

# **Rotherham Library and Information Service**

## **Stock Policy and Plan 2009-2014**

**Date of last update: September 2009**

## Stock Policy 2009

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### Introduction

This policy aims to provide a focused, objective and co-ordinated framework for the provision and management of the stock of Rotherham Library and Information Service and deliver a sustainable resource reflecting the needs of the whole community. The selection of stock for Rotherham libraries recognises that the local community comprises all ages and a wide range of social and ethnic groups, skills, abilities and needs, taking into account current relevant legislation and stated Council policies. The stock should also be representative of current publishing. The aim is to provide a broad range of quality stock balanced against potential usage.

This policy aims to ensure that through proper management of its stock the Rotherham Library and Information Service meets the corporate priorities<sup>1</sup> of

- opening up learning opportunities for all and raising educational achievement and skills levels
- strengthening the local economy
- supporting vulnerable people and improving life chances for all
- improving the quality of life
- reducing inequalities
- ensuring quality and effective services
- encouraging strong and active citizenship
- celebrating diversity

Staff training is essential for achieving the aims and objectives of this policy. Existing staff expertise and skills and relevant external training will be used to equip existing, newly recruited and promoted staff to fulfil their role in stock management.

The annual budget for library materials determines how many items we can buy. The budget is allocated so that each part of the service has a range of new stock. In addition, we may focus on particular needs and demands when setting priorities, especially as expressed by local communities.

However, we have to ensure that we can sustain the collections in each library.

We buy several copies of the most popular titles but have to balance this against providing customers with a representative selection of the tens of thousands of books published in the UK every year.

Our request service means that any title may be reserved and delivered to any site for the reader. Through the inter-library loans system we can provide most out-of-print titles or items deemed to be not appropriate for purchase.

Some of the considerations when assessing a book/item for stock are:

- will it meet a need?
- is it well produced and attractively presented?
- is the format appropriate for public library use?
- is the author/subject of local interest?
- is the information accurate and up-to-date?
- will it offer a better choice in the library?
- does it contribute to all cultures and lifestyles being represented?

<sup>1</sup> Rotherham Borough Council Corporate Plan 2005-11

[www.rotherham.gov.uk/graphics/YourCouncil/Vision+for+Rotherham/\\_CorporatePlan.htm](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/graphics/YourCouncil/Vision+for+Rotherham/_CorporatePlan.htm)

Our stock reflects a broad range of views on many subjects, some of which may be deemed to be controversial to some customers. We do not exclude stock simply because it 'gives offence' - we may stock any legally published item. However, such items may be shelved in reserve, i.e. not available on the open shelves, though they will all be catalogued and so will be available to be requested. We seek to provide accurate, current and balanced information across the whole service.

In formulating the policy the following have been considered:

- 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act  
[www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1964/cukpga\\_19640075\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1964/cukpga_19640075_en_1)
- 1997/98 Libraries' Value for Money Audit ) , (see also Building Better Library Services, Audit Commission 2002  
[www.audit-commission.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/AuditCommissionReports/NationalStudies/ACKLibrariesbr.pdf](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/AuditCommissionReports/NationalStudies/ACKLibrariesbr.pdf) )
- National (e.g. Public Library Service Standards 2007) and local standards  
[www.culture.gov.uk/reference\\_library/publications/3662.aspx/](http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/3662.aspx/)
- Rotherham Library and Information Service Team Plans  
[www.rotherham.gov.uk/Libraries/](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/Libraries/)
- Library Association's 'Guidelines for Reference and Information Services in Public Libraries' 1999 ISBN 978-1-85604-350-2
- Statement on 'Intellectual Freedom, Access to Information and Censorship' , CILIP 2005  
[www.cilip.org.uk/policyadvocacy/informationssociety/foi/intellfreedom.htm](http://www.cilip.org.uk/policyadvocacy/informationssociety/foi/intellfreedom.htm)
- The Council of Europe Guidelines: Public access to and freedom of expression in networked information, 2008  
[www.cilip.org.uk/policyadvocacy/informationssociety/foi/intellfreedom.htm](http://www.cilip.org.uk/policyadvocacy/informationssociety/foi/intellfreedom.htm)
- National and local agendas, such as Corporate Plan, Community Strategy, Corporate Equality Strategy  
[www.rotherham.gov.uk/graphics/YourCouncil/Vision+for+Rotherham/](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/graphics/YourCouncil/Vision+for+Rotherham/)

- 'Guidance on the Management of Controversial Material in Public Libraries' Museums, Libraries and Archives Council 2009  
[www.mla.gov.uk/news\\_and\\_views/press/releases/2009/controversial\\_stock](http://www.mla.gov.uk/news_and_views/press/releases/2009/controversial_stock)
  - NAG (National Acquisitions Group):
    - Public Library Stock Management , 1998 ISBN 1 870269 21 7
    - Servicing Guidelines – Best Practice for Public Libraries, 2007
    - Supply Specification – Best Practice for Public Libraries, 2007[www.nag.org.uk/publications/index.php](http://www.nag.org.uk/publications/index.php)
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## Where are we now?

