



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref

To: Francis O'Brien  
Chief Executive  
Neath Port Talbot  
chief.executive@npt.gov.uk

October 2024

Dear Francis O'Brien,

### **Welsh Public Library Standards: Annual Report 2023/24**

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 sets out the statutory duties of public library authorities to "*provide a comprehensive and efficient library service*" and makes it a duty of the Welsh Ministers "*to superintend and promote the improvement*" of public library services. To discharge this responsibility, the Welsh Government administers the Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) to assess library provision and performance across Wales.

Enclosed is a feedback report on your authority's performance under the WPLS 2023-24. The report is also being sent to your Leader and the library service manager. We would be grateful if you could review the assessment report and ensure that it is considered and scrutinised at all appropriate levels. The report comments on how each library service benefits local people and reviews performance against quality indicators and performance measures which are benchmarked across Wales.

External assessors, in consultation with a Reference Group comprising Welsh Government officials and three heads of library services, found that:

- Neath Port Talbot meets all 13 Core Entitlements in full;



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- Of the seven quality indicators which have targets, Neath Port Talbot is achieving four in full, one in part and two were not achieved; and
- Neath Port Talbot performs well in many areas. The library service is clearly appreciated by members of the local community who rate it highly. Attendances at events, training and informal support are all well above the median for Welsh library authorities. The service offers a wide range of activities, with a high uptake, many in partnership with other organisations.

It is evident from the information provided that public libraries in Wales make an invaluable contribution to our Well-Being objectives and to many areas of the Programme for Government. However, it is also clear that library service provision is under pressure and in some instances, this is having an impact on the level of service which can be provided. Whilst we acknowledge that local authorities are having to make difficult budgetary decisions, we would ask you to be mindful of the statutory requirements in relation to libraries and the significant benefits that libraries deliver for individuals and communities.

We would like to record our thanks to your staff for continuing to deliver a much-valued service and for their co-operation on reporting their performance against the WPLS.

We are looking to visit all authorities over the coming year and to view the range of cultural services available. We will be in touch shortly to arrange the visit.

Yours sincerely

Dr Nicky Guy and Paul Kindred  
Deputy Directors - Culture