

*NORTH  
LANARKSHIRE  
LIBRARY SERVICE  
COLLECTIONS  
MANAGEMENT  
POLICY*

February 2026

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## **Background and Context**

### **Aim of the policy**

‘Publish a stock policy detailing accessible options and diverse stock selection methods.’

### **Local action from strategic aim 1.5 of Forward: Scotland’s Public Library Strategy 2021-2025**

The purpose of this document is to outline the effective selection, management and promotion of stock for North Lanarkshire Library & Information Service and to inform staff, library members, and all who live, work, learn and visit North Lanarkshire about the stock management principles used in libraries across the authority.

North Lanarkshire Library & Information Service aims to provide opportunities to promote reading, literacy and lifelong learning and to build informed and active citizens by providing, through the service, resources which are of a high standard, relevant, current and wide-ranging in coverage.

These resources must meet the needs of the communities served. In order to monitor and respond to changes in community needs regular customer engagement will be conducted, analysed and responded to appropriately.

### **The Plan for North Lanarkshire**

One Place - One Plan. North Lanarkshire has a shared ambition for inclusive growth and prosperity for all - where North Lanarkshire is the place to live, learn, work, invest and visit.

To deliver our shared ambition of inclusive growth and prosperity, our work will be focused on five complementary priorities:

1. Improve economic opportunities and outcomes.
2. Support all children and young people to realise their full potential.
3. Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.
4. Enhance participation, capacity and empowerment across our communities.
5. Improve North Lanarkshire’s resource base.

### **Library Service objectives**

We will provide a quality library service to anyone who lives, learns, works or visits North Lanarkshire. We will aim to ensure:

- We treat all our customers with courtesy and respect and according to their individual needs
- We provide an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment for all our customers
- Staff are welcoming, helpful and polite.

## **Key principles**

### **Collection Management Policy Statement**

This policy outlines the basis on which library resources for North Lanarkshire Libraries are acquired, selected and managed. This policy supports The Plan for North Lanarkshire in:

- ensuring access to reading, learning, and cultural opportunities for all
- promoting reading, literacy and learning, and the love of books
- promoting digital inclusion by providing access to digital services
- promoting wellbeing by providing free access to resources
- providing local opportunities for culture and creativity to flourish within North Lanarkshire'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.

North Lanarkshire Libraries aims to:

- provide a sufficient range of stock in order to meet learning, leisure and cultural and wellbeing needs in a variety of formats (print, large print, audio, digital)
- deliver free access to materials and to keep stock-related costs to users as low as possible, within wider Council policy.
- meet the library-related needs of the community including people with protected characteristics as specified in the Equalities Act 2010.

### **Scope**

This collections management policy will cover the following:

- how North Lanarkshire libraries selects books and other items for your library
- how we reflect the needs of communities in our stock
- how we promote and maintain these items.
- how we decide on which items to keep, or which are withdrawn and removed from our shelves.
- how we measure performance in relation to stock.

## **Approach**

Each library aims to provide a varied stock relevant to community needs. However, every library is part of a large network of service points, and stock will be managed and exploited as a council-wide resource by:

- co-ordinating purchase across the service
- co-ordinating circulating stock across the service
- promoting access to and use of all libraries, and larger libraries in particular, for a broader range of stock and specialist materials
- promoting the catalogue and reservations service
- promoting the use of electronic resources and the library web site
- exploiting the resources available at larger libraries via smaller libraries, e.g. through local exchanges and the referral of information enquiries.

## **Electronic and Digital Resources**

A growing range of recreational or leisure content is produced digitally as eBooks, eAudio books, eMagazines and eNewspapers, and our aim is to develop our provision within these areas as financial resources permit.

The service is also committed to providing access to information for the widest possible audience. Online reference resources are a key component and include a wide range of commercially produced content.

We will continue to develop our provision of web-based reference resources for access by our 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.

We consider ease of use of the platform; whether remote access is possible; the sufficiency of range and coverage and whether the usage merits the subscription or license cost.

In all cases, use of our electronic and digital resources will be monitored to ensure that value for money is being achieved.

## **Requests**

We welcome suggestions for stock and feedback on the stock policy. Customers can do this via staff in libraries or via email – [libraries@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:libraries@northlan.gov.uk). This information will be used, wherever possible, to inform the selection process.

Requests for any books either in stock by North Lanarkshire Libraries, or items not held in our stock, may be made at any of our libraries or online.

Requests for items not in stock will be considered for purchase if they are in print. If they meet the criteria as listed in this document, they will be purchased for stock. Some items may be rare. In such circumstances we may offer them as reference only.

