensures a consistency of delivery, effectively manages an annual library campaign, drives forward key improvement initiatives such as the staff awards, and also provides librarians with an informal network for sharing knowledge and ideas. Building on the success of the Libraries for Life National Marketing Strategy recommendations, this strand of work will be delivered over a four year period to provide continuity of provision and to realise the benefits of targeted activities aimed at key life stages and target user groups.

The independent evaluation of the Libraries for Life strategy reported that librarians had identified the need to increasingly target marketing activities towards non-users (many of whom are actually lapsed users). This will be a priority for the delivery of the audience development strand.

The Framework will look to embrace opportunities provided by developments in social media marketing to promote library services to current and especially new audiences. It will also actively identify synergies with the museums and archives domain in developing audience development activities.

7.2 Targeted activities – academic libraries

One of the recommendations of the independent evaluation of the Libraries for Life strategy was that a 'one size fits all' approach has not always worked for all library sectors. Academic libraries have a 'captive audience' to some extent, although students often require support in finding and assessing information resources, or making the most effective use of the library. Some students may only use the library on the eve of an essay deadline, or only use Internet search engines rather than working from citations and references in trusted electronic journal articles.

[22] Scotinform. (2010). *Evaluation of Libraries for Life Final Report*. Available from www.wales.gov.uk/cymal

Implementing effective approaches to overcome these issues is an ongoing challenge for academic libraries. The Framework will actively support academic libraries in progressing new ways of promoting services.

7.3 What we will do

- A detailed annual audience development programme will be agreed with the all-Wales audience development programme provider. This programme will include a mix of bilingual promotional campaigns at target user groups, attendance at all-Wales events, the staff award competition, themed press releases, and staff training for specific skill areas.

- Organise an annual national Library Festival to attract new audiences and celebrate the work of libraries.

- The partners will explore and utilise the opportunities offered by social media and mobile technology to attract new audiences and improve services to existing users.

- CyMAL will work with the museum and archive sectors to investigate the potential for a more collaborative delivery of audience development activities.

8. Delivering a Quality Service

8.1 Promoting high standards

Public libraries are a statutory duty, as laid down in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. Under this Act local authorities are required to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient library service', and it is the duty of the Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage within the Welsh Government to 'superintend and promote the improvement of the public library service'. Since 2002, three performance measurement Frameworks of Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) have been introduced and administered by the Welsh Government[23] to monitor the quality of public library provision in Wales. In April 2011 a fourth framework of Standards and measures (*Maintaining a Valued Service – the Fourth Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2011-2014*)[24] was implemented.

The Standards aim to ensure a broad equity of service delivery, no matter where the person lives or accesses the library service. For library services, they provide a benchmark for provision, support service planning, and allow for the sharing of good practice. There have been significant improvements in most of the areas of service assessed by the WPLS Frameworks since 2002:

- ICT provision in Welsh public libraries has improved significantly, both in terms of facilities and the range of services provided
- Expenditure on acquiring materials for public loan and use has improved in most authorities, ensuring the public have access to a greater range and quality of materials, through more effective distribution channels

- The opening hours of service points have increased in many authorities, with a significant improvement in opening hours outside the more traditional office hours
- Expenditure on the condition of service points, including the refurbishment of library buildings, has also improved. A number of authorities have instigated improvement programmes, many benefiting from grant assistance provided by the Welsh Government
- Implement the Public Library Entitlement agenda.

Evidence from the *Evaluation of Libraries for Life* report revealed that there is however scope to make additional use of the data collated through the WPLS. The fourth assessment Framework for Welsh public libraries will also function in a very different financial climate, and in a very different set of circumstances.

The primary aims and objectives of the fourth Framework reflect these changing circumstances, in particular the need:

- To safeguard the improvements achieved since 2002 whenever possible
- To protect library services from disproportionate resource reductions
- To reflect the ways in which libraries can make significant contributions to the delivery of key national policy agendas, showing how they can make a real difference to the lives of individuals and communities, and
- To provide a suitable tool to support the efficient management of services and to ensure that services are delivered effectively.

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[23] See CyMAL webpage www.wales.gov.uk/cymal

[24] Welsh Government. (2010). *Maintaining a Valued Service – the Fourth Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2011-2014*. Available from www.wales.gov.uk/cymal

In common with previous WPLS Frameworks, the fourth Framework will be implemented over a three year timescale. It is recognised that, during this period, it may be necessary to review and re-calibrate the Standards to take account of the changing operational context. There is also the potential to extend the framework for an additional year (through to 2015) if appropriate.

8.1.1 Future performance management

The fourth Framework represents a gradual refinement of the Standards and Performance Indicators introduced since 2002, and focuses on the 'core' requirements for effective library service provision. There are however alternative approaches to measuring performance and ensuring the quality of service delivery. During the timescale of this Framework, CyMAL will investigate the potential for implementing other relevant quality frameworks.

8.1.2 Cross-sector opportunities

In addition to public libraries, other libraries have developed benchmarking toolkits or other performance management tools. In Wales, CyMAL funded the creation of a *Services Supporting Learning in Wales: A Quality Toolkit for Evaluating Learning Resource Services in Further Education Colleges* (2008/09). There is the potential to build on these developments to develop a cross-sector quality framework.

8.2 Evaluation and research

Since 2004 the Welsh Government has implemented a robust evaluation framework in relation to its significant investment in developing Welsh library services. The reports of the latest independent evaluation are available on the CyMAL division website.

8.2.1 Evaluating Libraries Inspire

An evaluation framework will be established from the outset to ensure that the Framework is appraised at regular intervals. A baseline will be identified from the results of previous commissioned evaluations.

The evaluation will comprise a mix of commissioned interim reviews which will seek to focus on specific elements to date. There will also be a comprehensive review of the entire programme.

8.2.2 Research

Additional research may be needed in key areas to help inform the direction of individual elements of the Framework. It is envisaged that innovative service delivery such as the e-book pilot and social media services will require specific attention. The Framework will also look to address gaps in existing knowledge of library provision in Wales.

8.3 What we will do

- Implement and review the *Fourth Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2011-2014.*
- Commission the evaluation of the Libraries Inspire strategic framework.
- Commission baseline research to address gaps in existing knowledge of Welsh library provision.
- Create a sustainable forum of sharing knowledge and expertise. Pilot "communities of practice" within a select number of pilot topic areas e.g. the delivery of e-books.

You want weapons?
We're in a library!
Books!
The best weapons in the world!

Doctor Who

9. Libraries Inspire Delivery Plan

An annual Delivery Plan will be published electronically by December of each year and will include specific actions to deliver the priorities outlined in each section of the Framework. It will detail actions in-year as well as ongoing activities. The delivery plan will be available from the CyMAL website – www.wales.gov.uk/cymal.

New priorities which arise during the duration of the Framework will be reflected in the annual Delivery Plans. It will also provide an opportunity to highlight the work carried out independently by the library sector alongside actions carried out in partnership with the Welsh Government.

"Going to the library is like visiting a long standing friend, where all the family drop in. Young children, always eager to see what is happening, adults popping in and out or on the computers, older folk with more time to chat. When I was studying for a degree it was not always possible to travel to the university library 'NO PROBLEM' if I needed a book the ladies at my local libraries without fail would track down the books I needed. Always with a smile and encouragement. P.S. I graduated last year with a BA in Social Studies.
Not bad at 76 years old."

(Flintshire library user, aged 65+)

Appendix

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