

Libraries Stock Management Guidelines and Standards

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LIVE LIFE ABERDEENSHIRE

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1) Introduction

A substantial number of books and other materials are published and released every year. The space available in our libraries to house and display these materials is limited, as is the purchasing budget. The team selects new stock very carefully based on market trends, recommendations and the diverse needs of our communities. We aim to provide an extensive stock collection, in a range of formats and languages, which is accessible to all, and that has the capacity to entertain, educate, inform and challenge.

We believe in an inclusive library service that reflects the diversity of our communities. You will find a good range of bestsellers and other popular books in your library and within our digital and audio collection. You will also find the different, the educational and, occasionally, controversial. The media promotes only a fraction of the authors and titles published every month. Our libraries offer and promote a far more varied and extensive collection.

We also try our best to supply books and other materials that are no longer in print, usually through our 'reserve' stock. All these factors make our service very different from mainstream retail outlets.

Our stock management guidelines are constantly evolving. It is reviewed regularly to take account of the changing needs of the community as well as the changes in technology and methods of provision. This is very much your library service, and we welcome your comments, questions and suggestions.

Definition of Stock

Stock is defined as books, newspapers and magazines in physical and digital formats, as well as maps, printed music, DVDs, music and spoken word recordings, electronic information resources, and any other print, non-print or digital formats.

2) Aims, Objectives and Principles

To show:

- how we choose the books, and other materials that you find in libraries in Aberdeenshire
- how we maintain and promote those materials
- how we circulate stock to ensure that even the smallest library provides the widest choice of reading
- why we decide to keep some items and remove others
- our position on censorship
- how we measure the performance of stock in all our libraries

General Objectives:

1. To supply the widest possible range of material to library customers.
2. To stay current and to maintain the high-quality physical condition of the stock to meet customer expectations.
3. To encourage new writers and the flow of new ideas in both Fiction and Non- Fiction writing.
4. To provide a forum for communication and seek feedback from all sectors of the community on stock issues, using the data to further manage and develop our services.
5. To maximise use of our physical and digital stock through display, promotion, and customer feedback.

General Principles:

1. Stock is a system-wide resource rather than the property of a single service point. The system aims to balance breadth of stock with the need for more specialist material. The wider the range of material available across many formats, the greater the potential for library services to appeal to all sectors of the community including those who do not currently use the library service.
2. Library staff manage the specifications that enable our library supplier to select and deploy stock following the principles laid down in these stock management guidelines and acting within current legal requirements.
3. Library Headquarters provides a strategic and physical base for supporting our branch libraries and communities across Aberdeenshire.
4. Stock is managed and maintained by staff at all levels as part of day-to-day routine.

3) The Philosophy

Public libraries are fundamental to the success of any democratic society. They allow all members of the community equal opportunity to engage in a wide range of social and cultural activities outside the pressures of the commercial environment.

Live Life Aberdeenshire libraries offer access to both print and electronic media (eBooks, eAudiobooks, digital magazines and newspapers) for leisure, information, and education. Where possible, stock will be available in alternative formats e.g. large print, to meet the needs of disabled people and to reflect the different ways in which customers choose to read and access information.

We provide and promote stock to meet the widest range of human enquiries and interest without prejudice. We value knowledge, and the provision of free of charge book lending and information allows the library to encourage interest and enquiry from all customers within Aberdeenshire, regardless of their economic or social background.

Our services are open to all regardless of age, background, gender, or ethnicity. We will include resources to meet the needs of those with protected characteristics.

Within the constraints of budget and space the library service seeks to:

1. Provide materials to enhance and extend the intellectual wellbeing and cultural development of the community.
2. Meet the information needs of the community for work, leisure, health, and wellbeing.
3. Support formal and informal education for customers of all ages and backgrounds.
4. Promote and expand the use of books and other media for the purpose of leisure.
5. Provide a free forum for the discussion and dissemination of facts and ideas.

In addition to our existing methods such as promotions on social media and staff recommendation across our libraries, we will endeavor to develop methodologies for identifying and addressing the needs of those who do not currently use library services as well as meeting the needs of existing customers.

As physical space is finite, library collections need constant management to ensure that they remain a useful and current community resource. In addition, physical stock deteriorates over time and with customer use.

Financial constraints mean it is impossible for the library service to buy everything. We aim to select a representative range of stock.

Our Stock management guidelines need to remain responsive to the needs of the community; therefore, this document will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it

remains relevant, and the management of our resources continues to be accurate and consistent.