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 binding), budgetary constraints, poor content or presentation, dated information or low demand. Some UK titles are not purchased as they are not relevant in Scotland e.g. regulations or house buying guide relevant to England. Any item that has the potential to breach UK law will not be purchased.

All requests for items in stock are free of charge. A nominal fee may be charged for items that are not in stock. Customers should refer to the current library charges (reservations) document for further information.

### **Censorship and controversial stock**

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) states in its guidelines that:

“The function of a library service is to provide, as far as resources allow, all books, periodicals etc., other than the trivial, in which its readers claim a legitimate interest. In determining what is a legitimate interest the librarian may safely rely on 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 racist grounds alone, to satisfy any sectional interest.” **Freedom of Access to Information. CILIP Guide, 2015.**

Using this guidance, North Lanarkshire Libraries 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 North Lanarkshire libraries offensive. However, we do not label items to warn customers of potentially sensitive content and would only restrict access to physical resources in order to protect them from damage or theft, not as a form of censorship.

### **Donations and unsolicited items**

North Lanarkshire Libraries welcomes donations of recently published materials that meet our criteria for stock selection and is of a sufficiently high physical standard for library needs. Donations become the property of the service as a whole and will be treated in accordance with this collections management policy. We accept donations on the understanding that they may not necessarily be added to stock or retained at a particular branch. Items considered to be unsuitable for library service stock will be sold or otherwise disposed of and the resulting income retained by the library service for development.

As our stock is now selected and purchased through our contracted suppliers, unsolicited items sent to the library service will not be considered for purchase by library service staff and will not be returned to the sender. Books will not be purchased by the library service

unless they are listed and selected by our contracted suppliers and meet our selection criteria. Authors who wish to make their books available for selection by contracted library suppliers should register the details of their book with Bibliographic Data Services. Alternatively, authors may wish to donate a copy of their work to their local library, and this will become static stock at that branch and will be treated in accordance with this collections management policy. Items documenting the history of North Lanarkshire may be offered to North Lanarkshire Archives or Local Studies for preservation.

### **Stock outside the scope of our collections**

The following categories of stock fall outside the scope of North Lanarkshire library's collections:

- items containing out of date information
- expensive luxury editions
- items banned under UK law
- items restricted for purchase 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 textbooks, reading schemes or workbooks primarily intended for use by or with a teacher
- items with a format unsuitable for their purpose, such as ring-bound books.

## **Selection**

### **Overview**

Items are selected for stock in response to known demand, as well as anticipated demand in the light of reviews and media interest. Our 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 needs and profiles of the communities that we serve are considered when stock is selected for purchase. We are committed to increasing use of our services by all and so we take active steps 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 our existing customers.

We aim to select stock in the format most suitable for a given purpose and most likely to prove of greatest benefit to the library user. A positive contribution to social inclusion will be made by providing other formats for users with individual needs. We aim to provide stock which is bright, attractive, well-presented and constantly refreshed by purchase.

An increasing number of resources are available online. The great benefit of this is the currency of information and wider access for library members. Subscription and license

costs vary greatly so the usage of our digital resources is monitored to ensure that value for money is achieved.

## **Selection Criteria**

### **Adult and Junior Fiction**

Fiction material is primarily selected using the following criteria:

- Content - authority and reputation of the author or recreational value
- Potential popularity of the author, subject or genre is assessed using available published information and identified customer needs
- Format - quality of production and durability in terms of library usage
- Publishing history - new edition of a proven title or new title in a proven series
- cost - the cost of an item will be balanced against the benefits of the item to the overall stock and its potential usage
- Coverage - consideration is given to the existing coverage of the author, subject or genre and whether an item adds anything new
- Electronic resources - the authority subscribes to a number of online subscription services to support reading for recreational purposes. These guidelines will be applied when selecting stock for our electronic collections.
- Cultural Diversity and Equality - works will be supported which promote diversity and equality of lifestyles, culture and language. This includes support for a range of community languages and their associated resources spread throughout the service.
- Scottish, Scots and Gaelic Material - the cultural contribution of Scottish, Scots and Gaelic material will be recognised and supported. Scottish authors and context will be viewed preferentially.

### **Adult and Junior Non-fiction**

Non-fiction material is selected using the criteria below:

- Content - content should demonstrate quality, accuracy and currency of information, where applicable.
- Relevance - material should be relevant to the development of the collections, both community and service wide.
- Accessibility - consideration will be given to the physical format of an item and its suitability for library use.
- Cost - the cost of an item will be balanced against the benefits of the item to overall stock provision and estimated use.
- Availability - consideration will be given to whether this information or content is available elsewhere in current stock resources or in other formats.
- Potential Popularity - potential popularity due to author or genre will be assessed via the library management system and available published information including trade publications and reviews.

