

Stock Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Libraries aim to provide, within our resources, access to the widest range of printed, electronic and audio-visual materials to support the information, learning, business, cultural and leisure needs of the whole community regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, creed or ability.

This policy explains:

- How stock is selected and made accessible
- Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Libraries position on censorship
- Why stock is circulated between libraries
- Why some stock is kept and others stock removed
- How stock is maintained and promoted
- How we measure the performance of stock

2. POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

“It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof.”

2.2. Government priorities

Learning, reader development, social inclusion, citizenship and e-government as expressed in ‘Framework for the Future’.

2.3. The strategic aims of Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils

For details see:

- Bedford Borough website <http://www.bedford.gov.uk/>
- Central Bedfordshire website <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk>

2.4 The Mission Statement of Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Libraries

“Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Libraries are a vital community facility, committed to providing excellence and value in enabling the whole community to participate in lifelong learning and providing access to information, knowledge, works of creative imagination and information technology with particular emphasis on social inclusion, citizenship and democracy.”

3. AIMS OF THE POLICY

The Stock Policy provides a statement of overall stock philosophy in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Libraries together with general principles relating to the acquisition, selection and withdrawal of stock. It is an evolving document which will develop in response to the needs of local communities. It reflects statutory requirements and legislation and the requirement to provide resources within a best value framework.

Supplementary, detailed information on Adult and Community Services, Youth Services and Information Services stock policy is available in the Service Handbooks.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Head of Libraries

- The ultimate responsibility for stock rests with the Head of Libraries to whom complaints and disputes that cannot be resolved at other levels must be referred.
- The overall standards of service and service provision are generally the responsibility of the Head of Libraries.
- The allocation of the Resources Fund and partnership arrangements with HUB services are responsibilities of the Head of Libraries.

4.2 Service Development Managers

Stock selection and provision is essentially de-centralised, responsibility for co-ordination rests with the Service Development Managers.

4.3 Librarians

Responsible for the selection, creation and management of stock from acquisition to withdrawal within agreed stock policies.

4.4 Operations Managers

Responsibility for the correct application of all Stock Policy in relation to presentation, appearance, good order and display of stock as well as the efficient operation of the inter-branch request and reservation service lies with the Operations Managers.

4.5 Library Managers

Responsibility for the appearance, display, good order and presentation of stock within a specific library rests with that library's Library Manager who will also be responsible for ensuring comments about stock are feed back to the appropriate librarian.

4.6 Library Staff

Individual library staff are responsible for the correct application of standards to the material they handle.

4.9 HUB services

HUB Services staff are responsible for providing a stock support service through the Acquisitions and Cataloguing Services and also through Reserve Store and its associated collections, and the Inter-Library Loans service. The aim of HUB Services is to bring economies of scale, specialisation, and co-ordination to these stock procedures, and to perform an advisory and enabling role for the system as a whole.

5. ACQUISITIONS

The Acquisitions policy will ensure efficient stock procurement for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Libraries to meet value for money objectives. Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Libraries are part of a stock-purchasing consortium and wherever possible stock is procured through this consortium.

6. STOCK SELECTION

Stock selection for the Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Libraries will be carried out under the overall supervision of the Service Development Managers - who will carry overall responsibility for the selection of appropriate stock for all services and service points under their control. Stock is selected using a variety of methods including pre-publication advance orders from suppliers, show room visits, regular standing orders, requests and online reviews.

The main criteria for stock selection are:

- Popularity of the author, subject or genre
- Anticipated demand
- Authority and content
- Currency
- Value for money
- Format
- The needs of diverse communities
- Addition of value to existing collections
- Addressing gaps in collections
- Stock proportions for different stock areas
- Policy priorities for the library service
- Legislative guidelines

For some areas of stock, such as local studies, other factors are critical e.g. geographical relevance.

Virtual stock will be selected using the same criteria as physical stock. In addition the following criteria will also be considered:

- Evidence that information is kept up to date
- Adequate and logical internal navigation
- Searchability
- The availability of help files
- The maintenance of external links on the site
- Technical quality of the site e.g. the prevalence of scripting errors

Stock outside the scope of our normal collections policy will include:

- Books with additional objects (other than CDs, DVDs, audiotapes, maps)
- Books in a format unsuitable for our purpose
- Academic material e.g. theses (available through inter-library loan)
- Expensive luxury editions (except where of local interest)
- Vanity press publications
- “One-time” books i.e. those with space to write answers to questions

Relevant stock will be identified through diverse methods including community consultation and community profiles.

Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Libraries do not endorse or promote any particular political, social or religious ideology, nor will we knowingly stock or display any material that incites religious or political hatred or any material that is legally defined by law as obscene or blasphemous. The nature of this material is defined in UK legislation (Appendix 1). At the same time we will assume that older works will reflect the morals and social attitudes of their day, and that adults can make reasonable and critical evaluation of the views and opinions expressed therein.

7. STOCK PROVISION

7. 1 Physical Stock

The amount of stock held locally in each library will vary according to its size and its catchment population. All stock at all libraries is regarded as an authority wide resource and is managed accordingly by:

- Co-ordinating purchases across the authority
- Co-ordinating automated stock rotation across the authority

We will not try to be fully comprehensive in providing stock in smaller libraries. There will however be a range of stock to stimulate wider reading habits.

Stock will be provided in different formats and languages to meet the needs of all sections of the community.

7.2 Virtual Stock

Virtual Stock will be purchased for the Virtual Library and will be given equal priority to physical stock.

8. ACCESS TO STOCK

Each library, including the Virtual Library and mobile libraries, acts as an access point or gateway to the whole library service.

