

**DORSET LIBRARY SERVICE
COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT
POLICY**

April 2024

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Section A: Background and Context

A1 Aims of the Policy

This Collection Development Policy sets out the principles by which books, audio-visual materials and other resources should be acquired, managed and made available for the maximum benefit of the people of Dorset, with the budget available.

A2 Vision, Aims and Strategic Policy

The [Dorset Library Strategy 2023-2033](#) has been co-designed with our customer, communities and partners.

Our vision for the future is: **Trusted community spaces for everyone, with services to inspire your future.**

Our mission is: **To Inspire, Connect and Enable our communities through our services.**

Inspire: To enrich lives through universal access to information, knowledge, learning, literacy, and culture

Connect: To connect with and meet the needs of our communities

Enable: To create accessible, inclusive spaces for our communities to share and use

To invest in the development of our workforce and volunteers to deliver services that meet current and future community needs and exceed customer expectations.

Dorset Library Service is part of the Libraries West consortium. The vision and core aims of the consortium can be viewed via the following link to [the Libraries West Mission Statement](#).

Section B: Key principles

B1 Collection Management Policy Statement

This policy outlines the basis on which library resources for Dorset Library Service are: acquired, selected and managed. This policy supports Dorset Library Service in:

Ensuring access to reading, information, knowledge, learning, literacy and culture.

- Promoting reading, literacy and learning and the love of books
- Promoting digital inclusion by providing access to digital services
- Promoting economic wellbeing by providing free access to resources
- Providing local opportunities for culture and creativity to flourish within Dorset's communities.
- Ensuring provision of excellent public services by offering access to a range of accurate, balanced and current information in all appropriate formats.

Throughout this policy, the term 'stock' is used to refer to books, newspapers, magazines and other electronic resources.

Dorset Library Service aims to:

- Provide a sufficient range of stock in a variety of formats (print, large print, audio, electronic) in order to meet our strategic aims.
- Deliver free access to materials.
- Meet the library-related needs of the community including people with protected characteristics as specified in the Equalities Act, 2010.

In order to achieve these aims, the following principles are adopted:

- All stock will be purchased and managed as a county wide resource and will be managed to optimise use throughout its life.
- Stock management will be based on identified customer demand and priorities and in support of diverse community needs set out in service objective and to support the service in maintaining library usage.
- The resource budget is allocated to meet customer demand, community needs, and to achieve operational efficiency and cost effectiveness most effectively.
- Each library provides a balanced collection reflecting the reading tastes, the information needs and the multicultural nature of the communities served.
- Collection range and level will consider variations in local communities to provide a range and depth of stock for the whole service.
- Evidence based management, such as issue statistics are utilised to select, manage and evaluate stock to maximise effectiveness and turnover.
- Additional copies are purchased (as budgets allow) in response to demand for new and popular materials to reduce waiting times.
- Access to a greater range of materials available through the reservations system both across the Libraries West consortium and through cooperation with library services and agencies nationally (Inter-Library Loan).
- All members of the Library Service Management Team will have a responsibility to ensure the future development and effective implementation of the Collection Development Policy.

- All library staff will have a responsibility for stock management in their service areas.
- The Collection Development Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure continuing relevance.

B2 Scope

The policy will cover how Dorset Library Service:

- Selects stock to purchase
- Reflects the needs of communities within the stock collection
- Circulates items around the service – all stock belongs to the whole service rather than a specific branch
- Promotes and maintains the stock collection
- Decides on which items to keep or which are removed from the collection
- Measures performance in relation to usage of stock

The library service provides access to a wide range of materials both fiction and non-fiction. As well as latest titles, the service provides backlists of popular authors and can cater for even the most specialist needs.

Dorset Library Service aims to hold items that local people want to borrow. Therefore if any stock gaps are identified by customers, these can be fed in as stock suggestions [via the Dorset Council website](#).

