

Explore York Libraries and Archives Stock Policy

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1. Overview and policy statement

Explore York Library and Archives Mutual Ltd ('Explore') is a not for profit Industrial and Provident Society responsible for delivering library and archives services on behalf of City of York Council. Explore has a contract with City of York Council to provide the statutory public library and archive service for the city, with 15 libraries including York Explore – our flagship library and home of the City Archive – a mobile library, a home library service and 7 Reading Cafes

This policy outlines our principles for the selection, purchasing, promotion and maintenance of all items of bookstock, both in physical and e copies to ensure we get best value from our resources for the benefit of the communities across York. Our objective is to provide as wide a range of materials as possible to support the work, learning and leisure interests and needs of individuals and communities across the City. It is subject to review and revision every 12 months. If you require a copy of this policy in another language or format please let us know.

The main piece of legislation governing libraries is the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 where:

'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, and for that purpose to employ such officers, to provide and maintain such buildings and equipment, and such books and other material, and to do such other things, as may requisite' (Section 7.1).

In addition:

'in fulfilling its duty under the preceding subsection, a library authority shall in particular have regard to the desirability:

a) of securing, by keeping of adequate stock, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter.....sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children and

b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographic and other information as may be required by persons using it'

In making decisions relating to the items it is appropriate for us to stock, Explore uses guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the national body, as detailed in 'Managing safe and inclusive public library services – a practical guide' (2023) which provides a framework for public libraries to inform decision-making. To this end, we work to the following affirmation as detailed in these guidelines:

‘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 of third party for any reason other than that they are expressly prescribed by law’

In addition, we support and are committed to CILIPs Ethical Framework, which means we uphold, promote and defend:

- Human rights, equalities and diversity, and the equitable treatment of users
- The public benefit and the advancement of the wider good of our profession to society
- Preservation and continuity of access to knowledge
- Intellectual freedom, including freedom from censorship
- Impartiality and the avoidance of inappropriate bias
- The confidentiality of information provided by clients or users and the right of all individuals to privacy
- The development of information skills and information literacy

2. General Principles

1. The aim of the library service is to provide the widest range of materials possible, in the best format available, within the resources available, whilst supporting the latest trends and ensuring you can obtain the latest bestseller.
2. Our role is to offer impartial and unbiased access to knowledge. We do not censor any materials, so you may find profanities, violence, scenes of a sexual nature and controversial views in some of our books. Material will not be rejected solely because it is considered controversial.
3. Our stock may include any published material unless it is proscribed by UK law or contradicts any of Explore’s policies. It will be balanced to reflect a range of opinions on any topic. Parents or legal guardians are responsible for their children’s use of material from any section of the library, not our staff and volunteers.
4. Explore stock is selected to support the key purposes of Explore, so it reflects what we do. Explore aims to:
 - Share the joy of reading
 - Support information literacy and digital inclusion
 - Inspire people of all ages to learn, imagine, create, and share ideas