4) Censorship

See ‘Legal acts & Further reading’

Our role as a free forum for ideas precludes censorship. Live Life Aberdeenshire Libraries do not endorse or promote any political, social, or religious ideology. We provide access to the widest range of knowledge and experience to encourage and inform public debate. Our stock attempts to reflect religious and political material that aims to inform rather than convert.

The library service welcomes suggestions for stock and feedback on stock management guidelines. This information is used, wherever possible, to inform the selection process.

However, we will not add or remove any items solely at the request of any individual or group. Members of library staff are responsible for the management of stock following the principles laid down in this stock management guidelines and acting within current legal requirements.

The library only restricts access to material to protect it from damage or theft, not as a form of censorship. Aberdeenshire library staff do not label items to warn customers of “offensive” or “harmful” content.

Some items of library stock are available for use in the library only and cannot be borrowed, such as high demand or rare items that are required for study or research. These may include directories and other resources and items for Local Studies.

Author under Scrutiny in the public domain

Aberdeenshire Libraries will not remove or restrict access to library materials solely because an author is subject to legal investigation, allegations, or public scrutiny. Any request to remove, relocate, or restrict access to materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account relevant legislation, professional guidance, the principles of intellectual freedom, and the library service's responsibility to provide access to a broad and diverse range of legally available resources.

The inclusion of a title within Aberdeenshire Libraries' collections does not imply endorsement of an author's views, actions, conduct, or personal circumstances. Library collections are developed to meet the varied interests, needs, and reading preferences of the communities we serve, and reflect a commitment to providing access to a wide range of information, ideas, and creative works.

In recognition that public demand for an author's works may change over time, libraries will continue to monitor stock usage and adjust holdings in line with these stock management guidelines. Decisions regarding the retention or withdrawal of stock will be based on established stock management criteria, including usage, condition, relevance, and demand.

5) Religious and Political Material

In the spirit of free and informed discussion a wide variety of religious and political views are presented within public library stock. The library purchases a range of descriptive and comparative stock about politics and religion. This includes books that advocate political or religious views, including some sacred texts. Books that analyse and criticise political and religious ideas are also acquired.

Live Life Aberdeenshire Libraries' role as an open democratic forum precludes the approval of any specific religious creed or political ideology. In line with this principle the library service does not stock newspapers or magazines published by specific political parties.

A representative range of political and religious materials is held across all libraries in Aberdeenshire and on our digital platform. Stock held is available through the normal reservation system.

Sacred texts are managed in the same way as other stock items. Members of library staff do not undertake to display or store these texts in the way they would be treated in a sacred environment - for example a church, mosque, or temple. Members of library staff are solely responsible for the storage, shelving, and maintenance of these materials. It may be necessary to withdraw or replace items during routine stock management processes.

The library service does not knowingly stock or display any material that incites religious or political hatred. Any material that is legally defined by law as obscene will also not be stocked or displayed.

Our libraries maintain a balanced and wide selection of stock covering the full range of human knowledge and experience.

6) Book Stock Selection

Stock is purchased from library and specialist suppliers in line with local government procurement guidelines.

Larger elements of library spending, e.g., 'Adult' and 'Young People' book funds are contracted to a principal supplier.

The library Service takes advantage of purchasing consortia- joining with other local authorities to negotiate improved discounts wherever possible.

Our stock supplier selects books in line with a specification template completed by Live Life Aberdeenshire library staff. Some of the detail required by the supplier:

- Budget breakdown
- Format preferences
- Quantities (per 'star ratings' for Fiction and Non-Fiction)
- Dewey categories
- Author lists

A monthly basket is pulled together based on the criteria and forwarded to the buyer. The Buyer reviews and edits the basket before submitting.

On arrival at Library Headquarters, physical stock is allocated to our branch libraries based on reservations and a stock requests procedure. Stock requests and excess stock returns ensure equity of provision across our libraries.

The decision not to purchase a particular item for library stock may be influenced by any of these factors:

- Unsuitable format e.g., loose leaf or workbook format items
- Poor content or presentation - Our suppliers choose titles from publisher's lists, so this factor is not always easy to assess. Such material is not supplied knowingly or on demand. This may be the case with heavily reviewed items or gift books.
- Dated Information - Regularly updated or periodical titles are not normally supplied in print format and instead can be accessed via our digital platforms, for example, Annual or regular food & wine guides, Annual or regular hotel/accommodation guides.
- Books which denigrate or ignore the validity of non-western customs and values.

a) Children and young adult stock

YPS - specific Stock Principles (Fiction):

- The selection guidelines advocates that physical and digital material is supplied which is suitable for the appropriate age range.
- Major fiction prize long-listed titles for Children and Young People are represented in our library stock, for example: Scottish Book Trust Awards, Carnegie Medal, Kate Greenaway Medal, Guardian Children's Fiction Award, Grampian Children's Book Award, Costa Children's Book of the Year Award.