Rotherham Library and Information Service consists of the Central Library, 16 community and mobile libraries, one of which - Bookability – is a mobile service for the elderly and a Home Library Service. Agency libraries operated by Rotherham Library and Information Service are the Schools Library Service, medical and patient libraries at Rotherham General Hospital and Wathwood Hospital (a secure unit) and a service for patients of the Rotherham Hospice. Rotherham also has a separate Archives and Local Studies service, which works closely with the library service.

To ensure transparency and consistency in service delivery with regard to stock the libraries are graded into 5 groups by size, which reflect stock levels and categories:

- Band 1 – Central Library
- Band 2 – large sites – Dinnington, Maltby, Swinton and Wath
- Band 3 – medium sites – Aston, Greasbrough, Kiveton Park, Rawmarsh, Wickersley and the Mobile
- Band 4 – small sites – Brinsworth, Kimberworth, Kimberworth Park, Mowbray Gardens, Thorpe Hesley and Thurcroft
- Band 5 – Bookability.

Investment in ROTHERHAM LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE has substantially increased the Materials Fund since 2001/02, which has meant that almost all stock in all sites has been completely replaced. Over recent years libraries have been refurbished/extended, the mobile replaced and 2 new sites opened in Thorpe Hesley and Wickersley. A big investment has been made in our large print and spoken word provision and we have increased the number of electronic resources subscriptions.

Currently we are a member of a stock supply Consortium consisting of 33 library authorities in Yorkshire, Humberside and the Northwest of England, to ensure that we get the best deals available in our arrangements with suppliers. Detailed profiles of our communities, libraries and priorities in terms of stock are submitted to the supplier to ensure their selection is in accordance with our requirements. For large print, spoken word and non-English materials we deal directly with the publishers and we buy by standing orders to get maximum discounts.

The Rotherham Library and Information Service management team approves the allocation of the annual materials fund, prioritising as necessary on the following:

- developing at least one Centre of Excellence for information provision and as back-up/support for the whole system
- distributing resources fairly over a period of years to all sites
- distributing resources fairly according to demographic information
- considering the appropriateness of different formats, especially electronic
- reflecting the social inclusion agenda
- reflecting the Council's corporate priorities
- taking note of Central Government's agendas

Currently we are directed by elected members to support Rotherham's only independent bookshop – Philip Howard Books – with a set spend, which is reviewed annually.

Excluding the Agency library services identified above, the stock belongs to the whole service and should be used for the benefit of all users. This policy ensures that stock is selected and exploited in a manner that serves this purpose, meets standards, either national or local, and secures Best Value. Regularly moving stock between our libraries helps to secure the latter and provides maximum variety for customers. Each library has a core static stock supplemented by rotating stock. Items for rotation will be identified at the time of purchase and processed accordingly. Rotation routes are designed to last for the expected 'life' of a hardback book as indicated in the Public Library Standards – 6.5 years. Rotating stock in this way is considered to be more efficient and cost-effective in terms of staff time than responding to reservations for items located in different sites on an ad hoc basis.

Stock is regularly looked at by both by the staff in each library and by specialist staff. All sites have received in-house training on the use of and maintenance of resources. Every library is to have attractive, clean and up-to-date material. Each site's stock is checked at least once a year by staff and the appropriate specialist for its validity with reference to the following:

- currency
- duplicates
- relevance
- physical condition
- issues

At Rotherham General Hospital and Wathwood Libraries the requirements of regional co-operative schemes and the criteria for NHS regional library accreditation schemes are taken into consideration for stock editing work.

Work is under-way to clean up obsolete and misleading catalogue records so that it gives an accurate reflection of our stock-holdings. All items of stock, including inter-library loans, that are borrowed are issued on the library management system and returned in accordance with pre-defined procedures. This includes all users, be they library staff, other Council employees, departments or elected members.

Reservations on any book or non-book item in stock may be made at any service point and via the public access catalogue on the internet and are currently free of charge. Requests for any book or non-book item not in stock may be made at any service point. Currently making such requests are free of charge but customers are informed that there will be charges for inter-library loans and asked whether they are

willing to pay this charge. Note: the cost of inter-library loans is still heavily subsidised by Rotherham Library and Information Service.

Customers wanting articles from periodicals not in stock are informed that it is cheaper for them to approach the British Library direct. We can get articles for them but they will pay our inter-library loan fee on top of the any photocopying charges.

When requested items are available to buy, they may be purchased if they meet our selection criteria or they may be borrowed from another library. If they are purchased, they may not be located to the requesting service point but to the most appropriate location for the service as a whole. When requested items are not available to buy, they may be borrowed from other libraries if the cost of the inter-library loan is justified. If an item is already in stock as reference use only, it will not be considered for inter-library loan.

