

# **Tameside Libraries Stock Management Policy**

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## **Introduction**

This document sets out the principles and practices by which stock should be acquired, managed and made available for the maximum benefit of the people of Tameside.

It explains:

- How the stock we provide contributes to the priorities and vision of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council and the aims of Tameside Public Libraries
- Our position on censorship
- How we select library stock
- How we maintain the collections
- How we measure the performance of our stock
- Why we decide to retain some items and remove others

## **Aims of the Stock Policy**

The stock we provide and the way in which we manage it supports the vision of the council to give residents the best start in life, opportunity to learn and earn, safe, green and supportive communities, and healthy and active lives.

Our Mission Statement and the aims of Tameside Library Service underpin our stock provision policy. We have used the following documents in the formulation of this policy:

- The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964
- Tameside MBC Corporate Plan 2024-2027
- Libraries Connected Universal Library Offers
- CILIP - Managing safe and inclusive libraries
- Tameside Library Service - Mission Statement and Aims

## **Tameside Library Service – Mission Statement and Aims**

Our Mission is to be a continually improving modern library service that is responsive to the needs of the local community, having at its heart the promotion of reading and lifelong learning in its widest sense, access to digital skills and services, and the provision of facilities which are open, accessible and inclusive and play a significant part in establishing the local community identity.

We will achieve this through our Service Aims which are:

### **Reading and Lifelong Learning**

- We will actively promote reading
- We will help readers to develop their reading choices through the books we provide and a range of events and activities
- We will work with others to support literacy and basic skills
- We will provide materials and resources to support learning throughout life
- We will provide access to information

## Digital Skills and Services

- We will provide free access to computers and the internet in all our libraries
- We will work with others to provide basic computer training courses for adults
- We will provide access to library services through the website, library app (Spydus), email and webchat
- We will provide free access to e-resources; e-books, e-audio books, e-magazines, e-newspapers and other resources
- We will provide access to information online

## Community Focus and Inclusion

- We will provide libraries which are open and neutral
- We will make sure that buildings are welcoming and accessible
- We will listen to users and non-users to make sure that services are based on the needs of local communities
- We will provide a range of activities and events for local communities
- We will provide access to Council services
- We will collect and preserve materials which celebrate local heritage and community identity

## Overarching Principles of Our Stock Policy

We endorse the following statement from the Chartered Institute of Information and Information Professionals (CILIP):

‘Librarians and library staff have a core and ongoing commitment to freedom of expression and freedom of access to information. A library is not a place in which to hide from difficult ideas, but to equip our users with the critical literacy to engage productively with difficult ideas in their proper context. In this context, librarians have both an ongoing duty to oppose censorship in all its forms and a proactive duty to develop collections, activities and services which properly reflect and celebrate the diversity of lived experience and identities in the communities we serve. These professional commitments are central to the trusted role that libraries hold in our society, and they should not be curtailed by any governing body or 3rd party for any reason other than that they are expressly proscribed by law.’ – **Managing safe and inclusive libraries, 2023.**

- Only books and other media that have been legally published will be purchased. Material that is defined by UK legislation as obscene or blasphemous, or which incites religious or political hatred, or promotes racism or prejudice against any social group cannot be stocked or displayed. However, stock selection decisions will be made on the assumption that adults are able to make a reasonable and critical evaluation of the views and opinions expressed in an item of stock. We do 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 items from our shelves solely at the request of an individual or group.
- A representative range of political and religious materials is held across libraries in the Borough and made available through the 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.
- We acknowledge that on occasions individuals may find items in our collections “offensive”. However, we do not label items to warn customers of potential “sensitive” content.
- We provide stock that meets the expressed or anticipated needs of the whole population of Tameside. We have a positive non-discriminatory attitude towards all nine protected characteristic groups covered by the Equality Act 2010 (sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief, pregnancy & maternity, gender reassignment, and marriage & civil partnership).
- We provide a customer focus to stock management by listening to and responding to the expressed needs of users, using statistical information, customer comments and staff knowledge of customer needs.
- We want stock that will attract and retain users and will provide the widest possible choice of materials.
- We will obtain library materials in the most cost-effective way.

