

Rebecca Evans AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Finance and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref Public Libraries and Museums Act

John Griffiths MS
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee

6 June 2023

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter relating to the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act.

As you are aware, the Act requires local authorities to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' service. However, the Act does not detail or define the nature of a 'comprehensive and efficient' service. Library services vary in nature across Wales, and it is the responsibility of individual local authorities to determine the arrangements for the delivery of their library service, taking into account the need of their local communities. It would not be appropriate for the Welsh Government to constrain the ability of a local authority to deliver a service based on local needs.

Since the introduction of the first framework of Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) in 2002, the Welsh Government has set out our expectations on local authorities in terms of their library provision. These frameworks were refreshed every three years, until the disruption caused by the pandemic. This approach has allowed us to monitor the level of provision, and also to support and encourage the development of new services in libraries.

A more closely defined description of a library service, enshrined in legislation, may impede the ability of local authorities to develop and innovate. For example, we are seeing local libraries developing 'Makerspaces'. It is unlikely that such facilities would have fallen into the definition of a library service even a few years ago. This flexibility is the reason I have not considered linking the policy framework to the legislation.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Evans AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Finance and Local Government

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales
Gohebiaeth.Rebecca.Evans@llyw.cymru

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.