

# Nottinghamshire Libraries Stock Management Policy

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## 1 Policy Statement

This policy sets out Nottinghamshire County Council's Library Service principles for the most effective selection, management and performance of all formats of stock for the maximum benefit of the people who live, work or study in Nottinghamshire. It is informed by UK Government legislation, local strategic aims and priorities, and professional standards and guidance.

The Nottinghamshire library service is delivered through Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries, who operate the public library service within Nottinghamshire under contract with the county council.

### 1.2 Legislative Framework

The main law underpinning this policy is The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. 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..." and "that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books .... and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children."

The libraries also operate within the legal boundaries of the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Public Order Act 1986
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- Children Act 1989
- Terrorism Act 2006
- Obscene Publications Act 1959 (and amendments)
- Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988
- Data Protection Act 2018

### 1.3. Nottinghamshire visions and priorities

This Stock Policy is a means to help libraries contribute to Nottinghamshire County Council's vision and priorities. Nottinghamshire County Council's vision is for "A healthy, prosperous and greener future for everyone" (The Nottinghamshire Plan 2021-2031).

Nottinghamshire's ambitions are:

- Helping our people live healthier, more independent lives
- Supporting communities and families
- Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe
- Building skills that help people to get good local jobs
- Strengthening businesses and creating more good-quality jobs
- Making Nottinghamshire somewhere people love to live, work and visit

- Attracting investment in infrastructure, the economy, and green growth
- Improving transport and digital connections
- Protecting the environment and reducing our carbon footprint

## 1.4 Universal Offers

Libraries Connected, the sector support organisation for public libraries, aims to support councils to deliver inclusive, modern, sustainable and high quality public library service at the heart of every community. They have developed Universal Offers which are integral to a modern library service:

- Culture and Creativity
- Health and Wellbeing
- Information and Digital
- Reading

Each offer is underpinned by the Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise developed by Share the Vision and The Children's Promise developed by The Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL).

Nottinghamshire County Council library strategy outlines the local offers across its network of libraries.

## 2. Key Principles

We will manage our stock to provide a unified and consistent approach across the county and ensure the most efficient and effective use of resources based on the following key principles:

- The term 'stock' relates to all forms of library materials, including books, newspapers, periodicals, maps, audiobooks and other materials in both physical and digital formats.
- All libraries are grouped into different levels based on their catchment populations, size, and level of use. The range of stock physically available in each library will vary according to their banding. Stock is regarded as a county-wide resource and does not belong to any one individual library. Each library, including Mobile Libraries, acts as an access point to the whole library service.
- Within the budget and space available, we will provide a balanced and comprehensive collection. Stock will include a wide range of material to suit people of different ages, abilities, needs, backgrounds, views and interests, including those with protected characteristics as specified in the Equalities act of 2010, and to reflect the diversity of life in the UK.
- Priority is given to new titles to ensure our collection is up to date, however we also aim to stock the best available titles that have proved useful and popular and are still in demand, such as fiction and non-fiction classics. Stock revision is also used to meet the needs of individual libraries and customers and fill any stock gaps.
- We will provide the best value from our resources by using performance statistics, professional knowledge and experience, industry expertise, stock management tools and community and customer engagement to maintain, develop and promote our collections.

### 2.1 Scope

Local heritage collections and materials lie outside the scope of this policy and fall under Heritage policies.

## 3. Stock Selection & Acquisition

### 3.1 Stock procurement

- Nottinghamshire libraries are part of the East Midlands and Central Anglia (EMMA) and the East Midlands Libraries (EMLIB) Consortiums. Consortium contracts for physical and digital stock

purchases are awarded to library suppliers via a rigorous tender process, in line with procurement procedures, to ensure maximum value.

- The majority of our purchasing is done through these stock contracts, though some stock which is not available from our main suppliers, including maps, foreign language material and items of local interest may be bought from other sources.
- The annual budget for the purchase of library materials is divided between different categories of stock using performance indicators and other stock management information. The different average costs of item categories, the provision of non-loanable items with no issue statistics, and specific target areas are also taken into account. Nottinghamshire Libraries operate a flexible, responsive service and so may reallocate budgets between categories as required if circumstances change.

### **3.2 Selection criteria**

It is impossible for any library service to buy everything that is published, so the following criteria are used to ensure we stock the materials that best help us to meet our key principles.

- Content
- Quality
- Popularity
- Age
- Format
- Cost
- Coverage
- Local interest
- Availability
- Legality

Items which do not meet these key principles and so will not be bought include:

- Academic textbooks or specialist items of limited interest to a public library audience
- Expensive, luxury or gift editions
- Books intended for personal use such as items with fill-in pages or loose leaves
- Items intended for use by or with a teacher such as reading schemes and workbooks
- Items that do not enhance the existing range of material in stock
- Titles not in print in the UK
- Items which are proscribed under UK law.

### **3.3 Self-Published items**

In recent years there has been an exponential growth in self-published or vanity press books. As the content of these has not been vetted by an editor or publisher, we will not standardly consider or purchase them. However, on some occasions we may make exceptions:

- If the author is local
- If a book fills an essential stock gap where there are no professionally published items
- If there are a number of customer requests for a title which has been well-reviewed
- If we already stock previous titles by an author which have been popular

In all cases, the self-published titles must also meet our standard selection criteria (3.2).

### **3.4 Donations**

We will accept donations from members of the public and authors for up-to-date books in good condition which meet the selection criteria and will enhance the collections.

### **3.5 Special Collections**

Nottinghamshire Libraries provides special collections and materials to address accessibility and areas of specific local need, including for health and wellbeing, visually impaired people, parents and carers, people living with dementia, speakers of other languages.