## Definition

In this policy stock is defined as books, newspapers, periodicals and magazines in physical and digital formats, as well as maps, printed music and spoken word recordings, electronic information resources, and any other print, nonprint or digital formats.

## Collections and Levels of Choice

- We will be aware of the needs of both the Tameside community as a whole and the local community served by an individual branch when deciding which items to stock.
- Our aim is to ensure that every library provides lively and relevant stock; targeted to the needs of the local community, the amount of stock in each library will vary according to its size and catchment population. Each service point is a part of Tameside Libraries’ offer, and none are expected to be individually self-sufficient. Material at other libraries can be reserved free of charge and will be transported to the pickup library of choice.
- We will provide collections of material at each service point, which offer a range of stock and approaches to a subject or type of literature. The level of coverage will reflect anticipated demand, which must be sufficient to ensure reasonable use. The material in these collections will be accurate, current and will provide the customer with a reasonable choice.
- Our scheme of provision indicates to the customer what they can expect to find in our stock. Material which we feel is outside our collections policy, can usually be obtained through the national library inter-lending network.
- All stock is regarded as a service wide resource, and we will seek ways of maximizing use of the stock through circulation, display and the reservation system.
- Stock circulation is vital as it gives customers the widest access possible to our stock and prevents stock from stagnating in one library. We regularly circulate large print books, talking books and non-fiction between all the libraries.
- We will provide a free e-books and e-audio books service and a free digital magazine/newspaper service to Tameside Library members, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, designed to be used by library members outside the library.

<p><b>Ashton Library, including Tameside Libraries Information Service</b></p>	<p>Ashton Library is the largest Tameside Library and offers a full range of services in the greatest depth and with the widest subject coverage. This includes fiction, non-fiction, large print, talking books, teenage, and junior material. It also has a collection of books in community languages including Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, Polish, Ukrainian and Urdu.</p> <p>The specialist Tameside Libraries Information Service is also based here and offers a range of Reference material for use in the library.</p>
<p><b>Town Libraries: Denton, Droylsden, Dukinfield, Hyde and Stalybridge</b></p>	<p>Town libraries provide a wide range of stock, to serve people with a diverse range of needs and interests. This includes fiction, non-fiction, large print, talking books, teenage, and junior material. Some town libraries have books in community languages including Arabic, Chinese, Bengali, Gujarati, Polish, Ukrainian and Urdu.</p>
<p><b>Community Libraries: Hattersley and Mossley</b></p>	<p>Community Libraries provide a smaller selection including fiction, large print and junior stock. Each contains a small non-fiction collection, mainly recreational/ popular reads.</p>
<p><b>Home Library Service</b></p>	<p>The service is designed to meet the library needs of people who have difficulty visiting a library for reasons such as reduced mobility or caring responsibilities. It has a range of stock aimed at meeting the needs of customers, including large print books, talking books and jigsaws. Stock from other service points is used as required to provide the service.</p>
<p><b>Library Access Point: Ryecroft Hall</b></p>	<p>Ryecroft Hall Library Access Point has a small collection of fiction, large print and children's books.</p>
<p><b>Bookstore</b></p>	<p>This material remains of value to the overall collection of Tameside Libraries, but for reasons of poor physical state or low usage, it is no longer suitable for display on open shelves and is not publicly accessible.</p> <p>Customers can request items from this collection for loan. There is no charge.</p>
<p><b>Local Studies and Archives Centre</b></p>	<p>Material relating to the history of Tameside's towns and villages is centralised at Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre.</p> <p><a href="https://www.tameside.gov.uk/localstudies">https://www.tameside.gov.uk/localstudies</a></p>

## Stock Selection

Tameside is a member of The North West and Yorkshire Libraries Book Consortium which contracts for mainstream library stock supply. Tameside is also a member of AGMA (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities) who contract together for other services such as e-books, e-audio books and e-magazines. The bulk of our purchases are made through consortium contracts which ensures maximum value for money for our mainstream stock.

