

Bristol Libraries – Stock Policy

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History of most recent Policy Changes – **Must be completed**

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change (e.g. TU request, change in legislation etc)
2010	All	Updated policy wording	Policy due for revision
Autumn 2013	All	Updated policy wording	Policy due for revision
January 2015	All	Updated policy wording and expanded sections on E resources and disposal	Policy due for revision
March 2018	All	Updated policy wording	Policy due for revision
March 2018		Inclusion of donations policy into Stock Policy	

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1. Background to the policy

Public Libraries are governed by legislation ensuring that all members of society have free access to library materials. The first Public Libraries act was passed in 1850 and more recently the Public Libraries and Museums act of 1964 became law. It states that

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.

Statutory duties are set out in the act and include:

- The provision of books and other materials needed to achieve the provision of a comprehensive and efficient service
- Ensuring the means are in place to allow borrowing of or reference use of materials to meet users requirements
- Encouraging users to make full use of the service and providing advice, bibliographic and other information to assist in this.

Libraries are also governed by the 'Best Value' provisions of the 1999 Local Government Act. Best Value requires that library authorities *make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness*. An example of best value is the practice of sharing resources, whether through local networks or the national inter-library loans service.

A relevant, diverse and well-maintained stock is essential to a comprehensive and efficient service and is central to the successful delivery of a quality library service, being the part of the service that most users connect with. For the purposes of managing library materials 'quality' is being responsive to user needs and expectations as well as trends in patterns of use. It also means matching and exceeding benchmarks, making the best use of available resources to ensure value for money and continuously improving and consulting with users over what they want and what they can expect from the service.

A number of other statutes influence the creation and interpretation of library stock policies, including:

- Equality Act 2010
- Copyright Design & Patents Act 1988
- Terrorism Act 2006

This Stock Policy provides the framework for building and maintaining our library collections. It will be reviewed two years.

2. Bristol Libraries & Libraries West

Bristol Libraries currently comprises Bristol Central Library, 27 branches of varying sizes and the At Home service. Bristol is part of the Libraries West consortium that includes six other authorities: Bath and North East Somerset, Dorset, North Somerset, Poole, Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Joining a library in one of the five authorities allows membership in all and enables users to borrow and return items in any of the 100+ libraries in the consortium. The shared catalogue and website allows borrowers to reserve items across Libraries West for delivery to any branch.

Bristol Libraries also co-operate with all other libraries in Britain in inter lending items. Bristol is grouped regionally with other South West authorities to form SWRLS (South West Regional Library Service).

Bristol Central Library

Bristol Central Library houses a comprehensive Lending Library including a Music and Drama section, a dedicated Children's Library, Reference Library and the Learning Centre IT suite. Its collections are relevant to those who live, work and study throughout Bristol and support the whole of Libraries West in the provision of stock to undergraduate level. Collections include local studies, books in community languages, printed music, art and reference stock.

Fiction for loan includes all genres, modern and popular fiction, graphic novels and a very large representation of the classics. A representative selection of first novels is purchased.

In addition there are Reference and Lending reserve stacks of older and out of print material (see sections 6 & 7 below).

The Branch network

The 27 branches contain stock relevant to their local communities. Each branch has access to the online reference resources (see section 8 below). The non-fiction collections vary in size and range according to the user profile, business and size of the branch. Fiction collections are generally modern and popular titles with some classics. Genres include romance, crime, science fiction, fantasy and westerns. Stock is purchased for all ages with each branch having a separate children's area.

3. Stock selection

Stock is selected by a team of professional Librarian staff. There are children's specialists who deal with material for children and young people. Material is chosen for its literary, cultural and recreational relevance or for its information and learning value.

