

Calderdale MBC

Wards Affected All

Cabinet 11th March 2024



Review of Calderdale Libraries Stock Management Policy

Report of Assistant Director, Customer Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To review and approve the revised Stock Management Policy for Calderdale Libraries and Information.

2. Need for a decision

- 2.1 The Stock Management Policy underlies many important library functions and it is ten years since it was last presented to Cabinet for update. Best practice in procurement and management of library stock has contributed to the revision of the policy.
- 2.2 The document describes the service that we offer and the procedures that we follow to deliver the main core of the service. It is intended to both inform the public, and act as a working tool for staff.
- 2.3 Book stock is a key resource of Calderdale Libraries, and its effective management is crucial in providing a wide choice of both reading and reference material. Electronic resources continue to be in high demand and the Revised Policy reflects these changes.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That Cabinet approve the revised Libraries' Stock Management Policy as set out in Appendix 1.

4. Background and/or details

- 4.1 The Libraries and Information Service is one of the Council's most popular and best used services. The service is delivered from 7 Hub Libraries, 5 Community Libraries and extensive online offer and a Home Library Service. Those libraries vary greatly in size and serve diverse communities and individuals. The amount and variety of published materials available for purchase is great, and funds limited. It is therefore important that funds are managed well and spent wisely.

The revised Stock Management Policy replaces the previous policy, which is now out of date. The new policy draws together a number of improvements that have been made over the last few years to the way the library service buys, selects and promotes stock. It also recognises the introduction of stock and resources in new formats, for example e-books and e-audiobooks available for library members to download to a personal device, 24/7.

- 4.2 The Stock Management Policy describes what is hoped to be achieved with the stock, how materials are procured and how customers can be involved. It provides consistency in stock management, and is linked to national standards and professional best practice.

- 4.3 The Stock Management Policy informs:

- How books and other library materials, including online and digital resources are selected.
- How stock is presented and displayed.
- How choice is increased by circulating stock around libraries.
- How requests are managed.
- Why library materials are withdrawn, and what happens to them.
- What is available in the various collections
- The aims that guide the service when managing library collections.

- 4.4 The main purpose of the Stock Management Policy is to set out clearly for customers and staff how the stock is managed in terms of selection, presentation and circulation in our libraries. This is important because it helps the Library service demonstrate how it will meet some key aims for the service such as supporting literacy and reader development, lifelong learning and ensuring that our collections meet the needs of our diverse communities.

- 4.5 The Stock Management Policy also sets out a number of principles (or standards) that customers can expect to be met by libraries across Calderdale. For example all titles held by Calderdale libraries service are available by request at any library in the Borough.

5. Options considered

- 5.1 The Library Service needs an up-to-date Stock Management Policy to ensure that it reflects current practice and the changing landscape of printed and digital formats.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The Stock Management Policy describes how outlay on library materials achieves best value by collaborating with other authorities to achieve improved discount from suppliers, and by outsourcing elements of the selection process.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Calderdale Stock Management Policy, sets out the principles by which books, audio-visual materials and other resources should be acquired, managed, and made available for the maximum benefit of the people of Calderdale, to meet our statutory responsibilities, within the budget available.

8. Human Resources and Organisation Development Implications

- 8.1 There are no HR implications.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 The Council held a public consultation seeking feedback on updated proposals for how library stock is managed between 8 January 2024 and 31 January 2024.

- 9.2 The survey was distributed to the Council's Talkback Citizens' Panel which has 355 members and includes representation from all Calderdale wards. The survey was also shared amongst local community networks. It was publicised through newsletters (including the Council's internal Ecall bulletin) and via a public social media campaign. Posters were also printed and distributed to all Calderdale libraries. Paper copies of the survey and policies were made available in all Calderdale libraries. This aimed to include people who had less access to digital media or were less confident completing an online survey.

Consultation took place with Library Staff – 2 January 2024

Consultation with Arts Council England (ACE) – 9 January 2024, 16 January 2024, 12 February 2024.

