

# Brighton & Hove Libraries Stock Policy 2021

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Stock is at the heart of the public library service, and should provide an unbiased, wide ranging resource freely accessible to all those who live, work or study in Brighton & Hove. The selection and maintenance of stock are essential to meet the requirements of the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act under which Brighton & Hove City Council has a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. It is also necessary to meet the requirements of standards laid down by the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport.

1.2 This policy defines stock as being all the materials, both printed and electronic, acquired or borrowed by the Library Service to meet the needs of the community it serves. Materials are provided in a variety of formats, but increasingly current information is provided electronically rather than in print. Online and other electronic resources are being made available via libraries and the library website.

1.3 By law the core lending service is provided free of charge to all who live, work or study in Brighton & Hove. However, there is statutory provision for libraries to charge for reservations and the loan of certain non-book materials.

1.4 This Stock Policy aims to:

- support the Libraries Strategy and corporate policies and priorities of Brighton & Hove City Council
- provide for continually changing educational, information, cultural, lifelong learning, and recreational needs by listening to customers and communities.
- enable the greatest number of people to have access to the widest range of resources, in the most appropriate formats balancing customer needs and service requirements with environmental impact by:
  - providing books in a wide range of formats, including electronic, to meet the needs and interests of local communities and of people of all ages and backgrounds
  - providing and enhancing access to information in print and electronic format and promoting an awareness of its value in sustaining the highest possible quality of life
  - working with groups and individuals who are unable to have full access to library services and to be active in working for social inclusion
- support, where appropriate, national initiatives stemming from Central Government and other organisations (for example, the Universal Library Offers).
- To achieve Best Value for the Library Service by:
  - Obtaining library materials in the most cost-effective way
  - Ensuring the efficient and effective use of library materials, and consistency in stock management through a service wide approach to selection, development, and maintenance.

1.5 This Stock Policy informs the Stock Plan which will be regularly reviewed and updated to keep up with changing demand.

## **2. FREEDOM OF CHOICE**

2.1 An important strength of the public library service is its neutrality and impartiality at the centre of the community it serves. It is not the role of the Library Service to act as censor or to promote particular campaigns or sectional views to the disadvantage of others.

2.2 The Library Service adheres to the following statement made by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP): -

*The function of a library service is to provide, so far as resources allow, all books, periodicals, etc. other than the trivial, in which its readers claim legitimate interest. In determining what is a legitimate interest the librarian can safely rely upon one guide only. the law of the land. If the publication of such matter has not incurred penalties under the law it should not be excluded from libraries on any moral, political, religious, or racial ground alone, to satisfy any sectional interest.*

*The public is entitled to rely upon libraries for access to information and enlightenment upon every field of human experience and activity. Those who provide library services should not restrict this access except by standards which are endorsed by law.*

2.3 A key element of this Stock Policy is to ensure that library service stock reflects all shades of legitimate opinion. Publications that are legally available will not be excluded. Each will be evaluated and judged by the standards and selection criteria as set out elsewhere in this policy.

## **3. STOCK PROVISION**

3.1 Brighton & Hove Libraries will provide a cost effective and high-quality service through continual review and staff development; responding to the ever-changing needs of the diverse communities it serves. Community and stock profiles help to identify the specific requirements of individual libraries. Local knowledge of groups and organisations, together with feedback from users are used in the stock development process. Information to inform stock decisions are gathered through:

- talking to customers
- feedback from surveys, focus groups, comments, complaints
- analysing stock performance
- reviewing reader reservations and suggestions
- community profiling to identify specific needs for individual branches

3.2 Brighton & Hove Libraries will aim to meet the needs of communities, subject to budgetary constraints, through the provision of

- a varied, balanced up-to-date stock reflecting diversity among ages, abilities, disability, gender, identity, backgrounds, nationalities, culture, and lifestyles, sufficient to cater for most everyday demands.
- a comprehensive subject coverage, relevant to the reading tastes and information needs and interests of communities served

- a reservation system to access stock from any Brighton & Hove library as the amount of stock held locally in each library varies according to its size and catchment population, but all are part of the library service network, and none are expected to be individually self-sufficient
- a reservation system to enable items not available in Brighton & Hove Libraries to be requested from alternative UK sources, particularly through the council's membership of the SELMS consortium which is Europe's largest consortium of public libraries.