- Build stronger communities by being a safe, welcoming place where all can belong, enjoy new experiences, and connect to each other and the wider world
 - Support individual and community wellbeing
 - Be a strong, entrepreneurial, and financially sustainable organisation
5. Stock is a dynamic library-wide resource rather than the property of one particular library. The system aims to balance breadth of stock with the need to supply specialist materials. The breadth of materials held encourages new customers and will meet the needs of all sectors of the local community.
 6. Library staff are responsible for the selection, management and disposal of stock based on the principles laid down in this document.
 7. Stock management is central to our core business. All staff are trained in managing stock and perform such functions on a day-to-day basis.
 8. Supplier selection is used for printed stock to maximise staff time in the promotion and display of the stock. Stock is purchased in a trans-regional consortium of 36 authorities to achieve the highest possible discounts. The consortia tender is renewed every 5 years, ensuring that we continually get best value and service.
 9. Supplier selection means that library staff do not directly hand select stock. Criteria are drafted together based on the make-up of our communities, the constant analysis of the performance of the stock and the size of our libraries and this information is fed to our suppliers to inform the selection of stock we receive in all of our libraries. The staff dealing with these requirements at the suppliers are professionally qualified library staff with an understanding of the needs of a public library service.
 10. The supplier selection documentation is renewed at least once a year, with analysis of the performance of each area of stock and feedback from customers informing any amendments.
 11. All types of stock (excluding children's board books) are circulated round our libraries and Reading Cafes to ensure as much choice and variety as regularly as possible.
 12. Stock will reflect the varied and diverse make-up of our communities. We will aspire to ensure that stock is made available in a range of different and accessible formats and languages, where possible.
 13. Multiple copies of popular non-fiction and bestselling fiction titles will be purchased.
 14. Adult fiction and popular non-fiction physical stock is maintained using a greater proportion of paperback items.
 15. A request service within the city boundaries ensures that everyone has access to all stock. Any book can be requested from any library (except Reading Cafes and the Community

Stadium) and we use your requests to identify any changes we need to make to our supplier selection documentation, and to identify any new emerging trends.

16. Explore York Library and Archive will provide specialist resources for the whole community including reference, local history and family history support.
17. The library service will purchase items in response to known demands, media and social trends.
18. The service will provide stock which is bright, attractive, well-presented and constantly refreshed by purchase and rotation.
19. Stock will be selected in various formats in order to ensure all customers have access to the best resources. Other formats include titles available in large print, audio and e-books.
20. The service will assess new formats as they appear on the market and monitor their appeal and usefulness before considering purchasing them for the library service.
21. Donations to stock are accepted provided they meet with the criteria set within this policy and are in pristine condition. We will decline donations that are unsuitable. This includes items in poor condition and those which may include out of date information, or which no longer have relevance or appeal. We will decline books where the subject is already adequately covered by our collection, or where we already have a sufficient quantity of a particular title or similar. We do not accept any amounts of unwanted books intended for disposal. Library staff reserve the right to dispose of any unwanted donations through book sales or other means.
22. Unsolicited and self-published titles are not accepted for purchase and receipt will not be acknowledged nor the items returned. We will only purchase items from our contracted suppliers. We will accept donations of one copy of a self-published title provided it meets with the criteria set within this policy.
23. The library service seeks to challenge reading habits by offering a wide variety of fiction titles including new and emerging authors, promote the use of books for recreation, support formal and informal education of customers of all ages and meet the information needs to the local communities.
24. We aim to offer 24 hour access to our resources where this is at all possible. This includes a collection of eBooks and eAudiobooks, which can be accessed remotely.
25. The service believes in meeting the needs of all of the communities we serve and we will, wherever possible, provide our stock in a range of formats and appropriate languages.

26. All stock is selected against the following criteria:

Content

The information contained within will be current and unbiased.

Value for money

How expensive is it in relation to other similar items and formats.

Scope

How does it compare to other items of a similar nature? Is it part of a series? Are we filling a gap by purchasing this particular item?

Authority

Is the publisher a reputable one within that field, or does the editor or author have a high reputation in that area?

Challenging

Are we providing something new?

3. Library Tiers, stock holdings and stock rotation

For the purposes of stock selection and the provision of services, Explore groups its libraries into 2 types – Explore Centres and Library Gateways, which are based on the opening hours of the library, the number of paid staff working at that library and the size of the library building itself. The tiers are as follows:

York Explore Library and Archive – our Central library operating as a hub for the whole of the City of York providing specialist resources for the whole community including reference, local history and family history support.

Explore Library Learning Centres – situated at Acomb, Clifton and Tang Hall. These also deliver a range of learning opportunities in partnership with York Learning.

Explore Library Gateways – are in Bishopthorpe, Copmanthorpe, Dringhouses, Dunnington, Fulford, Haxby, Huntington, the Mobile library, New Earswick, Poppleton and Strensall.

