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## **Birmingham Library & Archive Services: LoB Transition Work-stream Stock Retention Policy, 2010 - 2013**

### **1 Context and purpose**

A coherent, consistent policy is essential in order to manage stock effectively, assist collection development and continue to meet customer needs. This interim Stock Retention Policy updates previous policies and provides a framework for individual service area policies and procedures in preparation for the Library of Birmingham (LoB). The LoB vision for transformed services provides both opportunity and the imperative to take a fresh look at library materials in light of present and future needs. This policy will need to be reviewed in light of developments, such as an e-resources strategy, over the next 3 years – and beyond.

The scope of this Stock Retention Policy is, primarily, Central Library 'Legacy Collections' i.e. all open and closed access materials. Although there are retention policies for individual service areas and for different types of stock, this policy is applicable across the whole library. It is important that connections are made between materials throughout the building; for example, where collections require special storage and/or conservation but the subject matter has strong links to other areas of the library.

**See also:** current Stock Policy; 'Retention and Discarding of Stock (Discussion Paper, 2003); ALL report (2007), Service Development Statements (2002/3), ISG Retention project concerning periodicals in Information Services (2009).

**Acknowledgements:** Swindon and Newcastle Libraries' stock policies.

### **2 Retention policy**

#### **2.1 General principles (Stock Policy)**

- Birmingham aims to provide the opportunity for everyone to access learning, information and cultural expression through written print, audio, visual and interactive resources and technologies.
- Birmingham Library & Archive Services aims to make the most effective and efficient use of stock in line with value for money principles. The service measures the effectiveness of its stock management through a number of performance indicators.
- The stock policy supports Government priorities, the City Council's strategic outcomes and Birmingham Libraries Standards.
- The stock policy will be non-discriminatory, positively applying policies concerning gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age.

**Note:** the term 'stock' comprises all forms of library materials, including electronically accessible information and resources, books, newspapers, periodicals, maps, audio cassettes, videos, DVDs, CDs, microforms, CD-ROMs, photographs and ephemera.

#### **2.2 Overall aims**

We will acquire stock to...

- Enrich lives, inform, support learning, inspire, engage, entertain and challenge.
- Meet the expressed or anticipated needs of Birmingham residents; responding to customer needs from surveys, comments, staff knowledge and statistical information.
- Attract new audiences and retain existing customers.

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- Reflect the historic and cultural development and diversity of the city.
- Cover a comprehensive range of subject areas, including some specialist in-depth areas, appropriate to the library's regional/national role and local priorities.
- Meet specified standards set by local and national government and relevant professional bodies.
- Ensure value for money and effective use of resources.

The stock will be reviewed regularly, including an annual review that takes account of the growing availability of e-resources.

Service specific aims sit alongside these more general aims.

### **3 Withdrawal of open access stock/retention in closed access**

#### **3.1 General principles**

Good stock management creates space for new materials, enables materials to be replaced quickly and easily by staff and customers and enhances the presentation of stock, which helps to improve its performance.

#### **3.2 Open access: stock withdrawal**

We may withdraw an item from open display for any of the following reasons:

- Poor physical condition and beyond reasonable repair. An item may be re-ordered, if still available, e.g. a popular a standard work.
- Lack of use/low issues (lending items) e.g. item not issued in over a year (decisions based on issues will vary according to type and category). If the item is unique or valuable it may be transferred to the closed access area.
- There are more copies in stock than are justified by use. This often applies to gifts, although a new item may replace an existing item if it's in better condition.
- An abundance of material on one subject that isn't justified by use.
- The item is a superseded edition. If the item is of local interest or historical value, it may be transferred to closed access.

#### **3.3 Closed access: retention**

We will select materials for closed access areas that:

- Maintain and build on resources which form a special or significant collection.
- Represent the cultural heritage and diversity of the City and Library Service.
- Represent a balanced and wide ranging view of thought, beliefs and theories.
- Have significant/major contribution to a wide range of subjects.
- Represent significant current or historical contributions to a wide range of subjects.
- Are key biographical works of significant local, national and international figures.
- Are single copies of books which have important local or historical significance or have contributed to the field of knowledge in their subject.
- Contribute to a special collection such as fiction, plays, poetry and music.
- Offer a significant research resource for current/future local residents, and beyond.

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<b>Check-list for inclusion in closed access storage</b> (Not all may apply to every item)	<b>Yes/No</b> (unless indicated otherwise)
• Is it the last copy?	
• Is it the only item on this subject?	
• Are there other similar items in stock/ anything else available on this topic and at this level?	
• Is the interpretation of the subject biased/slanted? If Yes, does it complement other stock giving a balanced viewpoint?	
• Is the author a recognised authority on the subject?	
• Does the item add value to/enhance a (special) collection?	
• Do we still buy in this subject?	
• Is there a current/future likely demand for this item?	
• What is the importance/relevance of the subject to relevant individuals, groups and organisations?	(High/Med/Low)
• Is the item rare?	
• What is the financial value? (actual or estimated)	£
• Are there accessible, alternative sources of information including electronic and internet access, within the library?	
• Is the item available, and accessible, from external sources?	
• Is the item in good condition? If No, does it need repairing or conserving before it is added to the stack?	
<b>Decision:</b>	<b>Keep</b> <b>Discard</b>

#### 4 Discarding and disposal methodologies

There is always a need to achieve a balance between good spaces for customers to study, read, relax etc. and the need to present and store library materials in the most accessible and effective ways. Discarding library materials is an ongoing activity and essential to good stock management. Decisions about what to discard must be well-informed, using staff expertise, in order to retain high quality stock that customers want. It is also important to get good value for money from discarding. In order to achieve the transformed services envisaged in the LoB, a stock review is being undertaken. It is crucial that clear public information is provided on retention criteria, why discarding is necessary and how it is being achieved.

##### 4.1 When discarding, we will consider (in addition to the check-list at 3.3):

- User demand and convenience – likely impact on customers.
- The way individual subjects are, or will be, studied and researched.
- The effect of discarding on the strength, depth and range of stock overall.
- Medium and long-term preservation costs and storage needs balanced against current usage and potential usefulness.
- BL&AS role as a ‘centre for excellence’ in particular fields.
- Conditions of deposit (especially Archives & Heritage).

**Notes:** policies and priorities of individual service areas will inform the discarding process; format can affect decisions about retention.

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#### 4.2 Physical discarding process/priorities

- a) Offer/donate item to other libraries/British Library.
- b) Identify high value items which can be sold individually.
- c) Identify items which could be offered for sale via specialist sources e.g. second hand book dealers.
- d) Offer most items for sale to library customers (e.g. for one month).
- e) Offer unsold items to charitable organisation(s).

#### 4.3 Factors affecting the discarding process

- Staff resource, especially people with enough subject expertise to make well-informed decisions.
- The availability of suitable disposal methods.
- The effectiveness of disposal methods e.g. in terms of staff time or other resource requirements such as transport or postage.
- Availability of other resources needed to undertake discarding/disposal.
- How to link discarding to LoB preparatory work e.g. cleaning, tagging, cataloguing... 'touching each item once'.
- Considerations of off-site storage (permanent or temporary).

#### 4.4 Monitoring progress

A simple mechanism is needed to keep track of the quantity of discarded materials. Information is being gathered on current recording methods to identify best practice.

#### 4.5 Discarding action plan

Work is in progress on discarding methodologies and processes, resource implications and prioritisation to inform a discarding action plan (to follow).