Stock selection aims

- A range of material that reflects the demography of the area and the policy priorities agreed for the library service and Bristol City Council.
- A consistent approach to the management, selection and development of library stock across Bristol Libraries.
- Promotion and support of reading and learning opportunities.
- Collections that support Bristol's historical and cultural relevance.
- The material available in the library represents a balance of opinions within any particular subject area.
- Operational efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Selection criteria

Our objective is to ensure comprehensive subject and author coverage across the city at a range of levels from basic skills to undergraduate level. Stock is selected from the full range of published material (physical and virtual) and includes books in all formats, audio visual materials, community language materials, newspapers and periodicals, reference materials, electronic information, maps, CDs, DVDs, magazines, microforms & downloadable audio and e books as publishers license agreements allow. All stock is exploited as a citywide resource.

Evaluation is based on 3 factors - content, format, price. The key criteria:

- Currency and accuracy of information
- Presentation and layout including contents page, index, illustrations.
- Item is a new edition, especially in a subject area of rapid change
- Item fills a known stock gap or under-represented subject area
- Item is of local interest
- Popularity of author/subject/genre
- Authority and reputation of author/publisher
- Item is a sequel - do we hold previous titles in this sequence?
- New authors will be purchased to ensure a varied and current stock.
- Format and content should be appropriate for the target audience e.g. large print, spoken word, board books and picture books
- If an item is available in both hardback and paperback a judgement will be made on value for money based on the expected physical life span of the item and its potential usage
- Cost
- For electronic material other factors such as ease of use & terms of license agreements are also closely examined
- Audio visual material: CDs and DVDs are an income generating part of our stock offer. However it is a key aim to purchase a wide range of genres and titles in order to attract a broad customer base & enhance the cultural life of our users

Suppliers

Stock is purchased from a variety of dedicated library suppliers who efficiently supply library shelf ready stock. Bristol Libraries are members of a south west wide stock purchasing consortium called CUSP and as such have formally tendered contracts in place which include competitive discounts, for the supply of adult and children's books. For other material such as Large Print, Spoken Word, local material and books in other languages specialist suppliers are used to ensure the widest range of material is made available to our users.

How stock is selected

The Librarian team utilise a variety of tools to assist the selection process to ensure a comprehensive selection of stock is provided to the end user:

- Supplier websites, inc newly published titles, best seller lists, reviews
- Publisher information
- Booklists
- Press coverage and reviews
- Supplier selection of popular adult and children's titles
- Staff and reader recommendations
- Reservations (see section 4)
- Stock gaps information identified from readers' enquiries and branch stock reviews
- Work with specific user groups particularly in areas of provision related to socially excluded groups
- Information from the library management system e.g use and stock turnaround figures
- Branch profiles that include census data for the local area and library statistics

A high proportion of stock is selected from contracted suppliers websites and ordered ahead of publication, arriving at the library on or near the date of publication. We currently use a mixture of supplier selection and standing orders for much of our adult fiction material and children's books. Supplier selection is an efficient way to procure popular, mainstream stock. Professional Librarians write detailed specifications for library suppliers to work to and monitor closely the monthly suggestions for purchase made using this specification. It helps us use Librarian time more efficiently and achieve best value for money.

Standing orders are in place for items such as periodicals, popular romances, large print, spoken word material and regularly ordered reference items.

Donations

Donations are welcome on the understanding that they are subject to the same criteria as purchased stock. Material will only be added to lending stock if it is in new or nearly new condition. We reserve the right to use donated materials to the best advantage of the service as a whole, deciding on the most suitable location and disposing of items as deemed fit.

3.1 Donations from individuals

1. Bristol Libraries accept donated materials in the form of books or music CDs. This is on the understanding that items:
 - a) May be allocated to any library in Bristol
 - b) May not, after being reviewed, be taken into the stock at *any* Bristol library. In this case the donated items will either be offered for sale or disposed of.
2. Bristol Libraries cannot accept donations of electrical and/or computer equipment unless receipt of the gift is agreed by a member of the Library Management Team. We do not accept donations of DVDs

Criteria to be used

All the normal material selection policy criteria apply including:

- Physical condition
- Date of publication
- Suitability for library – specialist material may be sent to Central departments or other libraries
- For CDs, rental material is subject to legal restrictions.