In addition, we also offer book borrowing and lending services at:

Reading Cafes - Rowntree Park and Hungate Reading Cafes.

Community Stadium – a volunteer supported book-lending service situated within the Community Stadium

Each library acts as a gateway to the whole of Explore's stock, in that customers can reserve and collect books from any library across the City. Customers can collect requested items from our reading cafes, but reading café and stadium stock is not available to be requested for collection at another library. The physical constraints of existing buildings make it impossible to offer all levels of stock in all libraries.

Stock is circulated within the appropriate bandings that map to a library's size and opening times. This means that you, the customers, know what stock you can expect to find on the shelves at each library. The rota is applied to the book at the point of purchase. Given the Central Library status, most stock that is bought for York Explore is not circulated.

The eLibrary

Explore stocks a range of adult fiction, adult non-fiction, young adult and children's eBooks and eAudiobooks, with adult fiction forming the majority of the collection due to demand. The focus is leisure reading, so while non-fiction is stocked, it does not aim to support academic study.

4. Adult Stock selection

4.1 Fiction

1. Adult fiction stock is purchased to appeal to as great a variety of readers as possible. At Explore, we consider fiction an essential element of public library provision serving not only recreational, but also educational and social needs. In selecting stock we aim to provide titles which:
 - Seek to broaden the outlook, exercise the imagination and challenge the pre-conceptions of the readers
 - Extend literacy and encourage reluctant readers
 - Support mental health and wellbeing
 - Provide entertainment and relaxation
2. The emphasis is on paperback titles. This is to match customer preference for paperbacks and allow a greater amount of books to be purchased.
3. Adult fiction provision will fairly represent demand as reflected by borrowing figures and our criteria for selection will be reviewed annually as a minimum to ensure that this is always the case. The majority of our collections will consist of popular 'genre' fiction of all types e.g. crime, romance. Gateway Libraries will have a greater emphasis on this type of material with broader ranges to be found in our larger libraries.
4. We support national promotions (e.g. Booker Prize and Women's Prize for Fiction), where a minimum of one copy of short-listed titles are purchased and promoted.
5. We recognise the value in keeping good quality copies of 'classic' and 'modern classic' authors. These will continue to be replaced, subject to budget, if in print once existing copies are worn. Contemporary literature also become classics and library staff will identify significant new authors for replacement.
6. Library staff who define the criteria for selecting stock keep up with the trends in the publishing world and review our criteria for selection annually. This ensures our stock remains continually fresh, current and matches customer demands.
7. All physical fiction titles are ordered in advance from the supplier ensuring that titles will be available on the library shelves as the titles are being promoted in bookshops.
8. Large print fiction and audio book titles are purchased using a standing order from the key publishers of large print titles. Due to the specialist nature of large print and audio books, these titles will not be purchased in multiple copies.

4.2 Non-Fiction

1. A comprehensive non-fiction stock is essential in order to encourage and support community development, and promote social inclusion. Our non-fiction stock supports:
 - Lifelong learning including formal and informal education and training
 - Personal and social development
 - Independent research and private study
 - Local commercial and economic opportunity
 - Entertainment, relaxation and leisure
 - Health and wellbeing
2. Our library supplier uses a rating system to which we apply our own criteria to ensure that we have a good coverage of books relating to York and North Yorkshire and multiple copies of popular non-fiction items e.g. cookery titles. We also consider recommendations from staff working in libraries, from members of the public, listings in The Bookseller publication and Waterstones bestseller lists.
3. The emphasis is on paperback titles. This is to match customer preference for paperbacks and allow a greater amount of books to be purchased.
4. Reading Well Books on Prescription collections to support mental health and wellbeing will be purchased for some Explore Libraries according to local circumstances, with different collections being located where there is an identified local demand.
5. Major non-fiction prizes (e.g. Baillie Gifford Prize for non-fiction) are supported by Explore, where a minimum of one copy of short-listed titles are purchased and promoted.
6. All physical non-fiction titles are ordered in advance so that titles will be available on the library shelves as the titles are being promoted in bookshops.
7. Library staff who define the criteria for selecting stock keep up with the trends in the publishing world and review our criteria for selection annually as a minimum to ensure our stock remains continually fresh, current and matches customer demands.
8. Large print non-fiction titles are purchased using a standing order from the key publishers of large print titles. All large print titles purchased are circulated to enable maximum coverage. Audiobook titles are made available on CD, and as Audiobooks.

