

STOCK MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.1 Active Northumberland in partnership with Northumberland County Council strives to provide books in various formats to meet the educational, cultural, information and recreational needs of its residents. Current formats include printed books, books in large print, audiobooks in CD and MP3 format and digital ebooks. New formats are considered with regard to the value they add to the current level of provision.

1.2 Library stock is accessible taking into consideration physical disabilities and differing levels of reading attainment.

1.3 It upholds current legislation in the following areas:

- anti-discrimination in relation to gender, race, religion, disability, age, sexual and gender orientation,
- protecting copyright,
- protecting vulnerable adults and children,
- obscene publications,
- human rights.

1.4 It complies with the county council's statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide "an efficient and comprehensive" library service.

1.5 The content is up to date and relevant to the needs and interests of Northumberland people. Books are maintained in a good physical condition.

1.6 Where relevant, library stock supports the corporate values and aims of Northumberland County Council:

--- a more prosperous county through sustainable economic growth that provides residents with ready access to high wage and skilled jobs and opportunities to create thriving businesses.

To achieve this, we will seize every opportunity to equip all our residents with the right qualifications, training and skills to access meaningful work.

..... provide a range of quality community and cultural services and facilities which inspire creativity and participation. *(NCC Corporate Plan 2013 to 2017)*

2. STOCK SELECTION AND ORDERING

2.1 New titles are selected regularly to maintain an up to date, attractive collection providing current information and authors. Budgets are managed in order to ensure stock is provided in the most cost-effective way across the library network.

2.2 Stock is selected by library staff and ordered in advance of publication wherever possible using suppliers' websites, stocklists and standing order arrangements.

2.3 Readers may submit suggestions of titles to add to stock. These will be considered according to the normal selection criteria and whether they add value and range to the stock.

2.4 An evidence-based stock management system (Collection HQ) is used to inform the selection of stock according to demand. Library staff are also aware of current and forthcoming trends in publishing and respond to them to ensure the breadth of publishing output is represented in the stock.

2.5 Collection HQ

2.5.1 Collection HQ is a sophisticated program which analyses stock use across all libraries. It uses this information to recommend which items should be removed from a library or moved to another library according to their usage. It also uses stock analysis to inform the level of spend and choice of items for new stock purchasing. It provides performance data to help improve the quality and effectiveness of library stock.

2.5.2 The criteria it uses can be tailored by library staff to suit local needs. However, Collection HQ does use concrete evidence of stock use to support stock management decisions. It is an important tool in ensuring library stock is appropriate to customers' needs.

2.6 Adult Fiction

2.6.1 A range of fiction representing all aspects of current publishing is provided. This includes, but is not limited to: popular general and genre fiction; literary fiction; world authors in English translation; minority-interest genres; graphic novels; local authors; first novels.

2.6.2 Fiction in large print will be mostly popular and bestselling titles.

2.6.3 Within the constraints of the bookfund, titles are selected if they meet the following criteria:

- Capably written with flair, pace and good storytelling skill;
- Using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation;
- Accurately copy-edited and proof-read;
- Sturdily bound and able to withstand repeated use; spiral-bound books are not purchased, nor are gift editions or editions packaged with gift items;
- Professionally laid-out text and having an attractive and professionally-designed cover.
- Audiobooks must be recorded in CD format.

2.6.4 Titles will be placed in libraries according to demand but libraries in villages and smaller towns will hold predominantly popular and bestseller fiction. Other kinds of fiction will be held in key larger libraries which have a demand for them.

2.6.5 Quantities are allocated according to the size and level of use of the library . New fiction will be allocated to the ten main libraries.

2.6.6 Adult fiction is ordered in advance of publication to ensure prompt supply to readers.

2.6.7 Hardbacks and paperbacks are bought.

2.6.8 Library customers may place requests for adult fiction titles which are not already in stock. The decision to purchase or not is made with regard to the potential use of the title after the initial request has been satisfied and whether it adds to the quality and range of the existing stock. It may be added to a different library from the one where the request was placed.

2.7 Adult Non-Fiction

2.7.1 A range of non-fiction representing all aspects of current publishing is provided. Selected by professional staff, this includes the broadest possible subject coverage to reflect current and potential use and to support educational use and leisure interests. Content, currency and authority are the primary criteria for selection. Consideration may also be given to format and price.