8.1 Adult and Youth Material

Books will be reservable at any service point. The right is reserved to decline the purchase of requested material. An alternative title will be offered if available.

8.2 Reference material

Reference books will not normally be available for loan. In cases where a small amount of specific information is required the Library will provide a photocopy, or fax, of the appropriate sections (subject to copyright law). There will be occasions when it is not possible to supply a copy of a reference text except at the library that has bought it.

8.3 Recorded material

An agreement between the Cilip and the BPI means that a significant number of recorded items are not available for loan for the first three months after the release date. Material is still purchased and catalogued prior to this but will be clearly identified as being "on holdback". Material may be reserved at any service point; the right is reserved to decline the purchase of requested material.

8.4 DVDs

DVDs will be reservable at any service point. The right is reserved to decline the purchase of requested material. DVDs that are not universally available will not be purchased. Exceptions may be made for specialised non-fiction and Local Studies material.

DVDs will not be selected if, in the opinion of the selecting member of staff, it contains scenes of gratuitous sex, or violence. The existence of sexual, or violent, scenes will not automatically preclude a DVD from being selected. Material that is merely exploitive will not be selected.

8.5 Local studies material

Some local studies materials may not be available for loan due to the fragility, rarity or value of the item. Items will be assessed on an individual basis. Some material will be made available on the Virtual Library where copyright legislation and the items physical condition permits.

8.6 The Internet and World Wide Web

Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Libraries provide access to the Internet in all static service points. The use of the Internet is subject to certain statutory restrictions and access is offered under the terms of the Internet Code of Conduct.

8.7 Online subscription services

Where licence agreements permit all online subscription services will be made available on the Virtual Library for 22x7 access.

8.8 Virtual Library stock

Virtual stock will be created by Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Libraries (e.g. guides to the Internet web sites, local studies resources, and book lists) to compliment and extend access to library stock.

8.9 Censorship

The only censorship is to be that established by the law of the land, i.e. publications which have not incurred any penalties under the law will not be excluded merely because they are controversial but must be evaluated and judged using the selection criteria framework. Legislation which will inform a decision about stock selection is listed in Appendix 1.

8.10 Requests and inter-library loans

Requests are a useful indicator of reader interest. However titles will only be purchased for stock where they match the stock profile and enhance the overall contents of the collections. Requests not added to stock will be obtained through the inter-library loans service whenever possible. As part of the policy of ensuring the most effective use of resources certain material may be subject to waiting lists. The normal selection criteria will apply to all requested items.

Where a title is not available from a branch of Bedford Borough or Central Bedfordshire Libraries and it is not going to be added to stock, sources outside Bedfordshire will be approached with a view to borrowing the book or article. There is no guarantee that we will be able to supply all items requested, and readers should be aware that inter-library loans can take longer to obtain than internal loans.

This can be an expensive procedure and in cases of particularly heavy use (more than 30 items pa) we reserve the right to levy an additional administrative charge. Inter-library loans are restricted to adult printed material, whether books or periodicals. A number of premium services are provided by the British Library - if use is made of these services all additional costs will be passed onto the user.

10. DONATIONS

Donations are subject to the same selection criteria that apply to purchases and the library is not bound to add all donated material to stock, nor will it necessarily remain at the library to which it has been donated. The library service will dispose of unwanted donations through a variety of means including library book sales.

11. STORING ITEMS IN PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Libraries will not accept any items which remain in the ownership of organisations or individuals.

12. RE-CIRCULATION OF STOCK

It is our intention that stock will be moved between service points with a view to maximising use and maintaining and refreshing stock.

13. STOCK WITHDRAWAL

Stock may be withdrawn if it:

- Has outlived its usefulness
- Is in poor physical condition
- Contains out of date or inaccurate material
- Is a superseded edition
- Individual loans on the item have declined

Stock will be re-allocated to Reserve Store, sold, recycled or discarded as appropriate. Requests from members of the public to purchase stock when it is withdrawn cannot be accepted.

14. CONSERVATION AND REPAIR

Damaged items will be assessed as to whether they are to be rebound, repaired or discarded. Criteria for re-binding include:

- Future use and popularity of item
- Stock condition
- Currency of information
- Existing subject coverage in the collections
- Availability of replacement

Materials from special collections and local studies collections will be conserved for the interests of future users. Methods may include binding, digitisation, facsimiles or removal to secure storage.

15. STOCK MONITORING

- Stock management will be assessed through a number of measures. These will include MLA benchmarks and performance measures.

16. PRESENTATION OF STOCK

- Furniture and shelving will be clean and presentable
- All stock will be in good condition and arranged in order so that both staff and customers can find what they are looking for quickly and easily
- Stock will be maintained to a physical standard which encourages use. On occasion, however, we may retain items which do not meet our normal standards in order to maintain an adequate level of coverage in particular subject areas or to preserve a particular item which is unique or irreplaceable or in demand.
- Shelves will be straightened up so that the stock on each shelf is roughly equal
- There will be a mix of face on and standard shelved stock
- Attractive and appealing displays will be maintained regularly
- Once part of library stock, sacred texts are managed in the same way as other stock items. Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Libraries will not undertake to display or store these texts in the manner in which they would be treated in a sacred environment - for example a church, mosque or temple.

APPENDIX 1 – LEGISLATION INFORMING STOCK SELECTION

- Obscene Publications Act 1959 (and amendments)
- Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964
- Race relations Act 1976 (added to and amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000)
- Public Order Act 1986 (as amended by the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 and the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Terrorism Act 2000
- Terrorism Act 2006
- Incitement to Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- Local Government and Public involvement in Health Act 2007
- Blasphemy common law