

Stock Policy

Policy statement

Explore York Libraries and Archives is committed to providing sustainable, high-quality library stock that is accessible, relevant and responsive to the needs of York's communities. We aim to apply consistent and transparent approaches to stock selection, rotation, care and management to ensure that materials remain available, relevant inclusive and fit for purpose.

Our stock activities directly support our organisational priorities, including:

- Engaging people with reading, culture and learning.
- Inspiring creativity, connection and curiosity.
- Supporting individual and community wellbeing.
- Ensuring equitable access to information and resources.

This policy outlines Explore's principles for the selection, purchasing, promotion and maintenance of all items of library book stock, both in physical and electronic (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 of individuals and communities across the City.

Policy context

The relevant piece of legislation informing this policy 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 be requisite' (Section 7.1).

Furthermore, by law, that duty extends to providing a broad range of books to meet the varying demands of our communities:

'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'

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 relating to censorship and inclusivity. 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

Key Terms

- **Stock:** all physical and digital materials available for loan or reference.
- **Stock maintenance :** preventative activities that ensure our library stock is kept fresh, attractive and improves usability
- **Digital stock:** eBooks, eAudiobooks and other licensed digital content typically accessed via a smartphone, laptop or tablet.
- **Supplier selection :** the process whereby a specialist provider of library books chooses books for the library based on a set of criteria defined by Explore staff.



Scope and purpose

This policy applies to all public-facing library stock across Explore service points, including:

- Lending stock for adults, teens and children.
- Reference collections.
- Local and family history materials.
- eLibrary collections.
- Toy Library stock.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for selecting, maintaining, evaluating and caring for library stock.

Introduction

Explores library stock is a dynamic shared resource intended to serve the evolving needs of York's residents. Through a process of timely rotation, specialist library staff informed selection, withdrawal and condition monitoring, the service remains responsive, relevant and sustainable.

We seek 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 the formal and informal education requirements of customers of all ages and meet the information needs of the local communities.

The purchasing of library books – key principles

The physical library book stock is a dynamic library-wide resource rather than the property of one particular library. We regularly rotate the vast majority of our library books to balance the breadth of our collections with the need to supply specialist materials. The breadth of materials held encourages new customers and meets the needs of all sectors of the local community.

Supplier selection is used for printed books to maximise staff time in the promotion and display of the stock. Stock is purchased in a trans-regional consortium of 36 library services to achieve the highest possible discounts. The consortia tender is renewed every 5 years, ensuring that we continually get best value and service.

Supplier selection means that library staff do not directly hand select the majority of stock. Criteria are drafted and renewed annually 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.



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, where possible. Stock will be selected in various formats in order to ensure all customers have access to the best resources and as much of our stock as possible is accessible. Other formats include titles available in large print, audio and e-books.

Multiple copies of popular non-fiction and bestselling fiction titles will be purchased.

The library service will purchase items in response to known demands, media and social trends.

Adult, children and teen fiction stock is purchased to appeal to as great a variety of readers as possible. 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

A comprehensive non-fiction stock for all ages is provided 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

The emphasis is on paperback titles, matching customer preference for paperbacks and allowing a greater number of books to be purchased overall.

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.

We also 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.

All physical 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.



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

Our library suppliers use rating systems to which we apply our own criteria to ensure that we have a good coverage of non-fiction 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.

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.

Children's and teen stock covers a wide range of titles and authors to reflect diversity of lifestyles and cultures, whilst providing an opportunity to discover new authors.

We do not hold school reading schemes instead we purchase wide ranging good quality early reading books by quality authors to support children when they are learning to read.

Stock will cover a range of reading levels and interests and will be accurate and up to date

We do not aim to support schools or further education providers with books which support the curriculum, or with bulk loans of stock. Such requests would be directed to School Library Services in neighbouring authorities.

Selection Criteria

All library books are 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?
- Formats – we will assess new formats as they appear on the market and monitor their appeal and usefulness before considering purchasing them for the library service
- 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.



eLibrary Stock Selection

eLibrary stock will be available to people who live, work and study in York 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 well as those which offer the best content according to the standard stock selection criteria as mentioned previously.

We currently purchase eBooks and eAudiobooks from 2 suppliers, Overdrive and Borrowbox, who offer titles from multiple publishers. Customers can access the eLibrary via our website or via the providers' apps on mobile devices. Titles are selected manually by the Service Developer: Reading and LMS and the Service Developer: Children, Young People and Families.

Manual selection allows us to select unabridged versions of titles rather than abridged and to avoid books which are very short in length.

Value for money is a major factor in e-book and e-audiobook selection because prices are extremely varied and can be prohibitively high.

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.

Due to publisher restrictions on providing access to eBooks via libraries, not all titles published in hard copy are available as eformat.

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.

Library books and censorship

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.

Our library 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.

Explore library staff are ultimately responsible for the selection, management and disposal of library stock based on the principles laid down in this document.

Donations

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, where the subject is already adequately covered by our collection, or where we already have a sufficient quantity of a particular title or similar. Library staff reserve the right to dispose of any unwanted donations through book sales or other means.

Requests for books

A request service within the city boundaries ensures that everyone has access to all titles. 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.

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.

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. Customers may be given the option of borrowing the item from another library outside the City of York.

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.

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.

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).

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

Library Tiers and book stock purchasing and rotation

For the purposes of purchasing and the rotation of books, Explore groups its libraries into 2 types – Explore Centres and Library Gateways, depending on the number of opening hours and the size of the library building itself. More details below:

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 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

The eLibrary

Explore stocks a range of adult fiction, adult non-fiction, teen 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.

Reference Items

Information & Reference collections are designed to complement our lending services by making information more available and accessible via the use of online resources.

York Explore holds a small collection of printed reference materials. The print reference collections in other libraries are intended to answer quick reference enquiries only.

Emphasis is on access to reference resources online, including, but not limited to, access to digital newspapers, magazines and genealogical resources. Online resources are investigated constantly as a viable alternative to printed resources as this improves access to information for the customer.

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.

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.

Local and Family History Material.

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.

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.

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

Access to many Local and Family History resources will be made available online. We are committed to extending the collections made available digitally via Find My Past, and to further develop technological means to increase access to more collections.

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.

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.

Promoting Reading

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 times challenge perceptions

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.

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.



A programme of promotions, events and activities for children and adults relating to books and reading is delivered by library staff.

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.

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.

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.

Below is a list of criteria we use when assessing stock performance:

Issues of books

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

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.

Stock Maintenance

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.

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.

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 on page 5 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

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.

Roles and responsibilities

The Head of Library Services oversees strategic responsibility for stock policy.

Service Developers lead on stock selection, digital provision and performance monitoring.
Library staff and volunteers carry out day-to-day stock management and customer support.
Feedback on this policy can be sent to: **stock@exploreymork.org.uk**

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