### 3.3 Stock Selection

Brighton & Hove Libraries will continue to provide a comprehensive range of fiction and non-fiction titles in printed format to meet the needs and interests of communities. Selection based upon known demand is a primary consideration which is to be balanced with acquiring the maximum range.

3.3.1. Stock selection involves staff and library suppliers using community and stock profiles supplemented by management information. The profiles are prepared using information obtained from the latest census results and the Brighton & Hove Community Insight Library Catchment Area Dashboard. Statistical information is extracted from the Library Management system to help identify popular genre and subject areas for each library. The information is presented in reports giving detailed information for each library.

Selection methods include collections of newly published titles, electronic data (i.e. suppliers' selection tools and reviews posted on the internet), reviews, visits to contracted suppliers and local booksellers, publishers' lists, recommendations from staff with specialist subject interests, and readers' requests, readers' comments, consultation with front-line staff, and stock gap information collected from readers are also taken into account.

3.3.2. Evaluation is made at five levels with the following being taken into account:

- *Content* Educational and/or recreational value, currency, reliability, authority of the author, standing of the publisher, availability of the information elsewhere, and the legality of the item.
- *Format* The quality of production and its durability in terms of library use. The most suitable format available is chosen to benefit the library service in general. Unsuitable formats include spiral or loose-leaf bindings, and workbooks with fill in sections for personal use are generally not purchased
- *Coverage* Consideration is given to the existing coverage of a subject, and whether an item adds something new.
- *Price* If an item is satisfactory in terms of content and format then the price is taken into consideration. It will only be purchased if it represents good value for money.
- Anticipated demand through analysis of current demand for similar material, feedback from customers and partners and any identified local interest or need.

3.3.3 In keeping with library practice across the country, library suppliers choose approximately 80% of all newly published stock using a set of guidelines supplied by the library authority, including community and stock profiles which will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changing local needs. The guidelines instruct how many of each new book in each category of new publications to purchase for which libraries in the city.

- For example, one of our suppliers uses a rating system for each new publication, ranging from super seller, to one star. This rating is linked to previous author sales and is designed to ensure that we get enough copies of new books from authors that we are very confident will be popular with library borrowers.
- For instance, the instructions might require that two copies of each super-seller be bought for Jubilee and Hove Libraries, and one copy for each community library. Numbers will also vary dependent on whether the publication is hard back or paperback, as there needs to be a balance between longevity and price.
- Brighton & Hove libraries are divided into four categories to help allocate which Library gets which book. Jubilee is category 1, Hove category 2, six community libraries are in category 3 and six in category 4. Libraries in categories 3 and 4 have a geographical spread to try and ensure that if a new item is not in a resident's local library there will be one not too far away.
- The suppliers might be told, for example, to send one copy of each four-star adult fiction paperback to Jubilee and Hove libraries, and one copy to three branches in in category 3 and category 4. This will result in a spread of books of popular titles across branches.
- Library staff also monitor reservations to help identify popular titles that may not have initially been recognised as such and purchase more copies when the number of reservations warrant.
- The supplier selectors are experienced in buying stock for libraries and will use their knowledge to allocated books to multiple branches when there may have been no previous sales. For example, they will purchase multiple copies of books by new, high profile, authors or if works are likely to receive a lot of publicity.
- The lists of books selected by supplier selection are sent to library staff for approval before final purchases are made. Library staff will use their knowledge and experience to adjust allocations where they deem necessary.
- 20% of library stock is chosen directly by library staff, to ensure local needs are met, and to fill gaps in subject areas, following customer and staff suggestions and to replace popular lost and tatty items.