B3 Approach

Each library aims to provide a varied stock relevant to community needs and on a level appropriate to its size and type (Library, Library Plus or Library Connect). However, every library is part of the wider network of Dorset Library Service and stock will be managed and utilised as a county-wide resource by:

- Co-ordinating purchase across the county
- Co-ordinating circulation across the county based on evidence of usage and demand
- Promoting the catalogue and reservations service
- Promoting the use of e-resources and the library web pages

B4 Electronic and Digital Resources

Dorset Library Service is committed to maintaining and developing its collections to provide access to the widest and most up to date range of resources as possible, in order to meet the needs of its customers.

- The service is committed to providing access to information for the widest possible audience. Online information resources are a key component and include a wide range of commercially produced content. All of these resources will be available in any Dorset library via Library PCs as well as via the web, as licenses permit.
- Dorset Library Service will continue to develop its provision of web based reference/enquiry resources for internet access by customers, within budgetary limitations. This will ensure both currency and immediacy of access to this information either through library PCs or via the internet for all our members and customers.
- Dorset Library Service are committed to providing recreational e-resources (including e-books, e-magazines and e-newspapers) for the widest possible audience by pooling budgets

with other authorities within the Libraries West consortium to provide access to larger shared collections.

- E-resources are a key part of the library service offer and complement the provision of physical materials, with an emphasis on widening the library offer 24/7 and beyond traditional physical spaces.
- Use of e-resources is regularly monitored to ensure that value for money is being achieved and to help flag up any areas of concern.
- E-services are managed centrally by Libraries West – this includes stock selection, budget and contract management, promotion, performance analysis and responding to customer comments.
- Where budget is available, some additional content may be purchased by Dorset Library Service

B5 Other non-standard resources

Dorset Library Service works with partners and can sometimes secure funding to provide additional services and/or resources that customers can borrow through their local library.

These can include (but are not limited to), iPads, Micro:Bits and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) resources.

Use of these resources will be monitored to ensure that value for money is being achieved.

Due to the way these items are funded, there may be instances where use is limited to Dorset Library Service customers only and not made available to the wider Libraries West consortium.

B6 Requests

- Reservations for any items in stock within Dorset or the wider Libraries West consortium can be made at any library in Libraries West or online via the [Libraries West website](#) or app.
- [Suggestions for stock](#) and feedback on the Collection Development Policy are welcomed. This information will be used, where appropriate, to inform the selection process.
- Requests for items not in stock will be considered for purchase if they are in print and meet the criteria as listed in this document. If these cannot be purchased, customers will be given the option of requesting the item from another library outside of Dorset.
- 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 or spiral bound items), budgetary constraints, lack of availability, poor content or presentation, dated information or low demand.

B7 The Legislative and Regulatory Framework and Government guidance

The provision of library stock is carried out against a wide legislative framework:

- [Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Obscene Publications Act 1959 \(legislation.gov.uk\), amended 1964](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) and other relevant H&S legislation.
- [Video Recordings Act 1984 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#), [Copyright \(Visually Impaired Persons\) Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) and [The Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Local Government and Housing Act 1989 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

- [Children Act 1989 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Local Government Act 1992 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Protection from Harassment Act 1997 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Terrorism Act 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Further Guidance is provided by:

- [Managing safe and inclusive library spaces \(Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals and Arts Council England, 2023\)](#)
- [Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals ethics framework](#)

B8 Censorship and controversial stock

In its guidelines on Managing safe and inclusive library services, The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) states that:

“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 or 3rd party for any reason other than that they are expressly proscribed by law.” (page 3)

And:

“[T]here may be circumstances in which the provision of access to information, events, activities or public spaces would bring the library into conflict with its other statutory duties including (but not limited to) the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (the specific duty of public authorities to consider how their decisions impact people with characteristics protected under the Equality Act).

[...]

There may be circumstances in which the library may place conditions on access to information, events, activities or public spaces, but only where obliged to do so by their responsibilities to safeguarding, public safety or their public duty under the Equality Act 2010 and related legislation”. (page 7)

Using this guidance, Dorset Library Service will make available the broadest range of material within its policy of freedom of access to all legally available information. It is acknowledged that on occasion individuals may find items in Dorset libraries offensive. However, we do not label items to

warn customers of potentially sensitive content and would only restrict access to material to protect it from damage or theft, not as a form of censorship.

