



COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Version 5

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Section A: Background and Context

A1 Aim of the policy

This Collection Development Policy sets out the principles by which, within the budget available, books, audio-visual, digital materials, and other resources are acquired, managed and made available for the maximum benefit of the population in the LibrariesWest area.

LibrariesWest is a partnership of seven public library services in the southwest of England. The services work together to share costs and offer enhanced services to customers. LibrariesWest serves a resident population of more than 2.1 million people across an area of nearly 2,300 sq. miles. Customers can use their membership cards in any of the public libraries across the consortium. There is access to a joint catalogue of around 2.5 million items, which all customers can reserve and borrow from, subject to restrictions on certain material types such as reference items.

The authorities in LibrariesWest are:

Bath and North-East Somerset
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole
Bristol
Dorset
North Somerset
Somerset
South Gloucestershire

A2 Vision, aims and strategic priorities

LibrariesWest Mission Statement

Our Vision

Seven library services working together to add value and deliver a better library experience.

Our Core Aims

The route to achieving our shared vision is encapsulated in our two core aims, which form the basis of our operational work plan:

- Working together to:
 - Deliver and demonstrate value for money – sharing services and resources to improve the customer experience.
 - Innovate – applying technology and developing new services or projects to improve the customer experience.

LibrariesWest has four key service priorities:

- Remain relevant to our wider customer base.

- Drive down costs and improve efficiency.
- Focus our reach on targeted services.
- Focus on designing services to meet those in need.

Libraries Connected Universal Offers

Libraries Connected and partners have identified four key areas of service which today's users regard as integral to a 21st century library service.

The Universal Library Offers are:

- Culture and Creativity
- Health and Wellbeing
- Information and Digital
- Reading

Alongside the Universal Offers are two promises:

- Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise
- Children's Promise

A detailed explanation of the Offers and Promises can be found on the Libraries Connected website: [Universal Library Offers \(librariesconnected.org.uk\)](https://librariesconnected.org.uk)

LibrariesWest member authorities' council priorities

Each authority also has its own council priorities – see links below:

- Bath and North East Somerset Council: [Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 \(beta.bathnes.gov.uk\)](https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk)
- BCP Council: [Corporate Strategy \(bcpcouncil.gov.uk\)](https://bcpcouncil.gov.uk)
- Bristol Council: [Corporate Strategy \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://bristol.gov.uk)
- Dorset Council: [Dorset Council's Plan \(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](https://dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)
- North Somerset Council: [Priorities and strategies \(n-somerset.gov.uk\)](https://n-somerset.gov.uk)
- Somerset Council: [Somerset Council Plan 2023 – 2027 \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://somerset.gov.uk)
- South Gloucestershire Council: [Council Plan 2020 – 2024 \(beta.southglos.gov.uk\)](https://beta.southglos.gov.uk)

A3 Terms of reference

Collection(s) are defined as the entirety of library stock held by an individual LibrariesWest library, an authority within LibrariesWest, or LibrariesWest as a whole.

Customer or **user** is defined as any resident of any LibrariesWest member authority who uses library services or premises.

LibrariesWest member authority is defined as any one of the seven full member local authorities listed in A1.

Library management system is defined as the software used by libraries to manage the stock and keep a record of members and loans.

Self-published or **independently published** is defined as a book or books where an author has sole control of the content without an established publisher to provide editorial processes. This includes where companies charge the author for the printing or production costs of the book, or for some other part of the publishing process.

Stock or **library stock** is defined as any item held by a LibrariesWest library in physical or digital format. These include books, newspapers, periodicals and magazines in physical and digital formats, as well as spoken-word recordings, maps, printed music, equipment, electronic information resources.