### **3.3.4 Fiction**

The provision of fiction is also a core function of the public library service. Brighton & Hove Libraries cater for a broad spectrum of reading tastes by providing an extensive range of titles including: -

- First novels by new authors
- New novels by established authors
- Novels by established authors still available in print, including the classics.
- Novels published only in paperback.
- English translations of novels from other languages.
- Fiction in languages appropriate to the local ethnic communities
- Graphic novels
- Novels in formats designed to appeal to adults with literacy issues.

- Multiple copies of popular authors are bought in Large Print, but only one copy of less popular titles is added to stock. These are circulated as part of the regular stock rotation plan.

### **3.3.5 Range of stock provided and stock guidelines for children**

Libraries provide a range of resources for children and young people aged from 0 to 19 years of age within designated areas of each library. A balance between fiction and non-fiction is maintained.

The stock is selected with the aims of: -

- Encouraging reading for pleasure.
- Cultivating the use and understanding of language.
- Supporting and promoting literacy
- Supporting emotional and intellectual development.
- Supporting the National Curriculum
- Helping children and young people pursue their interests.
- Meeting the needs of specific client groups e.g. ethnic minorities, children with special needs, LGBT families.
- Reflecting the positive values of a multi-cultural and diverse society.

### **3.3.6 Reference Collections**

- Reference works are purchased to provide factual information in hard copy and electronic resources. Brighton & Hove Libraries will continue to develop the range of electronic resources as well as providing hard copy resources to cover areas not adequately covered by electronic resources.
- Brighton & Hove Libraries will provide reference materials specifically to support the work of the Business & IP Centre in supporting local entrepreneurs and small to medium sized business to develop and grow their business.

### **3.3.7 eBook & eAudio**

eBooks and eAudio enable library services to meet the needs of customers unable to visit in person and is a greener alternative to the production of hard copy books. Brighton & Hove Libraries will continue to develop the range of items available within the constraints of the agreements between publishers and online providers. Online service providers will be continually monitored and reviewed to ensure the most efficient and effective service is delivered and maintained.

### **3.3.8 Spoken Word – Audio CDs**

A selection of popular books in CD Spoken word format will be made available in all adult and children's sections in all branches in addition to the eAudio titles available electronically.

### **3.3.9 Film**

DVDs were traditionally a source of income generation for libraires, however there has been a 71% drop in issue figures during the decade up until April 2020. Brighton & Hove

Libraries recognise the importance of film within culture and society and will continue to develop an offer based on alternative, greener, film delivery methods.

A smaller collection of adult and children's DVDs will be available in Jubilee, Hove, Hangleton and Patcham and the Home Delivery Service to reach target audiences. Usage will be continually monitored and reviewed in line with budgetary constraints and falling issue figures.

### **3.3.10 Music**

CDs were traditionally a source of income generation for libraries but with issues decreasing by 70% during the decade up until April 2020 and with only 3.1% of CD stock on loan on a typical day it is no longer viable to offer a comprehensive CD lending service.

However, Brighton & Hove Libraries recognise the importance of music within culture and society and alternative, greener music delivery methods are being implemented to replace most of the physical CD stock.

The exception will be to provide CDs produced by local bands and labels, to promote local culture and local businesses. Usage will be continually monitored and reviewed in line with budgetary constraints and falling issue figures.

## **4 Special Collections**

- Brighton & Hove Libraries have a wide-ranging collection of rare books and archive material comprising of books, manuscripts, pictorial ephemera, and individual collections donated by local benefactors.
- Brighton & Hove Libraries will continue to provide access to these collections by appointment.

## **5. STOCK RETENTION AND DISPOSAL GUIDELINES**

5.1 All items of stock are purchased for the benefit of the Library Service at large, and maximum use is achieved by regular rotation throughout its life, as appropriate.