### **3.6 Customer Suggestions**

We welcome customer suggestions for items not in stock in Nottinghamshire Libraries. We will consider any item for purchase which is in print and meets our selection criteria, however we may not be able to purchase everything due to budgetary constraints. If we decide not to purchase an item, customers have the option of borrowing it from another library outside Nottinghamshire using Inter-Library Loans.

### **3.7 Electronic and digital resources**

- Use of Nottinghamshire Libraries' e-resources has hugely increased during the last few years. Our aim is to attain the right balance of hard copy and digital stock, which is an evolving process that we review regularly when allocating funds. We are committed to developing our digital collections in response to customer demand, as financial resources permit.
- Use of our electronic and digital resources is monitored to ensure that usage merits the subscription or licence cost. Value for money is a major factor in e-resources selection as prices are extremely varied and can be prohibitively high.
- Not all e-resources titles that are commercially available are licenced by publishers for electronic loan by public libraries and so we are not necessarily able to fulfil all customer suggestions.
- All electronic and digital resources are evaluated using our standard selection criteria.

### **3.8 Methods and Processes**

- We buy new material on a regular, co-ordinated county-wide basis to ensure effective coverage of popular titles while also developing choice and range.
- We use a variety of selection methods in order to achieve the best possible collection.

### **3.9 Censorship**

- The British public library tradition is built on the principles of intellectual freedom, free access to information, ideas and knowledge, free expression and democratic dialogue. Libraries operate within the law to provide this in a safe and hospitable environment. The Ethical Framework maintained by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), sets out the commitment of librarians and information professionals to uphold, promote and defend intellectual freedom, including freedom from censorship.
- In order to do this, Nottinghamshire Libraries follows the guidance on Managing Safe and Inclusive Public Library Services produced by CILIP in 2023 with funding from Arts Council England. This states that "Librarians, library staff and decision-makers are expected actively to oppose censorship for any purpose other than material that is proscribed by law, which risks the incitement of illegal acts or which constitutes 'hate speech' as defined by the Public Order Act 1986, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006."
- Nottinghamshire Libraries will therefore not censor items of stock which have not incurred any legal penalty because they are thought to be controversial but will evaluate them according to the selection criteria listed in this policy. We acknowledge that older works will reflect the morals and social attitudes of their day, and also that on occasion individuals may find items in Nottinghamshire Libraries personally offensive. However, we expect that customers can make their own judgements on what they would like to read and make reasonable and critical evaluation of the views and opinions expressed. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that

library stock their children access is appropriate according to their own views and the age of the child.

## **4. Stock Management and Maintenance**

### **4.1 Access**

- All physical stock can be accessed through the public library catalogue provided by our Library Management System (LMS) and items for loan can be reserved from any library in Nottinghamshire. Digital material can be accessed through the Inspire website or supplier apps.
- We use catalogue records supplied by the leading supplier of bibliographic metadata. Their metadata standards adhere to all current library cataloguing and classification standards and provide high-quality records to help users to successfully find resources.
- Individual items of stock are identifiable by a unique barcode which is used in the LMS, and an RFID tag which is used on self-service kiosks and with RFID stock management tools.
- To help customers find items more easily on the shelves, stock is arranged in categories according to genre or subject. To ensure consistency, these are standard for all libraries in Nottinghamshire, dependant on the size of library.
- Some stock is not kept on open shelves due to its format, age, condition or value, or for reasons of space. These items are all listed on our catalogue and can be viewed or borrowed on request.
- We use stock rotation as a means of refreshing library collections at a minimum cost, to ensure that titles reach the greatest number of customers and achieve maximum value for money, and that customers in smaller libraries have access to a greater choice.

### **4.2 Maintenance**

- All stock is managed and maintained during its life to achieve the maximum usage possible and thus ensure that we get the best value out of what we buy, and that items remain a relevant and useful resource for the Nottinghamshire community.
- All frontline library staff are responsible for the day-to-day management and maintenance of resources using stock standards which set out the required condition, age and performance of items.
- Evidence-based stock management tools including LMS and RFID reports are used to aid staff in this process.
- Stock which is not being borrowed at one library but meets the standards of age and condition will be moved on to another library to increase stock refreshment and performance.

### **4.3. Disposal**

- Withdrawal of stock is vital to maintain the quality of what we offer our customers. Library staff routinely dispose of items that are no longer current or borrowed, are faulty or in poor condition, according to the agreed standards.
- To maximise income, withdrawn stock is disposed of either at local book sales or through national book buying companies. Revenue contributes to the purchase of new stock.

### **4.4 Performance Measurement**

- We monitor the performance of our collections using data from our LMS and our e-resources suppliers and produce statistical information to enable us to increase the efficiency of our stock.
- Statistics including number of loans, turnover, items added to stock, expenditure and reservations are used to identify areas where resources, promotion or stockwork are needed and to prioritise spending.
- Libraries have access to RFID scanning tools which enables easy real-time stock data collection and ensures the information on our stock is up-to-date and accurate.

- We undertake annual audits to gain accurate data on stock collections.
- We use statistics to benchmark our collections and performance with other UK public library services which are local or of a similar size.

## **5. Promotion**

We promote stock to customers and to the wider public to:

- raise awareness of the wide range of stock and formats and maximise their use
- promote reading, literacy, lifelong learning, digital skills, health and wellbeing and social inclusion
- offer choice and opportunities for reader development, inspiring people to try something new
- assist readers to find the right book or information for their needs
- encourage library membership and use and raise the profile of the service

Date Approved: April 2026