Items not purchased for young people and family's library stock:

- Titles with sections for children to complete or removable gimmicks
- Puzzle books
- Books with any fill-ins
- Pop-ups that are complicated and fragile

(a) Categorisation of Junior and YA stock:

Format / Type	Description	Age range
Board books	Have a sturdy form with clear photos or pictures, minimal clear text, bright colours. Can be tactile or have flaps (for example) to stimulate the senses.	Suitable for babies and toddlers from birth to two years.
Picture books	Larger format books with longer stories. Language can be more challenging. Content can be more imaginative, abstract, dealing with the wider world and developing emotions. Pictures carry story as well as text.	approximately 2 – 5 years
First reads/Starters	Stories for beginner readers with simpler sentences, short chapters, and some illustrations.	5 - 8 years
Fiction	Stories for competent readers reflecting the wide range of tastes and experiences of children today.	8 -13 years
Graphic Fiction	Picture books for older readers - includes "Asterix", film tie-ins e.g., Star Wars etc. these are illustrated picture books with a reading age and interest level beyond the scope of a five-year old.	6 - 13 years

Teenage Fiction	These stories reflect the wide range of experiences and interests of teenagers today as they grow into adulthood. They may contain quite adult themes. Books are generally bought in paperback format except for first novels.	14 - 16 years
Children's Non-fiction	Subject Information books	5 - 14 years
Teenage Non-fiction	Information books aimed specifically at teenagers and families may be bought e.g., books on health issues, emotional development, family matters, sport, fashion, environment, media, revision guides etc. Physical books are generally bought in paperback format.	14 - 16 years

(b) Audio-visual Stock

A/V specific Objectives:

- To extend and enhance the range of materials available to library customers to include film, audio, and digital formats.
- To include, DVD, CD Audiobooks, MP3 and Playaway formats.
- To provide access to library materials for customers unable to use printed media.
- To generate income for the library service.

A/V specific Principles:

- A limited selection of DVDs are available in our libraries. Requests can be submitted online or via Aberdeenshire Library staff in branch libraries.
- Film purchase concentrates on popular cinema titles (produced in a rental format ONLY).

Procedure:

Our DVD and physical audiobooks (CD, MP3, Playaway's) are selected by suppliers and staff use pre-specified criteria in response to customer feedback.

(c) Local Studies and Reference Stock

Local Studies will acquire local material that fulfils one or more of the following criteria:

- Covers geographical area of Aberdeenshire (including the former Banffshire and Kincardineshire)
- Events and activities within this area
- Individuals that have lived, worked or are connected to the Aberdeenshire area

(d) Public Libraries stock in Academies

Stock purchased for Academy library shelves from the school budget is routinely supplemented with public libraries stock. Either in the form of satisfied reservations for pupils and staff, stock for an event or topic week, or to fill gaps in a series.

'Academy' stock cannot usually be borrowed by public libraries and their customers (except by special request). If it is a public stock item 'located' at an Academy- a reservation/ request will be satisfied as normal.

(e) Digital Resources

- The library service recognises the growing demand for online resources and is committed to expanding our range of eBooks, eAudiobooks and online magazines and Newspapers as financial resources permit.
- All our subscription databases are available from our Library computers, and many are also available from home to members.
- An increasing number of our eBook and eAudiobooks are available as concurrent loans and we will continue to monitor usage to ensure value for money.

(f) Customer Requests

A fee is applied to all purchase requests. This charge is added to the customer's account once the requested item has been fully processed and received by the library.

All requests to purchase items will be given consideration but will not necessarily be purchased. The following criteria may apply to the selecting of material.

- Cost of item - does it represent value for money?
- Performance of previous titles by author - is author still popular.
- Potential performance of requested item - consider authority of author, publisher and content, local interest.
- Change in borrower needs and demand - seasonal and topical - new authors and genres.
- Current holdings in category/subject - will item enhance and update existing stock - fill any stock gaps?
- Replacement copy - new edition of a worthwhile title, to complete a series.
- Currency and relevancy of item.
- Content and layout - is item attractive, well laid-out and illustrated.
- Presentation of item - is it a suitable format for adding to library stock - consider

size, shape, binding, packaging for multimedia items.