The designated Stock Librarian will decide which material is taken into stock & where to locate it.

Self published items

Bristol Library Service is often asked to acquire, either by purchase or donation, books which have been self published. The assumption has to be made that these items will not have been through the rigorous editing and legal content checks undertaken by mainstream publishers. Where the Library Service agrees that such an item may be of use in our collection, it will fall to the author to prove the content is reliable, professionally presented, and does not contravene any laws. The Library Service staff do not have the time to read items and make this judgement. The only exception to this is items with a strong Bristol interest. These will be judged by the Local History Librarian on a case by case basis.

Unsolicited Stock

Some authors and publishers send items that have not been ordered, enclosing an invoice in the hope that the Service will purchase them. These will not be accepted. Any item that is not required must be kept for three months after which it becomes library property and may be disposed of. Should the sender require its return, the cost of postage must be provided in advance, as per the Sale of Goods Act.

3.2 Donations from outside organisations

From time to time organisations offer to donate items to libraries, usually in a specific subject area. These proposed donations may consist of a single item or a number of books on a single subject. These requests should be directed to the Stock Team.

The following considerations will be given:

- Does the stock meet normal material selection criteria?
- Is it suitable for the library, e.g. are the items too specialised?
- Will it lead to stock imbalance, e.g. having a number of titles on one subject?

Stock will normally be dispersed through the classification system according to subject rather than kept together as a collection.

The organisation may wish to direct interested people to the library. It must be understood that people wishing to borrow material will need to join the library in the usual way and be subject to the usual rules.

The stock will be subject to usual repairs, maintenance and stock reviews. It may be withdrawn or circulated to other libraries as appropriate.

Acknowledgement of donations

It may be appropriate, on occasion, to send a letter of thanks on behalf of Bristol Libraries.

4. Reservations & requests for material not in stock

Reservations

Library members have access to over 2.5 million items through the shared LibrariesWest catalogue. Any lending item in LibrariesWest can be reserved for collection at a Bristol branch of choice for free. If there are a large number of requests for a particular title additional copies may be purchased to meet demand; waiting lists are regularly monitored by Librarians across the consortium.

Library users may also place reservations for books not in stock in LibrariesWest. These will be considered for purchase if they meet our selection criteria and are in print. If we do not buy the title we will endeavour to obtain it via our Inter lending service which accesses stock from libraries regionally, nationally and on occasion internationally. A charge is made for this service.

Stock suggestions

We welcome suggestions of items for purchase. Customers can submit these via our website, email or in person in any Bristol Library. All suggestions will be considered for purchase against the usual criteria. A decision not to purchase will be influenced by one or many of the following: unsuitable format, budgetary constraints, poor content or presentation, dated information or low demand.

5. Censorship and controversial material

The Chartered Institute of Information and Library Professionals (CILIP) policy statement on “Intellectual Freedom, Access to Information and Censorship” (2005) states clearly that:

“Access [to information] 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.”

Bristol Libraries also follow the Museum Library & Archives Council (MLA) Guidelines on the Management of Controversial Materials in Public Libraries, 2008.

We will consider for purchase any publication which has not incurred penalties under UK law. Material that is defined by UK legislation as blasphemous or which incites religious or political hatred, will not be stocked or displayed. The library service does not knowingly purchase such material and if any item becomes subject to legal proceedings it will be removed. We will investigate complaints about stock but we will not add, or remove, any item from our shelves solely at the request of an individual or group. We acknowledge that on occasion individuals may find items in our collections “offensive”. However, we do not label items to warn customers of potentially sensitive content and would only restrict access to material in order to protect it from damage or theft, not as a form of censorship.

It is assumed that the adult reader is capable of making a reasoned and critical evaluation of views and opinions expressed in any one book. In the case of children's material it is recognised that children have different emotional and intellectual development rates and the expectation is that parents will supervise their child's reading based on their knowledge of the child's ability to deal with the content and subject matter.