In the interests of intellectual freedom material will not be rejected solely because it is considered controversial. Controversial, potentially inflammatory or extremist material will be evaluated according to this collection development policy. Decisions will be made on the assumption that the adult reader can make their own critical and reasoned evaluation of views expressed in the content of the item. Where appropriate the assistance of relevant external agencies and advisory groups will be sought.

It is assumed that adults responsible for readers with junior membership will evaluate the appropriateness of the views and opinions expressed in an item on their behalf. .

B9 Donations and unsolicited stock

Donations

Dorset Library Service welcomes donations of stock that is less than five years old and in good condition. This does not apply to local interest, where the content is the most important consideration.

There is a cost involved in cataloguing donated items and making them shelf ready (e.g. adding protective jackets, RFID tags etc). Therefore, Dorset Library Service reserve the right to dispose of material as thought fit – this may include passing on to a third party for disposal or sale.

It is not guaranteed that donated items will be added to a particular library or to always keep it at that library.

Due to restrictions in licensing of some items and the inability to test the quality of items, donations of audio-visual material cannot be accepted.

Self-Published Items

Dorset Library Service is often asked to acquire, either by purchase or donation, books which have been self published. The assumption is that these items will not have been through the rigorous editing and legal content checks undertaken by mainstream publishers. Where Dorset Library Service agrees that such an item may be of use in their collection, it will fall to the author to prove the content is reliable, professionally presented, and does not contravene any laws.

Library service staff do not have the time to read items and make this judgement. The only exceptions to this are items with a strong local interest. These will be judged by the relevant team member 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 a library service will purchase them. These items will not be accepted. Should the sender require their return, the cost of postage must be provided in advance, as per the [Sale of Goods Act](#).

B10 Stock outside the scope of our collections

The following categories of stock fall outside the scope of our collections:

- expensive luxury editions
- items banned under UK law
- items restricted for purchase or loan by UK publishers
- items containing information that is inapplicable to UK conditions and regulations

- items intended for individual ownership, such as books with additional objects which form part of an integral package or workbooks primarily intended for use by or with a teacher
- items with an unsuitable format for loan

Section C: Selection

C1: Overview of selection principles

Dorset Library Service is a member of the Central Buying Consortium with regards the purchase of physical stock.

The purchase of recreational digital resources such as e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines and e-newspapers are purchased through the Libraries West consortium.

The majority of purchases are made through these consortium contracts, awarded to suppliers via a rigorous supply tender procedure, in line with legislation to ensure maximum value.

Supplier selection is used for a large proportion of adult and children's fiction.

The contracted main supplier selects new stock for all libraries using specific criteria in conjunction with this collection development policy.

Some reference materials and other specialist stock categories are supplied on standing order.

Supplier selection is supplemented by:

- Purchases from stockists of specialist material.
- Stock selected by staff from a variety of suppliers to address identified stock gaps or to develop new collections to meet identified need.
- Stock purchased to satisfy requests.
- Standing orders for annual/reference materials.
- Stock selected as a result of staff and/or customer feedback.

Items are selected for stock in response to known demand, as well as anticipated demand in light of reviews and media interest. The primary objective is to provide an extensive range of titles. Multiple copies are purchased to meet demand only where it is possible to do so without compromising the range of titles bought.

The aim is to provide stock in appropriate formats, which is attractive, well-presented and constantly refreshed by purchase and circulation.

A range of factors influence the selection of stock including:

- Available budget.
- Anticipated demand.
- The needs and profiles of the communities and individuals served.
- Known demand.
- Existing coverage of a particular subject or viewpoint in the collection.
- Reviews and media interest.
- The imperative to reflect our diverse society.

Reference material is now increasingly being rationalised and interfiled with non-fiction stock. To provide wider access and to ensure currency, reference provision will increasingly be provided by digital access.