5. Children's and Young People's Selection

5.1 Fiction

1. Stock is purchased to support and promote children and young people reading for pleasure from birth to 16.
2. Stock is purchased in several formats including eBooks, eAudio, board books, picture books, books for those learning to read and chapter books.
3. Stock covers a wide range of titles and authors to reflect diversity of lifestyles and cultures, whilst providing an opportunity to discover new authors.
4. We do not follow school reading schemes but purchase good quality early reading books by quality authors to support children when they are learning to read.

5.2 Information Books

1. Children's and young people's information books are purchased to support and promote reading and learning for pleasure, from birth to 16.
2. Stock will cover a range of reading levels and interests and will be accurate and up to date.
3. We do not aim to support schools or further education providers with stock to support the curriculum, or with bulk loans of stock. Such requests would be directed to School Library Services in neighbouring authorities.

6. Reference Stock

1. Information & Reference collections are designed to complement our lending services by making information more available and accessible via the use of online resources.
2. York Explore holds the main collection of printed reference materials. The print reference collections in other libraries are smaller and intended to answer quick reference enquiries only.
3. All libraries will hold printed reference copies of a dictionary and a thesaurus. All other access to reference resources will be available online, including, but not limited to, access to digital newspapers, magazines and genealogical resources.
4. Online resources are investigated constantly as a viable alternative to printed resources as this improves access to information for the customer. Contracts are reviewed at least annually by the Stock team.
5. Where possible, online reference resources are procured across a number of library services to keep costs to a minimum. Currently, Explore offers Access to Research which is provided free of charge as part of a collaboration between the Publishers Licensing Society and Libraries Connected.

6. Any printed reference materials are purchased using the criteria that they are the recognised standard reference works, they are primarily intended for consultation and for answering enquiries, they are constantly in demand, or answers enquiries which occur regularly and they cover a subject area in which published material is relatively scarce.

7. Local and Family History Material.

1. Local and Family History material is purchased to support those interested in researching the history of the City of York and its surrounding area, and tracing their genealogy in the York area and beyond.
2. The main collection of local history materials is at York Explore, where reference items can be found for the whole of the City of York. Smaller local history lending collections are held at all libraries, with the focus being on general York history titles and titles containing information specific to that local community.
3. Local History stock shall be acquired using the following criteria:-
 - Records and publications relating to the educational, social, cultural or political aspects of the area governed by City of York Council
 - Records and publications relating to the influence of York in the wider County of Yorkshire and the historic Ridings of Yorkshire
 - Records and publications of organisations or individuals which reflect the economic, cultural, social or political development of York
4. Access to many Local and Family History resources will be made available online. We are committed to extending the collections made available digitally via the Explore York Images website and through Find My Past, and to further develop technological means to increase access to more collections.
5. Items of stock are purchased by the Archives team. They are selected from our suppliers and lists of local publications. Items are also added to stock via donation and deposit.
6. Items will be purchased in a number of formats included printed material, maps, and periodicals. Local History items will only be purchased for reference stock if deemed to be of permanent historical value. Family History items will be replaced as and when new editions are released. Effort will be made to avoid excessive duplication of holdings, except where multiple copies aid wider public access.