- Inter-library loan (ILL) will be considered and offered if item is older or of a specialist nature and would not be added to stock - offered mostly for non-fiction items but rarely for fiction titles.
- Age of Book - Published 10 years or more then we wouldn't consider it but if it has been re-printed and the above criteria considered, then we may purchase.
- Requested title currently available as new copy, at reasonable price.

7) Funding

Funds are allocated by type of stock and supplier. Allocation patterns are reviewed annually by Aberdeenshire library staff ensuring funds are managed strategically and allocated in line with changing priorities.

As of 2022, a maximum of 6 copies of new books will be purchased in line with efficiency savings. Exceptions are made for popular authors and high levels of reservations.

Our total budget is allocated in the following approximate proportions:

- 35% Adult Books (Fiction/ Non-Fiction)
- 20% Digital books (eBooks/ eAudiobooks)
- 15% Junior/ Young Adult books (Fiction/ Non-Fiction) 10% Adult Audiobooks
- 7% Local Studies/ Binding/ Microfiche
- 6% Online Databases
- 5% Junior/ Young adult Audiobooks
- 1% Reference
- 1% DVDs

DVDs can be purchased by request and borrowing fees go back into the DVD fund for new purchases.

8) Gifts and donations

(a) Live Life Aberdeenshire Library Service accepts donations of books from the public at any of our libraries. Offers of bulk donations or specialist items will be referred to Support or Area Librarian.

The items should be in near-new or mint condition (unless of special local interest). Any donations not added to stock may be sold and profits used for library funding. Unwanted donations cannot be returned to the donor.

Donated stock is allocated and managed in the same way as purchased stock. Library staff decide on the most appropriate location and may withdraw the item for sale or disposal when it is no longer required.

Customers cannot request their donation to stay at any one location. Items are added to stock and may be requested for borrowing by any library member across Aberdeenshire. The library service cannot share details of the donation's usage patterns.

If, after the donation has been accepted by a member of Library staff, it is felt that the item is not suitable for our stock, the item will be picked up by 'Better World Books' who process and ship the donations.

(b) Live Life Aberdeenshire accepts donations of historic material for Local studies or the Museum service. Historic material may be in the form of archival items such as newspapers or other documents, historic photographs, or objects.

However, donations of historic material will NOT be accepted in LLA branch libraries or museums. Instead, name, contact details, details of the item and, if possible, an image of the item should be left with the staff member. The details will be passed on to: local.studies@aberdeenshire.gov.uk AND museums@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

Alternatively, the donator can contact local studies AND museum service themselves via the above email address'. Local Studies and Museum service will make a decision on whether to accept the item based on relevance, capacity to store and safety, e.g. historic gas masks may contain asbestos in the filters.

Also, if Local studies or Museums service don't have a completed entry form (containing details of where the item came from) signed in their presence, they cannot accept an item into the collection.

9) Stock Editing

Why do we need to edit stock?

In any library, constraints upon space and the continual purchase of new stock requires the regular management and removal of existing material. In addition, out-of-date information may mislead customers.

Physical condition of stock deteriorates over time and with use.

The removal of unused, worn out (physical) and out-of-date stock (physical and digital) makes it easier for customers to find suitable material.

What criteria do we use to remove stock?

Age - Both Fiction and Non-fiction items are considered for withdrawal or replacement if they are more than 5 years old. The date that a particular item was added to stock is used to measure stock age.

Currency - Content and publication dates are considered when assessing non-fiction items. Items containing out-of-date information or terminology are replaced or withdrawn depending on performance.

Poor physical condition - This includes items with broken bindings and loose/missing pages or illustrations. Library staff use data (number of issues)

from the library management systems in conjunction with physical examination to identify items for withdrawal, repair, or replacement.

Items are identified for withdrawal by library staff only. Stock is not withdrawn in response to customer demand. However, we encourage customers to highlight issues with physical quality or currency of stock, and the library staff team will address any action required.

What happens to the items that are removed from our shelves?

1. Items in good condition but with poor performance may be transferred to another branch.
2. Items in good condition but are no longer required for library stock will be sent to Better World Books for sale or recycling.
3. Items in poor physical condition that cannot be sent to Better World Books are recycled in line with Aberdeenshire Council’s environmental policies.

What Happens if a customer has lost or damaged a book whilst it was on loan?

When a customer has lost or damaged a book, there are several options available to resolve the matter.

In the first instance, customers should be encouraged to either pay for or replace the lost or damaged item through their local branch, as this is often more cost-effective that receiving an invoice from the Library Service.