- Cultural Diversity and equality - works will be supported which promote diversity and equality of lifestyles, culture and language. This includes support for a range of community languages and their associated resources spread throughout the service.
- Scottish, Scots and Gaelic Material - the cultural contribution of Scottish, Scots and Gaelic material will be recognised and supported. Scottish authors and context will be viewed preferentially.
- Local material – Archives & Local Studies has a responsibility to collect, retain and preserve material of local interest. Material where the author or content has a local connection will be purchased preferentially.

### Self-published items

Self-published material from local authors, or material with local content, may be considered for addition to our stock at the discretion of the Librarian. Consideration will also be given to other self-published titles by established authors whose works have previously been published by recognised publishers. Self-published material can have a lack of publishing standards and may not be purchased on that basis. This may include no editing or proof reading or being poorly presented. This would be the main reason for refusing to purchase a self-published title.

## Maintenance and Performance

### Maintenance

First impressions are vital. The physical presentation of the stock makes a statement about the quality of the service offered. Out of date information could mislead customers and can be dangerous and the physical condition of stock deteriorates over time. The removal of unused, worn out and out of date stock makes it easier for customers to find suitable material.

Our staff have the responsibility of keeping stock well maintained, tidying shelves and assessing the condition of stock at the point it is returned. A number of criteria are used when we are assessing stock (excluding local history materials). These include the following:

- age: all non-fiction and fiction items are checked for condition. The date an item is added to stock is used to assess this, not the date the book was published
- poor physical condition: the pages are yellowing, binding is damaged, loose pages or damaged illustrations, we consider the popularity of the book to determine whether the item should be repaired, replaced or withdrawn.
- currency: content and publication date is considered when assessing non-fiction items. Items containing out of date information are withdrawn from stock.
- poor performance: items that have not been issued to a customer over a certain period of time will be promoted to encourage use. If poor performance continues, they are either withdrawn from stock, sold to customers or disposed of.

- items in good condition that meet the criteria set within this policy, may be relocated to another library instead of being withdrawn.

## **Withdrawal and Disposal**

Once material has been identified for disposal, but still in good condition, it may be offered for sale within our branch libraries.

To maximise income from the stock we are withdrawing we will look to sell on the Amazon website, any items not sold directly to the customer. Materials not sold will be disposed of by either a charity or recycling partner. These methods of disposal will generate income and ensure that stock is disposed of in an appropriate and environmentally friendly way.

## **Stock performance**

Identifying gaps in subject coverage or of particular titles is a continuous process and all library staff contribute to this process. Customer feedback is also considered.

The Spydus Library Management System and its BI functionality are used to measure stock performance and inform the identification of areas of “dead” stock. This in turn informs the areas for stock replacement and revision and helps us make best use of our resources.

## **Promotion and Publicity**

The use and promotion of library stock in all its formats, whether books, eBooks, newspapers or electronic information, are the means by which the ultimate aim of the service, the promotion of reading, is achieved. The skills, knowledge, experience and enthusiasm of staff are essential to make the best use of stock to meet customer needs and attract new users.

Stock promotion is undertaken to:

- make the best use of stock
- raise awareness of the range of stock and services available, including on-line resources
- ensure that stock reflecting cultural diversity, equality and minority interests are given prominence
- promote library resources and priorities including books, eBooks and ePress, reading for pleasure, literacy, lifelong learning, digital skills and social inclusion
- offer choice and opportunities for reader development, inspiring and encouraging users and potential users to try something new.

Stock promotion is undertaken in a range of ways. For example, via social media, book groups, newsletters and emails to members who have signed up to receive such information, via our website and using displays. Displays are a key way that the service promotes stock, highlighting the range and choice available to customers.

Displays will:

- target all 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, and feature under-used stock
- use a high quality of presentation, e.g. headings
- use a variety of approaches to maximise opportunities for promotion e.g. end caps, dumpbins, power positions and display tables.
- exploit professionally produced promotions when available e.g. resources from the Scottish Book Trust
- take advantage of library hotspots, including return trolleys, new books sections, etc.
- take advantage of local and national promotional opportunities
- enable smaller libraries to highlight stock not normally available.

## **Review of the Collections Management Policy**

### **Review Period**

We review these guidelines every three years. The next review will be in March 2028.