8. eLibrary Stock Selection

1. eLibrary stock will be available to residents and non-residents, and where possible, usable by multiple customers concurrently. We aim to choose platforms which are easy to use, and which integrate well into our collection as a whole, as well as those which offer the best content according to the standard stock selection criteria in section 3.0.
2. We currently purchase eBooks and eAudiobooks from one supplier, Overdrive, which offers titles from multiple publishers. Customers can access the eLibrary via our website or the

Libby app on mobile devices. Titles are selected manually by the Service Developer: Reading and LMS and the Service Developer: Children, Young People and Families.

3. Manual selection allows us to select unabridged versions of titles rather than abridged and to avoid books which are very short in length.
4. eLibrary selections are made weekly for adult titles and monthly for children's titles to ensure that the collection is refreshed regularly. Value for money is a major factor in e-book and e-audiobook selection because prices are extremely varied and can be prohibitively high.
5. Customers can suggest titles for the eLibrary in the same way as they do for print titles. If they use Libby they can also add a Notify Me tag to titles which we do not hold and we will consider them for purchase. They will be notified if the title is purchased. We are not able to respond if we decide not to purchase a particular title.
6. Due to publisher restrictions on providing access to eBooks via libraries, not all titles published in hard copy are available as eformat.

9. Toy Library Selection

The Toy Library holds a wide range of toys and story sacks. Some are specially recommended for children with disabilities, but loans are open to all.

We select based on feedback from customers and partner organisations and are open to suggestions, which are then addressed when funding is available. When deciding we take into consideration gaps and the needs of our users.

The Toy Library is supplemented by grants applied for by the Service Developer : Children, Young People and Families.

10. Requests, reservations and comments

1. We accept suggestions for stock and feedback on the stock policy. Customers can do this via staff in libraries or online via [website](#). This information will be used, wherever possible, to inform the selection process.
2. Each library acts as a gateway to the whole of Explore's stock, in that customers can reserve and collect books from any library across the City. Customers can collect requested items from our reading cafes, but reading café and community stadium stock is not available to be requested for collection at another library.
3. Requests for any books either in stock by Explore, or items not held in our stock, may be made in person at any staffed library within City of York boundaries. Requests can also be placed online via our website www.exploreYork.org.
4. Requests for items not in stock will be considered for purchase if they are in print, if they meet the criteria as listed in this document, and budget allows. Otherwise, customers will be given the option of borrowing the item from another library outside the City of York.

5. Due to our book supply contract, we only purchase books from our contracted suppliers. Our supplier for adult stock is Askews and Holts Library Services Ltd and our supplier for children's stock is Peters Ltd.
6. 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, poor content or presentation, dated information or low demand.
7. Customers' reservations are monitored. If the title still meets our selection criteria, we will aim to purchase extra copies if more than 7 reservations are received for an individual item in hard copy and 15 for the e library (a higher number for the e-library given the fact that e-library stock can satisfy the same number of requests more quickly).
8. We have an ambition to supply:
 - 50% of all reservations within 7 days of the reservation being placed
 - 70% of all reservations within 15 days of the reservation being placed
 - 85% of all reservations within 30 days of the reservation being placed

11. Promoting Reading

1. We will actively promote items on topics of current interest to raise awareness, encourage understanding, improve accessibility and increase library usage. This is not to promote a particular belief or opinion, but to enable our customers to follow an interest in a topic, to be exposed to new ideas and encouraged to debate and at time challenge perceptions
2. All of our libraries will be welcoming, safe and create a reader-friendly atmosphere. Arrangement of stock will be clearly set out for all customers and all shelf guiding will be accurate and to a set standard.
3. All library staff will actively promote our stock and the joy of reading. This will include creating appealing displays, talking to customers about books and reading, helping customers to find books by new authors and encouraging them to try different genres and subject areas.
4. A programme of promotions, events and activities for children and adults relating to books and reading is coordinated by the Service Development team and delivered by library staff.
5. We support adult readers groups across York by holding a minimum of 200 sets of books exclusively for readers groups. At least twelve new sets of paperback titles will be purchased annually to keep the collection fresh and relevant. Reading groups will have input into this selection process.
6. The online catalogue website is designed to promote reading, and has features such as booklists, reviews, and user tags to make it easy for customers to browse for their next read.