5.2 All areas of stock are reviewed regularly to ensure: -

- That stock is maintained in good condition.
- That stock is still relevant to community needs.
- That content and information is still current and accurate.
- That usage justifies retention.

### **5.3 Adult Lending and Children's Stock**

5.3.1 Careful consideration is given to the last copy of a title according to the following criteria:

- If it is a definitive work
- The content is likely to be of historic or local interest
- The plates/drawings/illustrations are especially good
- Coverage of the subject area is very limited and cannot be obtained elsewhere
- The title is a classic/standard work currently not available in print

5.3.2 Stock falling outside the retention policy is withdrawn and disposed of as appropriate, generating income or being recycled wherever possible.

## **5.4. Local Studies and Special Collections**

5.4.1 Because of the nature of the collections concerned it is not policy to discard material, much of which is irreplaceable. The Library Service has a responsibility to preserve as much as possible for future generations.

## **6 WITHDRAWAL GUIDELINES**

6.1 Maintaining stock to a high quality and ensuring maximum relevance and use is an ongoing process, which requires constant editing, revision, and circulation of stock.

6.2 Stock should normally be withdrawn under the following circumstances:

- when in poor physical condition
- when unsuitable for binding or repair
- the content is out-of-date
- a later edition or better alternative is available

6.3 Careful consideration on the withdrawal of stock should be given in every case. Age of stock is a significant factor in continued use and therefore all titles acquired should be re-evaluated against withdrawal criteria. The age when stock is due for review varies for different genre.

### **6.4 Physical Condition**

- All books should be clean inside; where pages are torn, stained, defaced, or very discoloured, books will be removed from the shelves.
- Binding should be in good condition; books with loose pages or damaged spines may be repaired or rebound as appropriate.
- Dirty or damaged jackets and wallets will be cleaned or replaced if the condition of the book warrants it.
- Audio-visual materials should be properly packaged; damaged or scratched cases will be replaced subject to resources
- Damaged or faulty AV materials will be removed for checking and replacement if appropriate
- Faded or worn labelling on covers and cases will be replaced if the condition of the item warrants it.

### **6.5 Content**

#### **6.5.1 Adult fiction and non-fiction**

- Titles that have not been issued in the last six or for more than three times in three years should be considered for withdrawal or relocation, depending on the physical condition and the specialisation of the content.
- Superseded editions with outdated or inaccurate information should be withdrawn and replaced where necessary.
- Tourist guides over three years old should be removed if not already replaced.

#### **6.5.2 Children's and young people's stock**

- Content will be reviewed for relevancy, accuracy, bias and need, especially in information books that are five or more years old or on subjects that date quickly e.g. information technology, communications and TV tie-ins
- Non-fiction items eight years old should be removed.
- Items in a dull or outmoded style will be removed.
- Withdrawn items should be disposed of to avoid outdated material from libraries finding its way into schools and homes.

#### **6.5.3 Reference**

- Reference stock needs to be edited to ensure currency and accuracy; stock containing out of-date or misleading information will be removed.
- Standing orders will be used to ensure relevant annuals and directories are updated as soon as a new edition becomes available.
- Annuals and directories over three years old will not generally be retained.
- Stock will be considered for withdrawal when its content is more practically available in another format.
- Duplication of specialised items with other accessible local information providers will be avoided.
- Tourist books for reference containing listings and prices will be removed if over three years old.

### **7 DISPOSAL**

7.1 Stock identified as surplus to requirements through the withdrawal criteria should be offered for reuse or recycling whenever possible.

7.2 Some stock will be offered for sale either directly to the public through library organised sales

7.3 Any stock remaining or that is such a physical condition that it is not suitable for offer or sale will be offered to recycling agencies. This generates a small income for the service.

7.4 Every effort will be made to recycle stock so that there is no need for landfill disposal.