C2 Selection Criteria

Dorset Library Service aims to select stock in the format most suitable for a given purpose and most likely to prove of greatest benefit to our communities. A positive contribution to social inclusion will be made by providing other formats for users with individual needs.

Decisions on stock selection, whether printed or digital, consider a range of criteria including:

- **Content:** The authority and reputation of the author or publisher, educational or recreational value, quality, currency, and accuracy of information where applicable.
- **Potential popularity:** A substantial proportion of books are ordered pre-publication. Where possible previous performance/popularity of an author, genre or subject are used to determine potential popularity of the title being assessed. Information from the library management system, available published information and identified customer needs are among the resources used.
- **Known demand:** Based on numbers of reservations on existing copies or enquiries about a title or resource.
- **Format:** The quality of production and durability in terms of library usage. Suitability for the intended audience. Compatibility of digital resources.
- **Publishing history:** Whether it is a new edition of a proven title or a new title in a proven series or from an authoritative information source.
- **Cost:** The cost of a resource will be balanced against its benefits to the overall stock offer, its potential usage, and the available budget.
- **Coverage:** Consideration is given to the existing coverage of the subject or genre and whether a title adds anything new.
- **Availability:** The availability of a title may vary by format, and may be limited by a number of factors, most commonly due to digital licencing restrictions, being out of print, or having no UK lending rights.
- **Accessible formats:** A range of titles are provided in different formats, where available and in demand, so they are accessible to users with a variety of needs.
- **Diverse representation:** A wide range of titles which reflect our diverse population are selected.

Adult Fiction

Fiction is considered an essential element of public library provision, serving not only recreational but also educational and social needs. In selecting stock, Dorset Library Service aims to provide titles which:

- Seek to broaden the outlook, exercise the imagination and challenge the preconceptions of the reader.
- Extend literacy and encourage reluctant readers.
- Provide entertainment and relaxation.

In building the collection, the primary objective is to provide a varied and balanced stock of all types of fiction, designed to satisfy all tastes.

Collections consist of popular 'genre' fiction of all types and support and promote new authors, English translations, classics, standard works and literary fiction.

Adult Non-Fiction

A comprehensive non-fiction and reference collection is essential in order to encourage and assist community development and promote social inclusion. The collection aims to support:

- Lifelong learning, including formal and informal education and training

- Personal and social development
- Independent research and private study
- Local commercial and economic enterprise
- Entertainment, relaxation and leisure
- Health and wellbeing

The aim is to provide as comprehensive an information as possible within budget limitations.

Increasingly, reference materials are provided online in electronic formats to improve access and currency of information.

Physical reference materials are mostly available in larger branches but can be requested to a different library for customers to access. In most cases, this will be for use within the library only.

Items for children and young people

Every library within Dorset provides a range of resources for children and young people from birth. The aim is to provide a wide range of materials in order to satisfy the recreational, educational and social needs of children and young people.

Dorset Library Service provides resources which promote literacy and encourage a lifelong love of books and reading for children and young people of all reading abilities. Where possible, resources are also provided in appropriate formats for those with additional needs.

A young adult collection is also provided to form a bridge between the children's and adult's collections.

Books for children and young people are provided in a variety of formats including:

- Board books
- Picture books for a wide range of ages, including some dual language books with parallel texts in English and another language
- First readers for children learning to read, including some short chapter books for those growing in confidence
- Children's fiction for confident readers
- Young adult books
- Large print
- Graphic novels
- E-audiobooks and e-books

Audio Visual Materials; Music CDs and DVDs

Music CDs and DVDs are complementary to other formats and not part of Dorset Library Service's statutory provision. The effectiveness of these collections will be assessed by issues and by income generated (compared with the cost of purchase).

Due to cost outweighing income, new music CDs are no longer available to hire. A small collection has been retained in the Headquarters stack and items can be requested from this.

A small collection of new DVDs is still purchased whilst the income generated surpasses the cost of purchase. Performance is reviewed on an annual basis.

