



Library use in Powys

This publication contains information on library visits in Powys and across Wales from April 2017 - March 2018, when this data was last collected. Information has been taken from 'Data Cymru' and [can be accessed here](#).

Key statistics

- There were 716,039 library visits in Powys in 2017-18.
- Only six of the 22 local authority areas in Wales had more library visits than Powys. These were Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Caerphilly, and Neath Port Talbot.
- Powys had 5,411 library visits per 1,000 population. Again, only six local authorities had more visits per head.
- Powys saw a greater proportion of library visits in Wales than its share of the population. It accounted for 4.36% of library visits across Wales, despite only having 4.25% of the population.
- Powys is not immune from wider trends towards declining library use. In 2010-11 it saw 6,752 library visits per head of population (down to 5,411 in 2017-18).

Library Visits: Total Numbers

There were a total of 16,407,694 library visits across Wales from April 2017-March 2018. A breakdown by local authority is below.

Local authority	Total library visits
Cardiff	3,331,807
Carmarthenshire	1,428,231
Swansea	1,317,597
Rhondda Cynon Taf	862,556
Caerphilly	859,608
Neath Port Talbot	768,789
Powys	716,039
Flintshire	706,332
The Vale of Glamorgan	631,682
Wrexham	592,727
Bridgend	565,246
Monmouthshire	561,192
Conwy	530,318
Denbighshire	529,611
Newport	490,016
Pembrokeshire	453,280
Isle of Anglesey	411,096
Torfaen	390,067
Gwynedd	346,567
Ceredigion	314,622
Bleanau Gwent	308,752
Merthyr Tydfil	291,559

Despite its rural nature, Powys' libraries saw more visits than the vast majority of councils in Wales. Only 6 local authorities had more library visits.

Note on methodology

The number of library visits refers to: physical visits to libraries, including mobile libraries; virtual visits; and physical visits to other service points.

Other service points are spaces which allow access by the general public, and as a minimum, provide a staffed information point, stock loan facilities and a public access terminal linked to the internet (but not organisations for a limited number of people or closed communities).

This excludes visits to libraries run by external trusts or community councils where the authority is not formally contracting for the provision of services.

Library Visits: Per Head of Population

Powys saw 5,411 library visits per 1,000 population in 2017-18. A breakdown by local authority is below.

Local authority	Library visits per 1000 population
Cardiff	9,225
Carmarthenshire	7,689
Monmouthshire	6,016
Isle of Anglesey	5,901
Denbighshire	5,576
Neath Port Talbot	5,426
Powys	5,411
Swansea	5,390
The Vale of Glamorgan	4,901
Merthyr Tydfil	4,883
Caerphilly	4,764
Flintshire	4,568
Conwy	4,540
Blaenau Gwent	4,434
Wrexham	4,377
Ceredigion	4,271
Torfaen	4,240
Bridgend	3,942
Pembrokeshire	3,649
Rhondda Cynon Taf	3,621
Newport	3,278
Gwynedd	2,810

Using this measure, once again there are only six local authorities in Wales with higher library use than Powys.

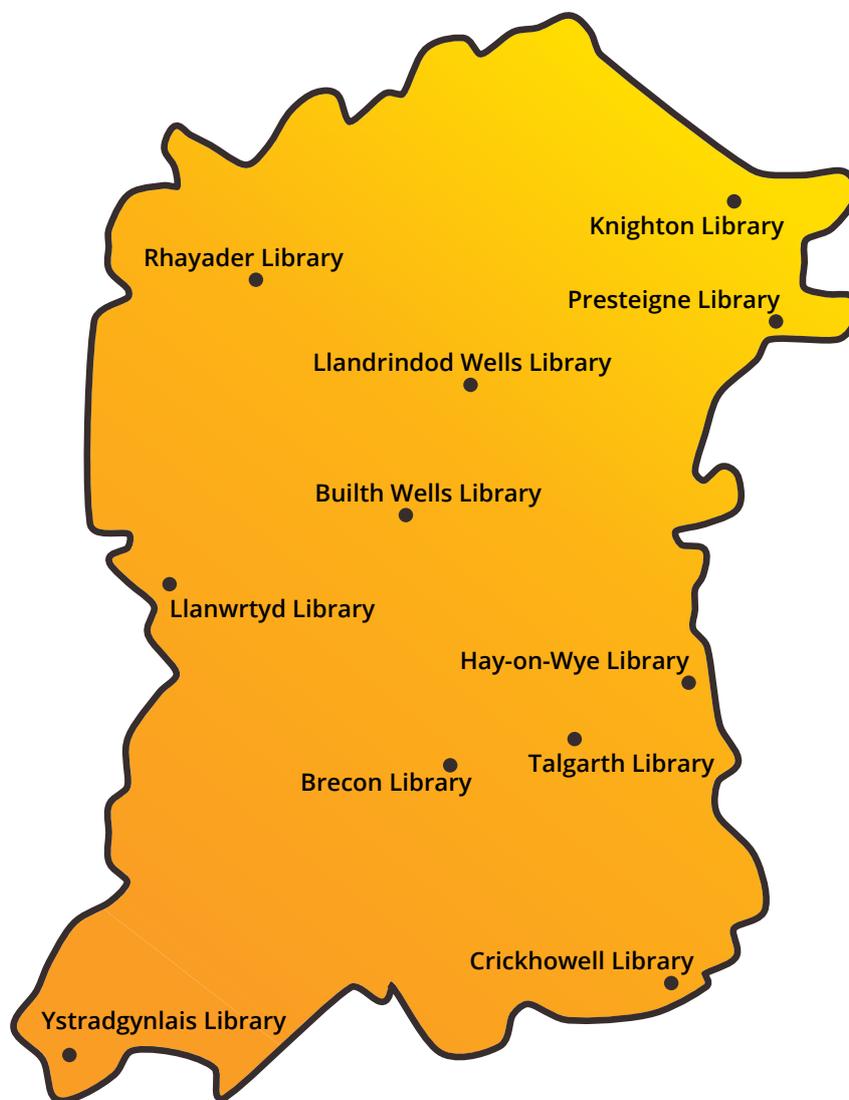
It should be noted that this represents a fall in use over the last decade. Powys' figure of 5,411 is in contrast to 6,752 library visits per head of population in 2010-11.

Note on methodology

The number of visits to public libraries during the year per 1,000 population is calculated by dividing the number of visits to Public Libraries during the year by the total population and multiplying by 1,000.

The Future of Libraries in Brecon and Radnorshire

There are 11 libraries in Brecon and Radnorshire, located in the following areas:



Of these, three are considered 'core' libraries: Brecon; Llandrindod Wells; and Ystradgynlais.

Crickhowell's library is run by the high school rather than the council.

The remaining seven are considered 'branch' libraries: Builth Wells; Hay-on-Wye; Knighton; Llanwrtyd Wells; Presteigne; Rhayader; and Talgarth.

The Conservative/Independent administration at Powys County Council has announced plans to withdraw financial support for the seven branch libraries, leaving their future uncertain. The Council looks to save around £200,000 by doing this.



Conclusion

"We often hear about declining library use. About how these services aren't being used. I'm presenting the information in this publication to show the other side of the coin. What it says, loudly and clearly, is that Powys' residents value their libraries.

"Only six of the 22 council areas across Wales saw more library visits than Powys. The high use in Powys comes despite the rural nature of our county, with the average resident less likely to have a library on their doorstep.

"Of course, our libraries have not been immune from the Wales-wide trend towards declining use. Those of us wanting to secure the future of libraries must be up-front about that. And it's in that context that services need to be planned. We do need to think about different approaches, such as greater community involvement and co-location with other services that we're increasingly seeing. Where this happens the Council needs to be fully committed to supporting it.

"But needing to think differently doesn't mean we don't need to think at all. Powys values its libraries more than the majority of local authority areas in Wales. The Council's plans to slash support for branch libraries do not reflect that.

"Our libraries are cultural and educational assets which can open up new horizons for people. I would urge the Council to take this information into account when considering the future of libraries in Powys."

**Kirsty Williams, Welsh Liberal Democrat Assembly
Member for Brecon and Radnorshire**