Requested items are not to be issued for longer than the normal issue period. They are to be renewed for the maximum of a week only unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We maintain reserve Stack collections for adult and children's fiction and non-fiction items which are no longer suitable for open shelf access but can be justified to be kept by potential usage. However, items from these collections need to be discarded on an ongoing basis due to space limitations. The physical condition of any item to be included in the Stack must still be appropriate for public use.

We accept donations from members of the public, Library Support Groups and organisations, excluding material of an advertising, vanity or self-published nature, on the understanding that, once donated all rights to the material pass to Rotherham Library and Information Service. Items will be added to stock only if they meet the selection criteria listed above. Items will not necessarily be placed at the service point to which they are donated. Items not wanted will be disposed of in the usual ways.

We do not permit individuals or groups to sell books or audio-visual materials in our libraries. However, such items may be submitted to the Stock Manager to consider for possible purchase and addition to stock. As with all donations, we exclude material of an advertising nature, vanity and self-published items. A number of local interest titles are available through the Archives and Local Studies department located in the Central Library or online at [www.rotherham.gov.uk/graphics/Learning/Archives/Bookshop/](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/graphics/Learning/Archives/Bookshop/).

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## **Where are we heading?**

We seek to continuously improve the quality and range of stock, maintaining relevant collections of lending and reference materials in a range of formats. We seek to improve accessibility and increase the use of stock by effective management, presentation, promotion and staff assistance.

We aim to

- provide access to information and imagination through books and other materials

- promote the benefit and enjoyment of reading and the value of up-to-date, accurate information
- co-ordinate stock selection, procurement and delivery to get maximum coverage and value within available resources
- provide and ensure access to a range of stock of sufficient depth, variety and appeal to meet the needs and demands of the people of Rotherham.

We aim to

- provide a balanced stock within each service point
- provide a balance between local needs identified through consultation and the suggestions/complaints procedures and a co-ordinated Borough-wide resource
- provide for the information and educational needs of the whole community to support RMBC's corporate priorities
- provide for the cultural, recreational and leisure needs of the whole community to support RMBC's corporate priorities
- promote and support literacy development throughout the whole community
- be socially inclusive
- encourage interest in the history, culture, landscape and environment of Rotherham and of its ethnic communities.

The layout of the library should create a welcoming, purposeful and user-friendly atmosphere. Arrangement of stock must be clearly set out for all users and all shelf guiding must be to a uniform standard and accurate. Effective deployment of new and existing stock to promote reading, literacy and lifelong learning skills is essential. All staff are to promote stock and reading by whatever means available, including electronic.

We aim to buy stock regularly throughout the year so that there is a continuous supply of new material going into all our libraries. We combine this with a regular weeding programme, whereby replacement older titles are identified, especially for fiction and non-fiction/audio-visual classics.

The catalogue must be accurate and user-friendly for both staff and public. It supports the acquisitions and circulation systems, acts as a findings list, provides a shelving arrangement and is an essential requirement for stock management. Work on cleaning up catalogue records will continue. All material in all formats, including electronic downloads, is catalogued. More and more of our catalogue records are provided by our suppliers but these need to be monitored and there will still be a need for some in-house cataloguing – e.g. local, foreign language and audio-visual material.

Methods of disposing of stock identified as no longer required after all the stock management procedures have been applied will be continuously investigated. Ad hoc book sales will continue to be held as long as they are viable in terms of staff time. We aim to continue investigating environmentally-friendly and cost-effective means of disposing of or recycling our unwanted items. Specialist booksellers will be involved in disposing of items thought to be of value.

## **How will we get there?**

We will consult with, identify and assess the needs of users and non-users, translating this information into the stock management decision process.

We will continue to streamline all our procurement processes to ensure that we select and purchase stock in the most cost-effective, efficient and speediest way. We will be a member of any organisation that secures the most efficient and effective means of supplying stock. We will move towards full supplier selection for main-stream stock, where the supplier chooses stock for us within prescribed guidelines, which will be checked and amended as required at regular intervals. Close monitoring will be necessary to ensure that we are getting the balanced stock to meet our aims.

We will continue to closely review our provision of information services, including alternative formats, accessibility, up-to-date and relevant reference material. Each format will be considered according to cost, ease and spread of use and physical storage space requirements. The viability of different formats will continuously be assessed, e.g. spoken word in cassette, CD or online format. Electronic resources do provide our smallest sites with the same level of service as Central Library and our biggest sites. Formats usually deemed to be unsuitable for library use, e.g. spiral bindings, loose-leaf, work books, study guides, text books, workshop and repair manuals, will only be purchased where appropriate for an identified demand, e.g. Skills for Life Collections. The majority of children's stock will be paperback.

We will monitor the viability of collections against the national and/or commercial scene.

We will streamline our internal reservation processes and participate in national/regional inter-lending schemes to enable us to borrow items from other libraries as speedily and easily as possible.

The management team will work in partnership with agency services to ensure complementary stock provision to meet the needs of service users.

We will routinely weed/add to the reserve stock collections.

We will investigate the use of our library management system and other electronic systems to further improve stock management processes.

Any comments or queries about this document should be directed to Ruth Radford, Stock Manager

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