

Entitlement	Compliance (please select)	Authority comments
1 Free to join, and open to all.	Fully met	<p>The Library Service meets its statutory obligation of being free to join and free to access the core range of services of book borrowing and accessing information - this includes access to all our services, both physical and online, and is not restricted to branch library users. Housebound users can join the library and also get access to the full range of resources available via the Home Delivery Library Service. Fines for overdue items were suspended as a result of COVID in March 2020 and have since been permanently abolished, removing a barrier to free and open access for all. Membership of Neath Port Talbot Libraries gives all users access to libraries managed by the Library Service in addition to all Community Managed libraries in NPT. Users are able to join the library either through their local branch library or via the online joining form. Any visitors, and this would include travellers and the homeless, can take out an introductory membership as a short term measure which gives them full access to all library resources. The only restriction is that they are unable to borrow the full entitlement of books and/or other items. Once they have satisfied the full membership criteria they would be enlisted as a permanent member of the Library Service. Our libraries are set up in a way to ensure that differing user needs are catered for. This includes providing a noise free environment for those who find it overwhelming and creating child friendly spaces for children and their families/carers to enjoy. In the two most recent library refurbishments/opening at Skewen and Neath making improvements to the space for children was a key consideration in both. All libraries have dedicated children's spaces. The Service does not record any social/demographic information about all its users. However, information is collated for specific services such as the Home Library Service, Mobile Library, Toy Library, Bookstart and Reading Groups which is used to better provide for users of these services.</p>
2 Ensure friendly, knowledgeable and qualified staff are on hand to help.	Fully met	<p>The Library Service conducted a full user survey, for both adults and children, in February/March 2023. What the results from this survey showed was that the public value both the library service and library staff very highly. Customer Care was rated as 99% in the adult survey. Annual performance appraisals are completed for all staff to ensure that they are fully able to maximise their potential and continue their professional development. Ensuring training is up to date and relevant to what staff and users need is a key part of the library training programme. The Library Service has a training budget to ensure that staff are able to continue their professional development and to meet new challenges. Staff continue to enhance their skills through a combination of formal and ad-hoc training. Furthermore, staff are encouraged to be innovative, to try things out, as part of their professional development. In addition to qualified professional, specialist staff at Library Headquarters, the two main libraries at Neath and Port Talbot have a professionally qualified senior librarian backed up by a library staff that boasts a wealth of experience. Moreover, paid library staff are available for 100% of the hours at every service point, ensuring that we are able to maintain a consistent level of delivery at all times. Professional advice and support is made available to community managed libraries and a professionally qualified librarian is always on duty.</p>
3 Libraries in Wales provide access to a range of services, activities, and high quality resources in a range of formats to support lifelong learning, personal health and well-being, community participation, cultural experiences, recreation, and reading for pleasure.	Fully met	<p>In contributing to Neath Port Talbot's Corporate priorities, the Library Service remains focused on delivering services and resources in the areas of digital inclusion, health and wellbeing, children and adult literacy, local history/culture and lifelong learning. These areas of work are vital and are addressed in our Business Plan. Our events and activities programme is wide ranging across all libraries, in schools and in the community. It provides social interaction and meets the needs of all users and different communities that use the library. These are promoted widely within the library, across the Council, with partners and on our social media platforms. Many of our libraries run reading groups and provide a local history talks, encouraging an interest in our local studies collection. All are available for library users.</p>

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<p>4 Provide appropriate services, facilities and information resources for individuals and groups with special requirements.</p>	Fully met	<p>A range of services are provided for all individuals and groups with special needs. The Home Library Service provides books and spoken word directly delivered to people's homes. We also provide books to residents at nursing and residential homes in Neath Port Talbot. Digital services enables 24-hour access to information resources as well as ebooks, emagazines, epress and eaudio resources. There is a wide range of assistive technology and hardware available at all Neath Port Talbot managed libraries. Libraries have worked with refugees to assist in their language and technology skills, and have provided support to users who have English as a second language. A programme of activities supporting Ukranian refugees was set up across our libraries in 2022, and continues with the Ukranian Coffee Mornings in Port Talbot. A reading well collection of resources is available in all libraries aimed at people with dementia and their carers, teens, children and adults to promote better mental health. The Library Service participates in the bibliotherapy scheme for children - Better with Books. The new Mobile Library - a smaller, more versatile vehicle, fully equipped for wheelchair access - has meant that we have been able to meet the needs of even more users in the remote areas of Neath Port Talbot. At our most recent survey - March 2023 - there was a high satisfaction rate (98%) when asked about the library space being safe and inclusive for all. We have supplied all libraries with ear defenders and can provide quiet spaces when needed. Our children's activities offer sessions suitable for a variety of needs.</p>
<p>5 Provide a safe, attractive and accessible physical space with suitable staffed opening hours.</p>	Fully met	<p>All eight of our libraries have been refurbished via Welsh Government capital funding grants programme. Even though this work has been carried out we are always looking to improve or adapt our library environments where it is needed. The work that has been undertaken to enhance the library environment at all static service points is validated by our survey results, with high levels of satisfaction. Opening hours at libraries are reviewed frequently and adjusted to cater for local needs. All libraries remained open and fully staffed during 2023-24 with no unexpected closures.</p>
<p>6 Lend books for free, and deliver free access to information, including online information resources available 24 hours a day.</p>	Fully met	<p>The free lending and reservation of books remains an important element of our core service. In 2020 fines for overdue items were suspended and permanently abolished the following year. We continue to provide a free request service for books on order and in stock within Neath Port Talbot libraries and from other library services across Wales (free interlending). This free request service is also extended to the seven community managed libraries. Free access to information remains a core library service available through the internet, our non-fiction stock or reference collection material. This also includes free access to a full range of physical newspapers and magazines, including epress on Borrowbox and emagazines with Libby. The Service has actively promoted Neath Port Talbot's community directory - an online resource for all community information needs and Digital by Choice as well as continuing to support the Passport scheme which opens up academic libraries, including Swansea University, to Neath Port Talbot's library members. The Service actively participates in and supports Books4u, the regional interlending scheme.</p>