In many cases, a replacement copy can be purchased at a lower cost from retailers such as Amazon, provided it is a like-for-like replacement of the same title and edition. There can be cases where paperback would be accepted instead of hardback but this would need to be approved by the Buyer.

What do we mean by physical condition?

Condition	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good
Overall Description	Urgent action needed	Acceptable at present but may need repair or other action.	Stock in good condition with some evidence of wear.	Stock in excellent condition
Criteria	- Jacket in poor condition - Broken spine - Loose / missing papers - Badly Stained	- Loose or slightly damaged jacket - Opaque look to jacket - Creased spine - Frayed edge at top/ bottom of the spine - Loose page(s) - Slightly yellowed pages	Slight evidence of criteria listed in the 'Acceptable' column.	- Undamaged - Clean - Processed correctly (e.g., spine label, date label).
Actions	Consider: - Withdrawal - Replacement - Repair - Transfer to reserve stock collection	Consider: - Clean - Repair	No action required	No action required

10) Stock Performance

The library service needs to measure the performance of stock to ensure that our primary resource is in the right place to encourage use by customers, and it is being managed successfully in line with this stock management guidelines and national standards.

Using our Library Management System (LMS), reports are routinely run to assess stock performance. Factors considered:

- Branch opening hours (availability of stock)
- Population size
- Number of active users
- Range of stock
- Size of collection

It is also important to analyse 'stock turnover'. Turnover relates performance to the size of each library stock. It can be easier for a large collection to generate a larger number of issues. The stock turnover rate is fairer to smaller branch collections by showing how hard library stock is working in relation to its size.

Poor performance is defined for our resources as follows:

- Fiction with no issues in the last 3 years
- Non-fiction with no issues within the last 3 years
- DVDs with no issues within the last year
- Talking books with no issues within the last 3 years

Performance is only partially useful as an indicator of value. Range is a very important criteria for stock, especially in non-fiction. Removing items purely on the grounds of irregular use can weaken the range of available stock. Use is a much less important factor when weeding core subject stocks than it is when weeding 'genre' Fiction or 'leisure' Non-Fiction.

Regular 'weeding' and refreshing a collection in each local library with proportional quantity of stock and titles inspired by feedback and community needs allows the library service to provide a tailored, proportional and relevant collection to our communities. This maximises the chance for the stock to perform well and meet expectations.

11) Stock Requests

Some items are popular whilst they are ‘new’ with use dropping off over time. The Stock requests system aims to move items on to another library before use declines and thereby extending their life.

Stock Requests also help to spread resources more fairly and allows customers to see a wider range of titles than static stock would.

Our LMS allows staff to run stock reports which ensures efficient movement of resources and is a constant background process as opposed to a periodical event.

12) Stock Security

Live Life Aberdeenshire Libraries recognises its duty to protect its stock from theft or misuse. The first duty of the library service is to maintain accurate records of its holdings so that stock losses can be measured accurately.

Stock takes are carried out regularly to ensure that items held on our shelves are accurately reflected in our Library Management System (LMS).

Our LMS reports identify items listed as ‘lost’ (long overdue = 3 months), ‘missing’ from shelves, as well as those on loan. These figures allow more accurate measurement of non-returned items and items stolen directly from library shelves.

Some of our branches have security gates and everything is RFID tagged as it is processed and sent out to branches. Even if there is no gate, this can act as a deterrent.

13) Contacts and Feedback

Julia McCue
Aberdeenshire
Libraries
Meldrum Meg Way
Oldmeldrum
Aberdeenshire
AB51 0GN
julia.mccue@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

14) Legal acts & Further Reading

- Public Libraries Scotland Act 1955
- Obscene Publications Act 1959, amended1964
- Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (including the Gender Regulations Act 1999)
- Race Relations Act 1976 and (Amendment) Act 2000
- Video Recordings Act 1984
- Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- The Children Act 1989
- Local Government Act 1992
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988, Copyright (Visually Impaired Person's) Act 2002 and Copyright Act Guidelines 2003
- Framework for the Future – the government's vision for public libraries for the next decade 2003
- Terrorism Act 2006
- Equalities Act 2010
- Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021
- Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014

For more information on Public Libraries and censorship consult the following websites and documents:

- IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) (https://tinyurl.com/c2hz678f)
- CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professions) (https://tinyurl.com/35px2xyv)

There is ongoing broad engagement with our customers (formal and informal processes) and we use the Town and Area profiles for Aberdeenshire to inform stock selection (https://tinyurl.com/mbd6m78c).