6. Stock management

Management of the stock is generally based on the principle that the library service's holdings

"Should be viewed as one complete stock which is made available to customers through a network of service points, rather than viewing it as a series of separate collections" (Audit Commission: *Due For Renewal*, 1997).

Fiction is arranged alphabetically by surname within any relevant genre. The fiction genres commonly in use are crime, romance, science fiction & westerns. At the Central Library, fantasy, horror & short story sequences are also used. All libraries have a run of general fiction as well.

Non-fiction is arranged by Dewey Decimal Classification. There are separate sections for some stock areas or types of stock, e.g. 'You & Your Child' collections and Local Studies sections.

Stock is separated by format, e.g. DVDs, Large Print, maps.

The stock at every library site will be:

- Accessible to the public, e.g. at a reasonable height for browsing
- Clean and tidy; Library staff regularly tidy the shelves to ensure the order is maintained & to remove grubby stock
- Attractively displayed, e.g. face on display is used where space allows
- Relevant to the community

Stock editing and revision

It is the responsibility of the Stock Team under the leadership of the Stock Manager, in collaboration with Library Supervisors, to ensure that the stock remains relevant and in good condition at all service points. Stock is monitored and evaluated through the use of automated stock management tools, national and in-house surveys, stock suggestions and customer comment forms.

We use stock management software that provides a powerful analysis of stock popularity across the whole network. From the reports produced it is possible to identify stock that is underused, or overused to the point where it may be in poor condition and in need of replacement. Other reports recommend fiction or non-fiction that branches should transfer to keep stock fresh or fill demand at another library. Methods such as these ensure our stock works as hard as possible and that demand is met efficiently and effectively.

We purchase stock on the understanding that it will often circulate to a number of sites. This is to ensure an item has maximum use and enables users of branches of all sizes to see a changing selection of books on the shelves.

In addition to the use of statistics and software, professional Librarians also periodically physically visit the branch libraries to 'weed' the shelves and analyse the stock gaps and

stock demand. This, alongside regular contact with Library Supervisors, remains an important part of the stock management process.

Stock will on occasion be relegated to non-public stack areas if the material is a classic text or is deemed otherwise useful by Librarians despite its appearance or date of publication. We have a substantial Lending reserve stack which functions as a citywide resource to support and supplement open access stock. The store consists of:

- standard and classic works of fiction and non-fiction
- out of print and still in demand material which is not in a condition for open shelves
- a music and drama reserve including scores, music/drama sets and a selection of classic CDs and DVDs.
- Local material

We also have extensive Reference and Local Studies collections in store (see section 7 below for more detail).

Stock promotion and reader development

Reader development is an integral part of Bristol Libraries stock development strategy. Our aim is to provide a range of opportunities for our readers to explore reading and develop their own reading habits. Each Librarian has a reader development role and one professional post has a particular focus on providing opportunities for public participation. These include a wide range of literary, leisure and cultural events such as author visits, themed events, exhibits and artists' forums. Bristol Libraries also facilitate a large number of local reading groups.

Stock promotion is an important part of stock management. Stock is promoted in a variety of ways including :

- Displays
- Shelving guides
- Library website
- Public events
- Tours for the general public and organizations
- Face to face contact with our borrowers

7. Reference and Local Collections

We aim to provide a comprehensive reference and information service to those who live, work or study in Bristol, to provide information for educational, recreational, cultural and welfare needs. We have extensive local and reference collections housed in the Central Library and at our off-site store, including a significant collection of art books. In addition there is the growing suite of online resources available to library members via our website (see section 8 below).