2.7.2 Library customers may place requests for adult non-fiction titles which are not already in stock. The decision to purchase or not is made with regard to the potential use of the title after the initial request has been satisfied and whether it adds to the quality and range of the existing stock. It may be added to a different library from the one where the request was placed.

2.7.3 We reserve the right to decline to purchase items for stock if

- the format is unsuitable eg spiral bound or loose leaf.
- If it is our professional opinion that we have sufficient stock in a particular area. Short term heavy demand can lead to overstocking on a particular subject.
- Budgetary constraints – where the cost of a single item may be high and other cheaper options are available.
- Poor content or presentation
- Dated information

2.7.4 Hardbacks and paperbacks are bought.

2.7.5 Adult non-fiction is ordered in advance of publication to ensure prompt supply to readers.

2.7.6 Quantities are allocated according to the size and level of use of the library . New non-fiction will be allocated to the ten main libraries.

2.7.6 Libraries in villages and smaller towns are either allocated circulating collections on a rota basis, or will receive a small allocation of popular and appropriate titles on an ad hoc basis.

2.7.7 A proportion of the budget will be allocated to replacing damaged or grubby items where appropriate.

2.8 Stock for Children & Young People

The service aims to provide attractive, interesting and age appropriate stock for the 0-16 age group. The stock should support formal and informal learning as well as encouraging reading for pleasure.

2.8.1 Acquisition and Selection

The following categories are currently provided:

- **Board books/baby books**
These include some activity (e.g. pop-up and sensory) titles and incorporate bold images and simple text as appropriate.
- **Picture Books**
Both hard back and paperback titles are purchased with an emphasis on books which are attractive and have the potential to be read aloud.
- **Dual language picture books**
A small collection of books in dual English/community language editions is held centrally and available for loan county-wide to meet the needs of children from other ethnic groups.
- **Early Readers**
These are sub-divided by spine labels into
 - ‘Silver Stars’: books, containing illustrations and a few words to a page suitable for children learning how to read; and
 - ‘Blue Stars’: books using simple language and short sentences, with up to about 50 words per page, suitable for children starting to read alone.
- **Junior Fiction**
These include hardback, paperback and large print titles according to the needs of the children served.
- **Junior and Teen Graphic Novels and Manga Titles**
Graphic novels and Manga titles are provided in some larger libraries and are also available for loan in other libraries via the library reservation system.
- **Junior Non-Fiction**
Items for both educational purposes and recreational reading are provided, with the emphasis on popular topics and pastimes.
- **Teen Fiction**
These include both hardback and paperback titles and are provided for ages 12+ or for younger children with parental consent.
- **Teen Non-Fiction**
A small collection of titles is available for children aged 12+ covering issues relevant to this particular age group.

- Audio Books
These are available in some larger libraries and are also available for loan in other libraries via the library reservation system.
- E books
A small collection of titles is available for download via the N.C.C. libraries website.

2.8.2 Magazines are not currently provided.

2.9 Ebooks

Fiction, non-fiction and children's books are considered for purchase. Popular titles are stocked; specialist non-fiction is not purchased.

2.9.1 Ebooks must be in e-pub format.

2.9.2 Ebooks that are only available for the Kindle will not be purchased because they are currently incompatible with our procurement systems.

2.9.3 Ebooks are purchased from our library supplier. Other suppliers are not compatible with our systems.

2.9.4 Ebooks will be considered according to the same quality criteria as printed books:

- Capably written with flair, pace and good storytelling skill;
- Using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation;
- Accurately copy-edited and proof-read;
- Professionally laid-out text and having an attractive and professionally-designed cover.

3. STOCK MANAGEMENT

3.1 Library stock is maintained in a good physical condition. It is circulated regularly to maximise its use and avoid unused books sitting in libraries for long periods of time.

Collection HQ is used to inform decisions on whether to retain, move or withdraw items according to supply and demand between libraries. Stock therefore reflects the demand and interests of each library and is regularly refreshed.

Collection HQ also informs decisions on removing items that are no longer popular and have stopped issuing. These are removed regularly and transferred to another library or permanently withdrawn.

3.2 Stock withdrawal

Stock is permanently withdrawn from the shelves if:

- It has dirty, torn or missing pages
- It has pages marked with readers' annotations
- The binding is broken
- Adult fiction and junior stock will be withdrawn if it has been circulated to at least 4 libraries and has not been borrowed at the most recent library for at least 6 months.
- Non-fiction will be removed if the information is no longer relevant or current.