Consultation with Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals (CILIP) – 2 February 2024, 7 February 2024, and 8 February 2024

Consultation with the contracted Library Book Suppliers – 24 January 2024, 5 February 2024 and 6 February 2024.

- 9.3 A total of 198 people provided feedback. Most people completed the survey online, but this figure also includes 16 paper surveys completed in libraries.

There was representation from most ward areas in Calderdale, though Park and Ovenden were underrepresented. The survey was overrepresented by women

(just over three quarters of respondents) and 17% of people identified as LGBTQIA+, higher than the Calderdale average of 3% and national estimates of 5 – 7%.

- 9.4 Over three quarters of people who commented thought the draft policy was comprehensive and covered everything people might need to know. A few did feel it was too long or complex and suggested providing a shorter version or a summary.
- 89% of people who completed the survey said they were library users.
 - 54% of people said that they agreed with everything in it. 20% did not agree with everything and 24% said they didn't know.
 - 76% of people thought all the sections were easy to read and understand. Of those who didn't, the main reason was that it was too long and not accessible enough. Suggestions to address this included having a simpler version or summary and a glossary of key terms used in the policy.
- 9.5 Some comments offered varied opinions about purchasing, stocking, and promoting texts that some might consider sensitive or offensive. Some were anti-censorship and thought everything should be available to everyone. Others thought that some titles should not be available and questioned whether the library would stock racist or homophobic texts. Some felt the detail on the consultation process with communities going forwards needed greater consideration and clarity.
- 9.6 The issue of consultation with the community is included in CILIPs recently issued National Guidance for public Librarians: Managing safe and inclusive services, though how this is to be accomplished is still under discussion. In their guidance CILIP refers to Mein Kampf which is now in the public domain. They state: *"There is no overall or simple rule concerning works such as this in libraries. The key consideration is for the library to reach an informed and considered position on them, ideally in discussion with their communities, and to have documented this decision so that it can be justified when challenged (whatever the nature of the decision)". In so doing, librarians, library staff and decision-makers ought to balance their duty towards intellectual freedom with the potential harms of accessing works that have been linked to radicalisation.*
- 9.7 Comments have resulted in minor amendments being made to the draft policy that is now proposed for consideration.

10. Environment, Health, and Economic Implications

10.1 There are no implications.

11. Equality and Diversity

11.1 The Stock Management Policy has significant implications for personal and community achievement:

- Literacy and information skills are proven to be central to educational success.

- A wide choice of popular materials is provided to meet the leisure needs of communities and promote the positive and creative use of leisure time.
- Formal and informal lifelong learning and the development of skills are supported by providing a range of non-fiction material, combined with access to web-based resources both within libraries via the People's Network and remotely.
- Universal access to knowledge builds well informed individuals and communities; helps remove barriers to equality of access and opportunity.
- Library collections are key resources for participation in the democratic process, recording and preserving the local heritage and supporting the work of service colleagues across the Council in education, in health, in social cohesion, in business.

12. Summary and Recommendations

12.1 To meet the requirements of legislation and the aspirations of policy, a good library service needs sufficient and well managed resources. Library resources in all media (print, audio-visual, digital, on-line) should be contemporary, provide a wide range of information, ideas and works of creative imagination and be of sufficient quantity and diversity to meet the needs of library users. This includes those who borrow materials, use them in the library or receive them on their desk top or personal device.

12.2 The updated Stock Management Policy draws together a number of service improvements made over the last few years. It recognises the changing market place and will act as a solid foundation for the delivery and development of a good library service for the people of Calderdale.

For further information on this report, contact:

Sarah Richardson	Assistant Director – Customer Services, Public Services
Telephone:	01422 28 8094
E-mail:	Sarah.Richardson@calderdale.gov.uk

The documents used in the preparation of this report are:

1. Library Stock Management Policy (Appendix 1)
2. Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 2)

The documents are available for inspection at:

c/o Public Services, Halifax Town Hall, Crossley Street, HX1 1UJ.