Central Reference Library

Together the whole collection of approximately 300,000 titles comprises a central resource of information on a wide variety of subjects. The size of this collection owes much to the library's long history and includes material of the following types: encyclopedias, dictionaries, official publications, bibliographies, directories, guidebooks, prospectuses, atlases, maps, newspaper and periodical runs, pamphlets, textbooks and many monographs and ephemera. Where the information is being made available in electronic format we always consider that option where it is a practical alternative to printed stock.

Local Studies

The Central Library also houses the Local Studies collection which includes in the region of 37,000 books & pamphlets, 1,500 press cuttings files, over 2,000 volumes of local & historical newspapers and 3,000 maps, as well as thousands of slides, illustrations and other information of local interest. The purpose of the collection is to preserve and celebrate Bristol's unique historical and cultural heritage.

Reference stores

There is a much larger, substantially historic but still relevant collection on closed access and at our off-site store. All items are accessible to the public on request with notice. Not all reference material is on the online catalogue and the library retains a number of card catalogues in the Central Reference Library that contain records of thousands of older items.

The reference stores contain:

- Extensive local collections including historical newspapers, cuttings and ephemera
- Runs of serials
- Backruns of newspapers and magazines
- Material in unsuitable condition or format for open access but which still has value for library users in terms of its content or historical significance.
- Material to assist enquiry work e.g. requests for illustrations of specific subjects
- The Art Reference Reserve containing over 30,000 items
- Fragile material
- Material of lasting historical interest
- Material of antiquarian value, or otherwise susceptible to theft

Preservation/conservation

The Central Library holds a number of historic collections. Of these, the largest is the Local Studies collection, some of which is particularly fragile and valuable. Bristol Libraries recognizes the need to ensure the preservation of historic and unique collections for future generations. Such materials need to be preserved from extremes of temperature, humidity and direct sunlight in closed access locations that are fit for the purpose. The nature of some of this material requires special attention to be paid to conservation, including rebinding.

8. Online Resources and eBooks

Bristol Libraries subscribe to a growing range of online resources accessible to library members via the library pages on the council website www.bristol.gov.uk/libraries-archives/library-online-resources

eBooks and eAudio

Bristol Libraries works as part of the LibrariesWest consortium to provide free eBook and eAudio collections to our library members. The collections are popular and becoming more so, and the number of titles are growing.

We use an approved supplier for both our eBook and eAudio services, selected via a robust tender exercise. In the future it could be we would have multiple suppliers and multiple platforms in place, depending on funding available and the growing popularity of the eBook format.

Stock is selected by Librarians using largely the same guidelines relating to content as for hard copy books in terms of popularity of subject and author, genre, content, currency of information, quality in terms of the reputation of the publisher/authoritativeness of the author. Usage is closely monitored and additional copies of titles are purchased where titles prove particularly popular, budget allowing. As a general guide an additional copy is purchased for every 20 issues.

In addition there are other considerations at the selection stage around format and licensing options, particularly around the number of loans allowed per title purchased.

The area of Ebook provision is a rapidly changing one, with publishers, suppliers and library authorities in dialogue internationally to develop a more workable model for Ebook lending going forward.

Online Resources

In addition to eBooks and eAudio services Bristol Libraries subscribe to a number of other online resources covering a range of subjects and interests. These include, for example:

- Reference and historical resources such as historical newspapers
- Family history records and genealogy
- Official information
- English language learning tools
- Driving theory test help
- Online editions of popular periodicals and magazines which can be downloaded onto portable devices
- A music streaming service

The majority (though not all) of these resources are accessible remotely – i.e. outside of physical library buildings and opening hours – via library membership details, and as such provide universal access to all library members 24 hours a day.

These resources increasingly form a core part of our stock and offer both a useful addition and a viable alternative to printed resources. Many of the same selection criteria are used as with printed stock in terms of authority of content and demand, but in addition there are other factors which are thoroughly investigated:

- Possible demand for the resource in this format
- Ease of use
- Licence costs
- Network licence agreements
- Consortium deals (national or regional)

Usage of our online resources is closely monitored and stock is promoted to reach a wider audience wherever possible, for example via social media and in branch libraries. Staff training is given priority.