Section D: Maintenance and Measurement

D1- Maintenance

Dorset Library Service aims to provide a balanced, attractive and current stock relevant to the needs of the residents of Dorset.

First impressions are vital – the physical presentation of the stock makes a statement about the quality of service offered. The removal of unused, worn out and out of date stock makes it easier for customers to find good quality titles and creates space for new stock and promotions.

The whole workforce has a responsibility to ensure that stock is well maintained, assessing the condition of books whenever they are handled, for example at the point of return, when being shelved or during the undertaking of stock tasks.

Several criteria are used to assess stock. These include the following:

- **Age:** Is the item still relevant?
- **Physical condition:** Is it in good condition with no yellowing pages, damaged binding, torn or loose pages etc?
- **Currency:** Does it contain out of date/potentially inaccurate information?
- **Performance:** Is the item no longer in demand?

Similar criteria apply to all items, although the physical condition of some out of print, classic works or the last copy held of titles which can be requested from the Headquarters stack, may not be to the same standard as stock which is browsable on a public library shelf. The Headquarters stack is a storage area that enables Dorset Library Service to continue to provide access to some items which are not in good enough condition to be in public libraries, but where there is ongoing demand for access.

Most local history titles will continue to be relevant regardless of their age. An item may not be in good physical condition but may be retained because of its local interest. Similarly, the level of expected issues would not be as high as that of a general non-fiction item.

Dorset Library Service currently subscribes to an Evidence Based Stock Management tool which helps to identify stock to consider for withdrawal or relocation to another library where evidence shows there may be demand.

Items removed from library stock are given to a third party company for them to sell, donate or recycle. Credit is given to Dorset Library Service for this.

D2 – Measurement

Dorset Library Service makes use of an Evidence Based Stock Management tool to manage stock and maximise performance. A regular schedule of tasks using the tools available help improve the choice of titles on shelves for customers and to increase the use made of titles.

This operates on a county-wide basis with stock moving between all branches. The system suggests items suitable for transfer based on lack of issues in one direction and identified demand in another. This enables funds to be focussed towards titles new to the service.

The stock with the greatest potential for transfer is:

- Titles by popular authors to help libraries makes sure they have enough of their most popular authors available to meet local demand.
- Popular subject areas to try and ensure libraries can meet demand.

- Items that have issued less well in one library that can replace copies in other libraries that have issued heavily and may be in poor condition but are still in demand.

Section E: Promotion

Stock promotion is undertaken to:

- Maximise the usage of stock
- Encourage library membership and use
- Raise awareness of the range of stock and services available
- Promote reading, literacy and lifelong learning
- Inspire and encourage users to develop diverse reading habits
- Link in with local and national promotions and initiatives
- Bring attention to stock reflecting cultural diversity, social inclusion and minority interests.

The skills, knowledge, experience and enthusiasm of the workforce are essential to make the best use of stock to meet customer needs and attract new users.

Stock promoted must be in good condition and displays attractive and well presented.

Stock is promoted in a range of ways across the county depending on the priorities within each library and space and display furniture/resources available in individual libraries.

Digital means of promotion are increasingly used for example, features on the Dorset Council and/or Libraries West websites as well as social media accounts.

Depending on the nature of the promotion, displays will aim to:

- Target a wide range of audiences including new and younger audiences
- Present imaginative and challenging reading material and choices
- Highlight stock that reflects cultural diversity and minority interests
- Bring together areas and formats of stock dispersed by the Dewey classification scheme and fiction stock categories
- Use a high quality of presentation
- Utilise professionally produced promotions when available and as budget allows e.g. resources from The Reading Agency
- Make the most of library hotspots including return trolleys, new books sections and other display areas
- Take advantage of local and national promotional opportunities.

Section F: Conclusion

This Collection Development Policy was last updated in April 2024 and will be reviewed in April 2025.

Any comments, questions and suggestions in relation to the Collection Development Policy can be sent to dorsetlibraries@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk