

# Bolton Libraries

## Collection Management Policy

**May 2025**

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# **Bolton Libraries Collection Management Policy**

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## **Introduction**

Bolton Libraries' is an inclusive service accessible to all regardless of age, gender, sexuality, background or ethnicity.

The service aims are:

- To promote literacy and reading as a life skill, as well as a recreational activity
- To encourage a love of reading and develop the individual's reading experience.
- To support the individual's formal and informal learning across all ages and educational needs.
- To contribute to an informed and active citizenship, enabling people to make informed life choices and take part in the democratic process.
- To promote and support the economic life of the community.
- To introduce users to the experiences of others, reflecting the cultural, ethnic and social diversity of a changing society
- To celebrate and preserve the culture and heritage of Bolton and foster a sense of community identity.

Bolton Libraries' Collection Management Policy supports these aims through the provision of the widest possible range and choice of stock within our funding.

# **Bolton Libraries Collection Management Policy**

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## **Our Collections**

Bolton Libraries' stock is a system-wide collection rather than the property of a single service point.

Each library, including the Home Library Service, (the service provided for our housebound and residential care home customers) offers access to materials aiming to provide a wide range of titles, from the popular bestsellers to those from new authors and publishers in fiction and non-fiction, as well as more specialist materials.

We offer resources in a range of formats, including large print and talking books and also materials in Gujarati and Urdu languages.

Our eLibrary of electronic resources includes eBook, eAudiobook, eMagazines, and eNewspapers as well as online reference resources.

No library service can purchase, or accommodate, the large amount of material published or produced each year. Inevitably Bolton's library service must be selective when choosing to purchase and to retain the range of material available to meet the needs of the service and its users.

## **Library Services**

The libraries in Bolton are grouped into tiers according to stock size, issues and opening hours. The levels and the broad stock offered at each level are as follows:

### **Central Library**

The stock held at the Central Library is the most wide-ranging of all our libraries in Bolton.

Adult, children's and young adult fiction stock includes the more popular titles as well as first novels and literary fiction.

Non-fiction collections include the more popular leisure reading titles alongside more specialised titles.

The Central Library is included in the rotation of popular adult stock and large print and talking books.

### **Tier 2 Libraries**

Tier 2 libraries are located in Farnworth, Harwood, Horwich, Little Lever and Westhoughton. These libraries are also known as Key Centres and are the larger libraries of our borough outside of Central Library.

The collections in these libraries include popular fiction and non-fiction. A small selection of first novels and literary fiction titles are purchased, as are more specialised non-fiction.

The majority of adult stock, including large print and talking books, is part of the stock rotation process.

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### **Tier 3**

These libraries are located in Blackrod, Brightmet Health Centre, Bromley Cross and High Street. Their collections include the more popular fiction and non-fiction titles. The majority of the adult stock, including large print and talking books, is part of stock rotation.

### **Home Library Service**

The Home Library Service is a free service for housebound and residential care homes users. Staff select stock for customers from across the library network.

### **Other Collections**

#### **Local History**

Local Studies lending stock is available at all of our libraries, providing a comprehensive collection of material on all aspects of Bolton, including works by Bolton-born authors.

The majority of the collections are for reference use, however, lending copies of items about the immediate locality are provided wherever possible.

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## **Collection Management Policy**

The Collection Management Policy seeks to balance the leisure, information and education needs of service users and to ensure the most efficient and effective use of material and funding.

It offers guidance in the acquisition, maintenance, exploitation and disposal of materials to ensure the service is able to:

- offer the widest range of material to library users within the limitations of both space and funding
- ensure stock is current and relevant
- maintain the stock in good physical condition
- improve stock security and minimise stock loss
- monitor the performance of all areas of the collection
- consult with customers and non-customers in developing the stock
- promote the stock through display and Reader Development activities to attract a wider and more varied readership to our libraries

The changing needs of our communities are identified through customer comments and surveys, statistical information relating to stock performance and library use, as well as outreach activities.

To ensure the Collection Management Policy remains relevant and responds to those needs it will be reviewed yearly.

## **Key Principles**

Public libraries are an integral part of any community, and their collections should reflect the ideas and views of that community. In doing this the service will hold items which some individuals find challenging and controversial.

Bolton Libraries follows the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals' guidelines for stock management which states:

*“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 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 are 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.”*

In line with this statement the library service may purchase any publication which has not incurred penalties under current UK law.

Material that is defined by UK legislation as obscene or blasphemous, or which incites religious, racial, or political hatred, cannot be stocked or displayed.

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The library service does not knowingly purchase such material and if any item becomes subject to legal proceedings it will be removed. We will not add, or remove, any item from our shelves solely at the request of an individual or group.

A representative range of political and religious materials is held across all libraries in the Borough and made available through the normal reservation system.

Sacred texts purchased by the library service are managed in the same way as other stock items and they may be withdrawn or replaced as part of the routine stock management processes but will be disposed of in the correct manner following advice from specialists.

We acknowledge that on occasion individuals may find items in our collections “offensive”. However, we do not label items to warn customers of potentially ‘sensitive’ content and would only restrict access to material in order to protect it from damage or theft, nor as a form of censorship.

Responsibility for the use of library materials from the collections by children, both in hard copy and digitally, rests with their parents or legal guardians, not with library staff.

# **Bolton Libraries Collection Management Policy**

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## **Management of Stock**

Range and breadth are key features of a library's stock together with the ability to offer materials which are no longer in print or commercially available.

In Bolton these are achieved in the following ways:

- Creation of a service-wide collection with a greater range of stock at larger libraries complementing a more limited stock at the smaller community libraries
- Rotating stock around the libraries in the borough to make sure that users see a wider, more diverse range of titles on their local library shelves and that maximum use is made of scarce funding.
- Allowing the loan and return of items from any library service point.
- A free reservation system allowing customers to request books not held at their local library.
- Reader Development activities, promotional events and presentation of stock to attract a wider and more varied readership to our libraries.

Bolton Libraries' collection management is co-ordinated by the Resources Team but is the responsibility of all staff as part of the day-to-day routine of the service.

The Collection Management Policy aims to give staff guidelines which ensure a clear and consistent approach.

## **Funding**

The library service is allocated an amount of money each year to purchase materials as part of the local authority budget setting process.

The allocation pattern is reviewed annually using stock management data rather than historical precedent and allows funds to be managed strategically and in line with priorities for the coming year.

Budgets are allocated by the Team Leader – Resources to individual libraries based on holdings and performance data, with input from the Resources Team.

The majority of the fiction and non-fiction budgets are spent on newly published English language titles and adult stock is purchased for rotation around all libraries.

Funds allocated to individual libraries, other than the Central Library, are used to purchase titles by popular authors and subjects and to replace material withdrawn as a result of the stock editing procedures or loss.

A proportion of the book fund is allocated for the purchase of readers' requests, stock promotions, special collections and stock gaps identified by staff and customers.

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### **Acquisitions Policy**

The library service is a member of the North-West Libraries Consortium. By joining with other library services in the region the service has been able to negotiate improved discounts and servicing arrangements.

Some elements of the book fund are not included within the contract giving the service freedom to purchase materials from more specialist suppliers when necessary.

### **Stock Selection**

New **adult** fiction and non-fiction is selected by our suppliers 2-3 months in advance of publication from as wide a range of authors, genres, subjects and publishers as possible. The supplier works to a specification updated annually by the Stock Services team.

New **children's** fiction, including young adult fiction, and children's non-fiction is selected by our suppliers on publication from as wide a range of authors, genres, subjects and publishers as possible. The supplier works to a specification updated annually by the Stock Services team.

New **Talking Book** and **Large Print** stock is obtained from specialist suppliers via a Standing Order arrangement. This is organised yearly.

Selection of new and replacement stock, in addition to customer requests for items not already in stock, is made according to specific selection criteria.

These criteria are based on data gathered from the library management system and also from customer feedback. Stock levels and book fund allocations also reflect this data.

### **Adult Fiction**

While the library service aims to maintain as wide a range of newly published fiction as possible a higher priority is given to popular genres, such as crime, sagas, thrillers, romance, science fiction, fantasy and horror. Titles in these categories will be purchased in greater numbers and duplicate copies are allowed across the service.

New titles from the most popular authors, identified by the number of loans during each calendar year, are purchased in greater numbers.

Titles in the less popular fiction categories such as general literary fiction, contemporary, international and modern British fiction will be purchased in lesser numbers.

### **Adult Non-fiction**

While the library service aims to maintain a broad collection of non-fiction, a higher priority is given to more popular subject areas in the Key Centres and smaller libraries. Titles in these categories are purchased in greater numbers and duplicate copies are allowed across the service.

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Titles in the less popular subject categories and of a more specialised nature will be purchased for the Central Library.

Content, currency and the reputation of the author in the subject field are primary selection criteria, however, price and format is taken into consideration.

### **Children's Fiction**

While the library service aims to maintain as wide a range of newly published fiction as possible a higher priority is be given to popular authors.

New titles from the most popular authors, identified by the number of loans during each calendar year, are purchased in greater numbers and duplicate copies are allowed across the service.

All junior fiction is purchased as core stock for all libraries and is not rotated.

### **Children's Non-fiction**

While the library service aims to maintain as wide a range of newly published non-fiction as possible a higher priority is given to more popular authors, series and subjects. Titles in these categories will be purchased in greater numbers and duplicate copies are allowed across the service.

Titles in the less popular categories will be purchased in lesser numbers and allocated to Central Library and the Key Centres.

Children's non-fiction titles aimed at pre-school and Key Stage 1 children, including concept books (i.e. shapes, numbers, alphabet, colours etc.) will be purchased as core stock for all libraries. A wide range of titles, rather than every title in these categories, will be purchased for each library and titles will be allocated at the order stage. These titles should be treated as fiction.

### **Young Adult Fiction**

While the library service aims to maintain as wide a range of newly published fiction as possible a higher priority is be given to popular authors.

New titles from the most popular authors, identified by the number of loans during each calendar year, are purchased in greater numbers and duplicate copies are allowed across the service.

Books for young adults increasingly tackle areas such as drug and alcohol abuse, the occult, sexual experience and violence. The service aims to purchase titles which deal with these subjects in a responsible manner appropriate to this age group.

### **Young Adult Non-fiction**

Books for young adults increasingly tackle areas such as drug and alcohol abuse, the occult, sexual experience and violence. The service aims to purchase titles which deal with these subjects in a responsible manner appropriate to this age group where they are requested.

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### **Reference materials**

Each library has a small collection of reference materials. However, these collections are being gradually phased out as materials are superseded by online information resources, which we subscribe to on a yearly basis. This ensures customers have access to materials 24/7 at home and in our libraries.

### **Foreign Languages**

Material in languages other than English is purchased to reflect Bolton's ethnic and cultural diversity and to reflect the needs of those studying foreign languages. Urdu and Gujarati are spoken by a large proportion of Bolton's resident population and materials in these languages will be purchased and held in collections at Central, Farnworth and High Street libraries.

Our suppliers aim to supply books suitable for a general public readership in a wide range of titles, however, there is often a limited amount of printed material available.

### **Large Print**

Large print titles are an essential part the library's collection and the service aims to buy as wide a range of available titles in both hardback and paperback as possible.

The majority of titles published are fiction titles aimed at a popular adult readership. A limited number of non-fiction titles are available. Due to the limited range of large print titles published, all large print materials are rotated.

### **Talking Books**

Talking books are also still an essential part the library's collection and the service aims to buy as wide a range of available unabridged titles in compact disc (CD) format. However, as eAudio becomes more popular, level of use will be monitored and buying policy adjusted if necessary.

The majority of talking book titles published are fiction titles aimed at a popular adult and children's readership with only a small number of non-fiction titles produced annually. Due to the limited range of talking book titles published these materials are rotated.

### **Graphic novels, including manga and ranobe (light novels)**

Our policy is to buy only standalone graphic novels and first volumes of graphic novel series, with limited exceptions. Given the extent of many of these series, the frequency with which volumes go missing and the cost of replacement, we do not have the financial resources to maintain such collections.

### **Academic texts and study guides**

We do not purchase academic texts as they are expensive, tend be of limited general interest and quickly become out of date. Neither do we purchase study guides as these also quickly become out of date and often go missing or are written in.

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### **eLibrary**

Our eLibrary offer includes eAudiobooks, eBooks, eMagazines and eNewspapers as well as online reference resources.

### **eAudiobooks, eBooks, eMagazines and eNewspapers**

These services are currently provided by one supplier Bolinda via Consortium arrangements. The selection of titles is undertaken by Consortium staff from differing authorities. All the products can be downloaded via an app, Borrowbox and can be used on various devices.

### **Local History**

The Local Studies material is held in the Key Centres and some smaller libraries, providing a comprehensive collection of material on all aspects of Bolton, including works of local interest by Bolton-born authors. The majority of the collections are for reference use, however, whenever possible lending copies of items about the immediate locality are provided.

For more information regarding Local Studies stock please refer to the **Local Studies Collection Management Policy**.

### **Newspapers and Periodicals**

The purchase of hardcopy newspapers and periodicals ceased due to COVID. Newspapers and magazines are now available via the Borrowbox app. Suggestions to add titles can be made through library staff via the Consortium.

### **Reference**

Reference materials in printed or electronic format are defined as items which should always be available to enquirers or whose format may be unsuitable for lending

### **Reservations – items available in stock**

Customers can reserve items which are not held at their local library from other libraries in the borough. These can be collected by the customer at their library or the library where the item is held. Reservations can be placed via the library service's OPAC (Online Public Catalogue) and there is no charge for this service.

Additional copies of titles which are already in stock will be considered for purchase to meet demand according to pre-determined copy to reservation ratios.

### **Requests - items not available in stock**

Items which are not in stock, or on order, at the time a customer request is made will be considered for purchase where those items are still available and in print. Monitoring and purchase of requested titles is carried out by the Service Development Assistant - Stock (SDA-Stock) and part of the budget is allocated to Reader's Requests.

The SDA-Stock will follow the established criteria and will also consider existing stock levels to ensure a balance is maintained in all stock areas. All requests will be carefully considered, however, purchase is not always guaranteed.

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### **Donations**

The library service no longer accepts donations to stock after the levels of donations became unmanageable.

Most of our stock is supplied ready for the shelves and requires little staff intervention, whereas donations need to be evaluated as to suitability and then made shelf ready. This was taking up valuable staff time and in most instances, donations were in addition to stock already purchased.

The Bolton History Centre welcomes donations of titles which are of local interest.

We advise people to approach charities and voluntary organisations who may be able to make use of the books they wish to donate.

### **Stock Rotation – Circulating stock**

Stock rotation aims to provide ‘refreshed’ collections of adult lending stock. Rotation not only means that users see a wider range of titles than would be offered with static collections but makes maximum use of limited resources.

Titles spend 6 months at a library before moving to the next in the rota as part of an automated background process.

### **Stock Editing**

Items continue to be added to stock on a daily basis and as a result the management of stock is vital to ensure maximum use is made of the space and materials available.

Library staff are responsible for monitoring stock and encouraged to remove stock from the shelves using the guidelines below.

Over time items physically deteriorate as a result of age and customer use, material is lost or damaged and the content of items becomes obsolete.

Data gathered from the library management system is used to identify items with very low issue rates or which have not been on loan for some time and this information is used by staff to remove items from the shelves.

### **General Principles**

All stock should be removed from open display for any of the following reasons and reviewed:

- The item is in poor physical condition.
- The item is beyond reasonable repair.
- The item has pages or parts, such as a CD, missing
- There are duplicate copies of the item on the shelves.

The review process will consider items for one of the following processes:

- Return to the open shelves

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- Display/promotion
- Relocation
- Sale
- Disposal and replacement
- Disposal and no replacement

An alternative to disposal is found wherever possible.

### **Fiction**

This includes:

- Adult fiction
- Children's fiction
- Large Print fiction
- Talking Books
- Young Adult fiction

Fiction stock may be removed from open display for review for any of the following reasons:-

- The item has not been on loan for 2 years

### **Non-Fiction**

This includes:

- Adult non-fiction
- Children's non-fiction
- Large Print non-fiction
- Talking books
- Young Adult non-fiction

Non-fiction stock should be removed from open display for review for any of the following reasons:

- The item has not been on loan for 2 years.
- The item contains out of date or inaccurate material (i.e. law books; health and safety material).
- The item has been superseded by a new edition
- Geography books, atlases and travel books which have been in stock over 5 years

**NOTE:** Attention is given to the fact that demand for some stock is seasonal relating to homework enquiries and some books may be used in-house as reference material due to the amount of information required.

### **Reference**

Reference stock must be edited to ensure currency and accuracy. Reference material should be removed from open display for review for any of the following reasons:

- The item contains out of-date or misleading information
- The item has been superseded by a new, updated edition
- The items is over three years old

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### **Stock maintenance**

The overall maintenance of library stock is assisted by the use of Collection HQ – an evidence based stock management tool which allows staff to complete the following procedures by utilising a series of reports:

#### **Stock Refresh**

A report which enables the replacement of stock in one library with items which are less used in other locations.

#### **Grubby Items Refresh**

Allows library staff to select items, which are in good condition but no longer being borrowed, for transfer to a location where a copy of that item is in high demand but is in such poor condition that it should be withdrawn.

#### **Popular Author Transfer**

Popular Author Transfer uses loan information to determine where there are not enough titles by popular authors to meet demand in one location and offers a list of titles in other libraries which could be transferred to meet that demand. Library staff select items on the list for transfer to their library.

The Selection List will only include titles from another library if they are dead (i.e. no longer in use) at that library.

#### **Popular Subject Transfer**

Popular Subject Transfer use loan information to determine where there are not enough titles in a subject area to meet demand and offers a list of titles in other libraries which could be transferred to meet that demand. Library staff select items on the list for transfer to their library.

The Selection List will only include titles from another library if they are dead (i.e. no longer in use) and in a reasonably good condition at that library.

### **Author Events**

Bolton Library Service aims to deliver a varied selection of events to be accessible and representative of our local community. We deliver a programme of both adult and children's events both staff run and with invited authors as part of our cultural and literary offer.

Author events are hosted mainly at Bolton Central Library and are held to promote reader development projects. These events are organised by the Library Access Officer – Reader Development, assisted by other staff.

We are approached frequently by authors and publishers requesting or making an offer of an author event. This is an unsolicited event. Any library receiving such a request will forward the details to the Library Access Officer – Reader Development. The Officer will assess each offer case by case to ensure consistency in our

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approach to dealing with such offers. No guarantees should be given at any point about organising an event, until it has been approved.

The acceptance of a request will be assessed by:

- the content and format of the book which should be available for purchase by the Library Service's regular library supplier.
- if it is not already held in stock, a copy of the book should be viewed. This and other donated copies will be subject to the same criteria as listed in the Collection Management Policy.
- the popularity of the event in terms of attendance will be discussed with each author prior to the event and agreed on a case-by-case basis.
- consideration will be given to local authors whose books are relevant to local history or are written about Bolton and its environs.
- other considerations regarding the venue, staffing requirements will be assessed by the officer in charge of the event.

### **Self-Published Publications**

Bolton Library and Museum Service is often asked to acquire, either by purchase or donation, books which have been self-published. The assumption must be made that these items will not have been through the rigorous editing and legal content checks undertaken by mainstream publishers. The library service will refuse items that do not adhere to the Collection Management Policy.

Our policy is not to purchase self-published books apart from a few exceptions. We define self-publication as being where an author has sole control of the content without the collaboration of an established publisher to provide editorial processes, where a company charges the author for the actual printing or production costs of the book, or for some other part of the publishing process. This includes Hybrid Publishing, Co-Publishing and Partner Publishing, Joint Venture Publishing, Subsidy Publishing and Shared Responsibility Publishing.

The exceptions are:

- Self-published books that relate to the Bolton borough and its environs. These will be considered for purchase and if bought, content and legality remain the responsibility of the author.
- Self-published books that have undergone independent scrutiny such as a nomination for a literary award. To be considered for purchase, such books must be available from our contracted library supplier.

We do not have the resources nor necessarily the expertise, to undertake the editorial review and evaluation that we would expect a traditional publisher to do.

We do not accept donations generally, apart from publications that are covered by the Local Studies Collections Management Policy.

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### **Acknowledgements**

The stock policies of Birmingham, Cumbria, Kirklees, Leeds and Shropshire libraries were consulted when creating this document.

Bolton Libraries acknowledges the invaluable contribution these policies made to the production of our own policy and thanks colleagues in these services for sharing their information.