9. Stock Disposal

Stock is withdrawn from library holdings for a number of reasons. The approach will vary according to what the stock is, whether it is part of lending material or the reference collection, or part of a special collection. This policy attempts to outline the key principles we work to and the criteria applied, as well as how we dispose of stock, to ensure the process is transparent and clear. These principles and guidelines are used by professional Librarians when applying their professional knowledge and judgement.

Lending stock

For general lending collections throughout the service stock is withdrawn from circulation regularly as new editions become available, information becomes out date or superseded, stock is no longer being used, or the condition of stock deteriorates and becomes dirty, damaged or otherwise aesthetically unpleasant. Lending collections are heavily used and space is at a premium on the shelves.

A team of professional Librarian staff carry out reviews of stock as part of their day to day responsibilities for the management of the collections in the Central Library, and have an overview of the stock throughout the branches. Sophisticated statistical stock management tools are used alongside professional expertise to make decisions about stock relegation and withdrawal. See section 6 above for more detail on stock management methods.

Reference & specialist stock

The vast majority of this stock is found in the Central Library and at our off-site store. Library services are changing and there is an increasing decline in the use of printed library collections as digital technology has radically developed the way information is collected and retained. In addition, as the role of the Central Library develops and moves forward there is a need to ensure space is being used to best effect and that there is suitable storage space for current and future collections of material. Accordingly the stock policy needs to allow for the planned disposal of certain types of general non-specialist stock, which for the purposes of this policy comprises non-valuable, non-unique material.

Special collections, printed heritage, manuscripts, maps, photographs and ephemera are excluded from this policy. We will keep in perpetuity at least one copy of any book or item that specifically relates to Bristol.

Withdrawals of stock from the Reference collections are undertaken by professional Librarian staff as part of their stock management role. Local material is dealt with by the specialist Local Studies Librarian. Advice may be sought from institutions or individuals with specialist knowledge in the content of material where appropriate. We will take external advice for any items dated pre 1900 that we are considering withdrawing from stock as we recognise that there may be considerations beyond those covered in this Stock Policy of Bristol Libraries.

Criteria for withdrawal

Material being considered for withdrawal will meet at least one of the following indicative criteria:

- The content of the material is no longer relevant to, nor fulfills the criteria of, the Stock Policy.
- The content of the material is out of date
- For lending stock, stock is no longer being used
- A later edition is available
- Duplicate copies
- The material has deteriorated too far to be of any further use to library customers or staff
- The material may be available in a more accessible or more appropriate format e.g. electronically
- The material is readily available in another local library or another library in the UK

Disposal procedure

Once stock has been identified as surplus we will dispose of it according to these principles:

1. Sold if there is both a market and a cost effective method. The income can be reinvested in the library service
2. Offered to be reused by organisations or individuals if appropriate
3. Recycled in an appropriate environmental way.

Disposal process

- All withdrawn material will clearly indicate a withdrawn status on the book and will be withdrawn from the library catalogue.
- The majority of general lending material will be offered for sale via an approved not for profit company such as Better World Books. Any monies made from the sale of withdrawn library material will be reinvested in the library service. It may on occasion be desirable to invite book dealers to bid for unwanted stock if it is of appropriate value.
- Material may be offered by gift to other public, specialist or academic libraries in Bristol, the South West region or further afield if it could possibly add value to their special collections
- In some cases, where appropriate, material may be offered by gift to a not for profit organisation, school or reputable charities.
- In some cases, once other options have been exhausted and if it is in a suitable condition, selected stock may be offered on a time limited basis to the public for free at the discretion of the professional Librarian team
- Withdrawn material not suitable for sale or offering elsewhere will be recycled wherever possible or destroyed by a suitably qualified contractor.
- Newspapers and periodicals, which are only kept for a few months, will be recycled.
- No items may be earmarked for individual purchasers, as such a system may be open to abuse.