Section B: Key principles

B1 Collection Management Policy statement

- All stock will be purchased and managed as an authority-wide resource to optimise use throughout its life.
- Stock management is based on identified customer priorities, in support of diverse community needs, set out in service objectives to support the service in monitoring and maintaining usage.
- The resource budget is allocated to most effectively meet community needs and to achieve operational efficiency and cost effectiveness.
- Each library branch aims to provide a balanced collection reflecting the reading preferences, the information needs, and the multicultural nature of the communities served.
- Collection range and level varies taking account of the variations in local communities and size of library.
- Evidence based management information, such as issue statistics, are utilised to select, manage, and evaluate stock to maximise effectiveness and turnover.
- Additional copies are purchased (as budgets allow) in response to demand for new and popular materials to reduce waiting times.
- LibrariesWest actively cooperates with other library services and agencies to make a greater range of materials available through the reservations system.
- The whole library workforce has a responsibility for stock management in their own libraries and service areas.
- The Collection Management Policy is reviewed and updated by representatives of all LibrariesWest authorities on an annual basis.

B2 Approach

Each LibrariesWest member authority aims to provide a varied range of stock relevant to community needs.

However, every library is part of a large network, and stock will be managed and used as an authority-wide resource by:

- Co-ordinating purchases across an authority
- Co-ordinating circulation across an authority
- Promoting the catalogue and reservations service
- Promoting the use of e-resources and the library web pages
- Providing access in smaller libraries to the resources available at larger libraries, e.g., through local exchanges and the referral of information enquiries

B3 Digital resources

- LibrariesWest are committed to providing a core selection of electronic resources (e.g. eBooks, eAudio, eNewspapers) for the widest possible audience. This is done by pooling LibrariesWest member authorities' budgets to provide access to larger shared collections. These electronic resources compliment and expand what the library can offer beyond its traditional physical location.
- Shared electronic resources are handled centrally for all participating authorities. This includes choosing stock, managing budgets and contracts, analysing performance, and addressing customer feedback.
- Individual LibrariesWest member authorities may choose to provide additional eServices or eResources in addition to the shared LibrariesWest collections, which are available to their users only.
- Use of eResources is regularly monitored to ensure that value for money is being achieved.

B4 Other non-standard resources

Authorities work with various partners and often secure funding to provide additional services and/or resources that customers can borrow through their local library.

Depending on the LibrariesWest member authority, these can include iPads, story bags, book bags, reminiscence packs, slow cookers, blood pressure monitors, and thermal imaging cameras.

In all cases, use of these resources will be monitored to ensure value for money.

B5 Requests

- Reservations for any items in stock in LibrariesWest, or requests for books not currently held in our stock, may be made at any library in LibrariesWest or online via the LibrariesWest website or app.
- Suggestions for stock, and feedback on the Collection Development Policy are welcomed. This information will be used, wherever possible, to inform the selection process.
- Requests for items not in stock will be considered for purchase if they are in print and meet the criteria as listed in this document. It may be possible for the item to be obtained as a loan from another library outside LibrariesWest.
- The decision not to purchase a requested item for stock may be influenced by any of the following factors: unsuitable format (e.g., loose leaf binding), budgetary constraints, lack of availability, poor quality content or presentation, dated information or low demand.
- Some reservations incur charges which are specific to individual authorities. This information can be found here: [Your Library Service \(librarieswest.org.uk\)](http://librarieswest.org.uk)

B6 The Legislative and Regulatory Framework and Government guidance

The provision of library stock is carried out against a wide legislative framework:

- [Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/42)
- [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15)
- [Obscene Publications Act 1959 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1959/61), [amended 1964](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/27)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37) and other relevant H&S legislation.
- [Video Recordings Act 1984 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/29)
- [Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/12), [Copyright \(Visually Impaired Persons\) Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/9) and [The Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/1453)
- [Local Government and Housing Act 1989 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/28)
- [Children Act 1989 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/12)
- [Local Government Act 1992 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/26)
- [Human Rights Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/41)
- [Protection from Harassment Act 1997 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/40)
- [Terrorism Act 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/11)

The provision of library stock is also influenced by best practice guidance including:

- [Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals and Arts Council England's Managing safe and inclusive library spaces 2023 \(cilip.org.uk\)](https://cilip.org.uk/publications/managing-safe-and-inclusive-library-spaces-2023)
- [Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals ethics framework \(cilip.org.uk\)](https://cilip.org.uk/publications/ethics-framework)

B7 Censorship and controversial stock

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) states in its Managing safe and inclusive library spaces guidelines that:

“Librarians and library staff have a core and ongoing commitment to freedom of expression and freedom of access to information. A library is not a place in which to hide from difficult ideas, but to equip our users with the critical literacy to engage productively with difficult ideas in their proper context.