3.3 Stock disposal

If items are still popular, current and relevant they will be replaced. An updated edition will be bought if necessary. Withdrawn items are disposed of through library booksales or a commercial book recycling company.

3.4 Stock circulation

Stock is moved regularly between libraries to keep it current. Collection HQ is used to identify items that, according to their usage, should be moved between libraries. Its purpose is to enable a regular turnover of stock so that readers see fresh titles on the shelves and increased choice.

It identifies items that are no longer issuing in a library and provides options for moving them to another library that has a greater demand, or to withdraw them from stock. It also identifies items that, owing to the number of issues they have had, may be in poor condition and offers options to replace them with better-quality copies, and also to increase the coverage of popular authors and subjects where demand outstrips supply in a library. Stock is transferred between libraries according to Collection HQ's recommendations. Adult fiction and junior stock are transferred alternately on a bimonthly basis.

3.5 In addition to CollectionHQ's scheduled transfers, small ad hoc exchanges of stock are carried out between libraries on an informal basis. These enable a quick refresh of small sections of the stock or a rapid response to a sudden increase in demand.

4. DONATIONS

4.1 Staff accept donated books in excellent or very good physical condition and with a currency appropriate to the category or subject, on the understanding that they may or may not be added to the stock of any library. If the item does not meet a need and is not up to standard staff are not obliged to take it or add it to stock. They will suggest alternative outlets where it might be accepted.

4.2 Staff cannot undertake to collect books from donors' homes.

5. CONTROVERSIAL STOCK

The library service will only exercise censorship when required by the law. This principle is embodied in a policy statement by the Library Association and upheld by its successor the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals:

"It is the role of a library and information service that is funded from the public purse to provide, as far as resources allow, access to all publicly available information, whether factual or fiction and regardless of media or format, in which its users claim legitimate interest.... Access should not be restricted on any grounds except that of the law. If publicly available material has not incurred legal penalties then it should not be excluded on moral, political, religious, racial or gender grounds, to satisfy the demands of sectional interest."

Stock Management Policy 2015

Controversial material will be evaluated according to normal selection criteria and purchased on that basis. It is recognised that young people mature at different ages and it is assumed that adult carers take responsibility for their children's reading without prejudicing access to others.

6. LOCAL AUTHORS

Books by local authors will be evaluated according to normal selection criteria and the decision to buy will be based on a book's quality and the likely popularity of it in the local area.

7. SELF, INDEPENDENT AND SUBSIDY-PUBLISHED BOOKS

7.1 Definitions

7.1.1 Self-published and independently-published books are published by individuals, usually the author, at his or her own cost. They pay their own printing, binding and marketing costs and keep all the sales revenue. The books are published under the individual's own imprint.

7.1.2 Subsidy and vanity-published books are published by commercial publishing companies which ask for an upfront payment from the author towards publishing costs. In return they claim to offer marketing and sales support which may or may not be forthcoming. They count on people's desire to see their name in print (their vanity) to make a profit.

7.2 The difference between the two is often marginal. A lack of independent editorial control often leads to poorly-written books and production design, especially cover design and copy editing, can be amateurish.

7.3 However, the self and independent publishing market is growing fast with the increasingly easy access to ebook publishing. Titles are reviewed, often online, authors are starting to take a more professional approach, and such titles should not be ignored out of hand.

7.4 Therefore, independently-published books are purchased selectively on their merits and with regard to adding value and range to the stock. To aid selection of the best, The Bookseller's regular preview of indie books is used as a guide.

7.5 Vanity and subsidy-published books are not bought when they are identifiable as such.

8. STOCK PROMOTION

8.1 Stock is attractively displayed and presented. Libraries use a variety of imaginative ways to promote the stock and encourage customers to be adventurous in their reading repertoire. These include themed displays of particular categories, to mark calendar events (eg Valentine's Day) and anniversaries, major literary awards, TV and film tie-ins, and national reading promotions. Staff have been trained in specialist library display and stock promotion.

8.2 Libraries provide a range of events and activities for all ages to support and add value to reading, including storytimes, talks, workshops and reading-based events.

9. POLICY REVIEW

9.1 The stock policy will be reviewed at three yearly intervals. The library management system and Collection HQ will be used to evaluate the performance of the stock. Clear criteria will be set for the performance data used to monitor that the above stock policy is fulfilling its purpose.