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7 Libraries in Wales provide free use of the Internet including Wi-Fi, and access to digital equipment, in all service points.	Fully met	Using the internet and our public computers, including wifi, at all eight statutory branch libraries is free, irrespective of the length of session. There are no charges relating to time used. Library visitors may use a PC for up to 2 hours daily (bookable, if needed) and additional hours can be requested if there is free space / availability. We promote a range of formal and informal IT and digital literacy training and support, provided by library staff, colleagues within Neath Port Talbot and Digital Communities Wales. A programme of digital training and support is available at all libraries. At a number of libraries there are now regular classes and drop-in help sessions to support library users with their digital skills. In addition library staff have been visiting local schools to deliver coding club sessions to pupils in primary schools. Any sessions relating to computer use and IT training are advertised internally and externally through a variety of means including adverts, social media, partner organisations and via our website. WiFi printing is available at all libraries.
8 Provide access to services, cultural activities and high quality resources in the Welsh language.	Fully met	Our Welsh language stock selection is reviewed annually. Changes were made to our supply arrangements in 2021. We have an established relationship with a local supplier that will greatly improve our Welsh language books offer and better cater to local community needs. The Library Service will often liaise with the Books Council of Wales on stock requirements, as well as consulting with our Welsh language reading groups. We offer a wide range of formats. These include large print, audio books, ebooks, epress, emagazines and eaudio. The Library Service provides a wide variety of material in all formats, both written and digital for all ages in a wide variety of languages. Sesiwn Ganu events - Welsh language song and rhyme sessions in partnership with Menter Iaith - are an established feature of our song and rhyme programme. We work in Welsh medium schools to deliver bilingual sessions and have delivered Welsh language class visits at libraries, most recently staging an Esiteddfod at Neath Library for local pupils.
9 Work in partnership to share catalogues and facilitate access to the resources of all Welsh libraries.	Fully met	The Library Service's catalogue has seen much improvement in recent years. Users now get a much better experience featuring images, information about the book and links to reservations similar to those offered by the retail sector. The Library Service works in partnership across South Wales on the Books4u inter lending scheme and also provides access to academic libraries through the Passport scheme. This facilitates open access to university and college libraries within South West Wales. A link to Access to Research is available on the Service's website and staff are encouraged to promote a range of national library services and resources to users. The all-Wales Library Management System allows access to Neath Port Talbot's stock catalogue and an insight into the stock held in other Welsh authorities.

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<p><b>10</b> Work with a range of partners to promote and deliver services to new and diverse audiences, enabling more people to benefit from their services.</p>	Fully met	<p>The Service frequently attends a number of external events throughout the County and actively promotes the library service through a number of methods - activities, information sessions, performances and projects. These events promote the service to both users and non-users through events and programmes including World Book Day, National Libraries Week, Adult Learners Week, Summer Reading Challenge, Better With Books, Bookstart Week, Family Fun Days and Community Days. A Library Service Social Media and Promotions Group oversees this work, and a programme of events/projects. There is a marketing budget which is used to promote the Library Service and support the various campaigns. The Service has also worked alongside partners to promote and deliver to different audiences - Social Services, Flying Start, Schools, Youth Council and Third Sector organisations. Social media now plays an active role in the communications policy of the Library Service. The Library Service has an Instagram, Facebook and X account as well as a YouTube channel. These channels have been valuable in attracting people to our events and activities programme. We also provide access to Theory Test Pro and Ancestry Library edition via our website as part of our all wales offer and provide 24 hour access to all services to cater for a range of user needs.</p>
<p><b>11</b> Regularly consult users to gather their views on the service and information about their changing needs.</p>	Fully met	<p>Surveys are usually undertaken every 2 years. The most recent was in March 2023 and the next is due early 2025. These surveys sought the views of both adults and children at all eight statutory libraries and followed the guidance set out in the Guidance Document. In addition, the Service continues to undertake a range of consultation exercises to garner people's opinions. We continue to work with members of Neath Port Talbot Youth Council to seek opinions from teenagers on how best to promote libraries. Users are regularly consulted through feedback forms, social media contact and via Neath Port Talbot's Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Staff also collect anecdotal feedback at a number of external events which enable us to engage with both users and non users. Feedback has led to the upgrading of both computer hardware and software at all libraries in recent years, as well as implementing a WiFi printing service at all libraries. Libraries have also been used for Council consultation exercises in the last twelve months with senior officers and members in attendance to meet with library users.</p>
<p><b>12</b> Provide access to the library service's strategy, policies, objectives and vision, in print and online, in a range of languages appropriate for the community.</p>	Fully met	<p>The Library Service's strategy for the period of this report is available online here <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/8069">https://www.npt.gov.uk/8069</a> A Welsh language version is also available. Work is now underway to develop the next strategy and now that this extension framework is in place and discussions are underway about Framework 7. The current strategy outlined a vision and set of objectives that remain relevant and relate to both Council's corporate priorities and national priorities. This was approved by our Cabinet Member with responsibility for libraries, and our Head of Service in 2023. With a new Library Services Manager in post, this is one of our priorities for 2024.</p>