In this context, librarians have both an ongoing duty to oppose censorship in all its forms and a proactive duty to develop collections, activities and services which properly reflect and celebrate the diversity of lived experience and identities in the communities we serve.

These professional commitments are central to the trusted role that libraries hold in our society and they should not be curtailed by any governing body or 3rd party for any reason other than that they are expressly proscribed by law.” (page 3)

And:

“[T]here may be circumstances in which the provision of access to information, events, activities or public spaces would bring the library into conflict with its other statutory duties including (but not limited to) the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (the specific duty of public authorities to consider how their decisions impact people with characteristics protected under the Equality Act).

[...]

There may be circumstances in which the library may place conditions on access to information, events, activities or public spaces, but only where obliged to do so by their responsibilities to safeguarding, public safety or their public duty under the Equality Act 2010 and related legislation”. (page 7)

Using this guidance, LibrariesWest will make available the broadest range of material within its policy of freedom of access to all legally available information. It is acknowledged that on occasion individuals may find items in LibrariesWest libraries offensive. However, we do not label items to warn customers of potentially sensitive content and would only restrict access to material to protect it from damage or theft, not as a form of censorship.

In the interests of intellectual freedom material will not be rejected solely because it is considered controversial. Controversial, potentially inflammatory, or extremist material will be evaluated according to this collection development policy. Where appropriate the assistance of relevant external agencies and advisory groups will be sought.

Decisions will be made on the assumption that the adult reader can make their own critical and reasoned evaluation of views expressed in the content of the item. We

expect adults responsible for young readers to judge if the views and opinions in an item are suitable for them.

B8 Donations and unsolicited stock

Donations

Each authority within the LibrariesWest consortium has its own policy regarding donated items of stock. Members of the public wishing to donate stock to their library will need to contact the relevant library service for further information regarding their donations policy.

Self-published items

Authorities in LibrariesWest are often asked to acquire, either by purchase or donation, books which have been self-published. The assumption is that these items will not have been through the rigorous editing and legal content checks undertaken by mainstream publishers. Where a LibrariesWest member authority agrees that such an item may be of use in their collection, it is the author's responsibility to prove the content is reliable, professionally presented, and does not contravene any laws.

Library service staff do not have the time to read items and make this judgement. The only exceptions to this are items with a strong local interest. These will be judged by the relevant team member on a case-by-case basis.

Unsolicited Stock

Some authors and publishers send items that have not been ordered, enclosing an invoice, in the hope that a library service will purchase them. These items will not be accepted. Should the sender require their return, the cost of postage must be provided in advance, as per the [Sale of Goods Act \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk).

B9 Stock outside the scope of the collections

The following categories of stock fall outside the scope of our collections:

- expensive luxury editions
- items banned under UK law
- items that are restricted from being bought or borrowed in the UK
- items containing information that is inapplicable to UK conditions and regulations
- items intended for individual ownership, such as books with additional objects, which form part of an integral package, or workbooks primarily intended for use by or with a teacher
- items with an unsuitable format for loan

Section C: Selection

C1 Overview of selection principles

Each authority within LibrariesWest will have a slightly different approach to stock selection depending on budget and staffing, but this will, in most cases, consist of a combination of:

- Supplier selection – selection of titles, usually in advance of publication by selectors at specialist library suppliers
- Standing orders
- Selection by staff
- Purchases from stockists/publishers of specialist and local history materials

The aim is to provide stock in appropriate formats, which is attractive, well-presented, and constantly refreshed by purchase and circulation.

A range of factors influence the selection of stock including:

- Available budget
- Anticipated demand
- The needs and profiles of the communities and individuals served
- Known demand
- Existing coverage of a particular subject or viewpoint in our collections
- Reviews and media interest
- Responding to requests by members of the public
- The imperative to reflect our diverse society

C2 Selection criteria

We aim to choose materials in the best format for their intended use, for maximum benefit of library users. Offering alternative formats helps to meet the needs of a range of individuals and promotes social inclusion.