12. Measuring Stock Performance

Measuring the performance of our stock is an integral part of the stock policy. Using the Library Management Software (LMS) we monitor the current performance of all our stock and produce statistical information to enable us to increase its future performance.

Performance measurement helps library staff to prioritise spending on stock and to identify areas where resources are needed. It also informs the information we give to our suppliers to ensure that we are continually buying the stock that you want to borrow. It also enables us to compare the performance of our service with other similar library services.

Below is a list of criteria Explore York Libraries and Archives use when assessing stock performance:

Issues of books

Issue figures are expressed 'per 1000 population' to make comparisons with other library services. This is monitored on a monthly basis using the Library Management Software.

Stock turnover

This refers to the number of issues divided by the number of items in stock, and is a measurement of how hard the stock is working. This is monitored at least once a year.

Items added to stock

These figures are expressed 'per 1000 population' to make comparisons with other library services. This is monitored monthly.

Cost per use of online reference resources

Applying to all eLibrary stock, the full cost of the solution including support, hosting and titles, should amount to less than £0.50 per use.

Data from our LMS is also used to identify stock that is not issuing well, is out of date or has been borrowed many times and is potentially in bad condition. These items are then checked by library staff and withdrawn if in poor condition or out of date, or located to another library if performance data shows that they could be borrowed elsewhere.

13. Stock Maintenance

1. First impressions are vital – the physical presentation of the stock makes a statement about the quality of service offered. Out of date information could mislead customers and can be dangerous and the physical condition of stock deteriorates over time. The removal of unused, worn out and out of date stock makes it easier for customers to find suitable material.
2. All staff, supported by volunteers, have the responsibility of keeping stock well-maintained – tidying shelves to a regular routine, and assessing the condition of stock at the point it is returned.

3. A number of criteria are used when we are assessing stock (excluding local history materials). These include the following:

Age

All non-fiction and fiction items are checked for condition and relevance at the point of them getting to 9 years old. The date an item is added to stock is used to assess this, not the date the book published.

Poor physical condition

If the pages are yellowing, binding is damaged, there are loose pages or damaged illustrations, we consider the popularity of the book along with the factors in section 3 to determine whether the item should be replaced or withdrawn.

Currency

Content and publication date is considered when assessing non-fiction items. Items containing out of date information are withdrawn from stock. In addition, the following areas of stock would automatically be withdrawn from stock when they hit a certain age:

Tax	Current year only
Travel Guides	No more than 3 years old
Books relating to health conditions	No more than 3 years old (excluding Reading Well collections)
Law	No more than 3 years old
Computers	No more than 5 years old
Language learning materials	No more than 7 years old

Poor performance

Items that have not been issued to a customer over a certain period of time will be promoted to encourage use. If poor performance continues, they are withdrawn from stock. Fiction stock is removed from the shelves if it has not been borrowed for 9 months and non-fiction at 12 months

4. Items in good condition that meet the criteria set within this policy, may be located to another library. All library staff are also trained to think about stock placement/promotion before good quality stock is removed. Would a customer borrow it if it were relocated to another section or displayed effectively?
5. Items in good condition but no longer required for library stock because of demand are withdrawn from stock and sold to customers or disposed of commercially where appropriate. Staff will not make arrangements to withdraw and sell specific items to members of the public on demand.
6. In addition to stock being withdrawn for the positive reasons outlined above, some stock is removed from the catalogue due to being lost or stolen, or in the case of e-books when the licence expires. In these cases processes exist to alert library staff wherever the last copy of a given title is being removed in this way, and a decision is made whether to re-purchase the title based on the factors outlined in section 1 as well as past/current performance.

14. Contact Information

If you have any queries about the content of this policy, please contact:

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