Decisions on stock selection, whether printed or digital, consider a range of criteria including:

- **Content:** The author or publisher's reputation and authority, educational or recreational value, and the quality, currency and accuracy of the information where applicable.
- **Potential popularity:** A substantial proportion of books are ordered pre-publication. Where possible, previous performance/popularity of an author, genre or subject are used to determine potential popularity of the title being assessed. Information from the library management system, available published information, and identified customer needs are among the resources used.

- **Known demand:** Based on numbers of reservations on existing copies or enquiries about a title or resource.
- **Format:** The quality of production and durability in terms of library usage. Suitability for the intended audience. Compatibility of digital resources.
- **Publishing history:** Whether it is a new edition of a proven title, a new title in a proven series, or from an authoritative information source.
- **Cost:** The cost of a resource will be balanced against its benefits to the overall stock offer, its potential usage, and the available budget.
- **Coverage:** Consideration is given to the existing coverage of the subject or genre.
- **Availability:** The availability of a title may vary by format and may be limited by several factors. The most common are digital licencing restrictions, being out of print, or having no UK lending rights.
- **Accessible formats:** A range of titles are provided in different formats, where available and in demand, so they are accessible to users with a variety of needs.
- **Diverse representation:** A wide range of titles which reflect our diverse population are selected.

C3 Digital resources

Selection of digital lending materials for the core LibrariesWest collection is managed centrally on behalf of all participating authorities. The selection process follows the same criteria as set out in section C2.

LibrariesWest works with authorities in the wider region to realise further cost savings and offer LibrariesWest members access to even more content.

Each authority also subscribes to a range of digital reference materials which are managed and promoted at authority level.

Section D: Stock Maintenance

LibrariesWest authorities aim to provide a balanced, attractive, and current stock relevant to the needs of our communities. First impressions are vital – the physical presentation of the stock makes a statement about the quality of service offered. The removal of unused, worn out and out of date stock makes it easier for customers to find good quality titles and creates space for new stock and promotions.

All the workforce has a responsibility to ensure stock is well maintained, assessing the condition of books whenever they are handled, for example at the point of return, when being shelved, or during the undertaking of stock tasks.

Several criteria are used to assess stock. These include the following:

- **Age:** Is the item still relevant?
- **Physical condition:** Is it in good condition with no yellowing pages, damaged binding, torn or loose pages etc?
- **Currency:** Does it contain out of date/potentially inaccurate information?
- **Performance:** Is the item no longer in demand?

Similar criteria apply to items of reference stock although the physical condition of some out of print, classic works may not be to the same standard as lending stock. There are also no performance statistics to base decisions on, as the items are not issued.

Different criteria apply to local history stock. Most local history titles will continue to be relevant regardless of their age. An item may not be in good physical condition but may be retained because of its local interest. The same level of issues would not be expected from a local history lending item as for a general non-fiction title.

Section E: Promotion

Stock promotion is undertaken to:

- Maximise the usage of stock
- Encourage library membership and use
- Raise awareness of the range of stock and services available
- Promote reading, literacy, and lifelong learning
- Inspire and encourage users to develop diverse reading habits
- Link in with local and national promotions and initiatives
- Bring attention to stock reflecting cultural diversity, social inclusion and minority interests

The skills, knowledge, experience and enthusiasm of the workforce are essential to make the best use of stock to meet customer needs and attract new users. Stock promoted must be in good condition, attractive and well-presented.

Stock is promoted in a range of ways across LibrariesWest depending on priorities within each authority and space and display furniture/resources available in individual libraries.

Digital means of promotion are increasingly used. For example, features on the LibrariesWest website and authority/library social media accounts.

Authorities actively promote e-services to library members and potential members, including through social media.

Depending on the nature of the promotion, displays will aim to:

- Target a wide range of audiences including new and younger audiences
- Present imaginative and challenging reading material and choices
- Highlight stock that reflects cultural diversity and minority interests
- Bring together areas and formats of stock dispersed by the Dewey classification scheme and fiction stock categories, and feature under-used stock
- Use a high quality of presentation
- Exploit professionally produced promotions when available e.g., resources from the Reading Agency
- Make the most of library hotspots, including return trolleys, new books sections, etc.
- Take advantage of local and national promotional opportunities