Stock is selected by a variety of methods including:

- Supplier Selection – The contracted main suppliers select new stock using a written specification from the library service which is reviewed annually. The selections are reviewed and edited by library staff before orders are confirmed. This allows us to benefit from suppliers' expertise and knowledge of the publishing industry, whilst ensuring that our criteria for selection are adhered to and that staff involvement in stock selection processes are time and cost effective.
- Regular orders from stockists of specialist material such as large print, audiobooks and foreign language books. These are selected by the suppliers, with staff involvement and oversight.
- Stock selected by staff from a variety of suppliers to address identified stock gaps or to develop new collections to meet identified need.
- Stock purchased to satisfy requests.
- Reference materials selected by staff.
- Stock selected in response to customer feedback.
- Monitoring of literary prize shortlists, book reviews, social media etc.
- Monitoring of reservation lists to ensure extra copies are ordered of very popular items.

## Criteria

Decisions on stock selection consider the following criteria:

- Content - authority and reputation of the author or publisher, educational or recreational value, quality, currency and accuracy of information where applicable.
- Physical format - quality of production and durability in terms of library usage
- Cost - the cost of an item will be balanced against the benefits of the item to the overall stock and its potential usage
- Potential popularity
- Coverage – consideration is given to the existing coverage of the subject or genre and whether an item adds anything new.
- Electronic resources - These entail additional selection criteria, for example, licence agreements and access methods and a place within any regional or national acquisitions arrangements. Where possible we will offer resources which allow home access to enhance the service provided.
- Availability- we do not buy second-hand books.

## **Adult Fiction**

Supplier selection is used for a large proportion of our adult fiction. In selecting stock, we aim to provide titles which seek to broaden the outlook, exercise the imagination, extend literacy and encourage reluctant readers, and provide entertainment and relaxation. Whilst the collection should reflect known demand and popular 'genre' fiction will make up the largest part of our collection we recognise the important role libraries play in supporting and promoting all areas of fiction. Therefore, we ensure our stock also includes the following:

- Books for emergent readers
- Classic fiction
- Fiction in Community languages
- First novels
- LGBTQ+ fiction
- Graphic novels
- Literary novels
- Novels in translation

## **Adult Non-fiction**

Non-fiction is selected monthly by Library staff. Materials are selected on a broad range of subjects to support:

- Lifelong learning, including formal and informal education and training
- Personal and social development
- Entertainment, relaxation and leisure
- Health and wellbeing
- Local commercial and economic endeavour
- Study of the history and culture of the local area

## **Children and Young People**

Supplier selection is used for a large proportion of the junior and teenage stock, with Neighbourhood Librarians buying additional stock where required.

Stock should aim to:

- encourage reading for pleasure and enjoyment
- promote language, numeracy and literacy skills
- support educational attainment, material for homework and independent study
- encourage language and communication skills, and contribute to school readiness for pre-school children
- support information and cultural needs
- provide materials to help children understand emotional or physical issues positively
- provide materials with positive images and role models

Material will be provided in a variety of formats including:

- board books for sharing with very young children
- picture books for younger children, including dual-language books (parallel texts in English and another language)
- easy readers
- junior fiction
- young adult novels
- graphic novels/manga for older children and teenagers
- eBooks and e-audio books
- popular non-fiction for leisure

### **Reference and Information**

We subscribe to several online resources which enables us to provide free access to high quality resources for our library members. These subscriptions are reviewed annually. For physical stock we have a standing order for selected titles to ensure new editions are added automatically. This list is updated annually by Information Services staff to assess the continued relevance of titles.

### **Periodicals and Magazines**

We aim to provide a broad selection of periodicals, with the main collection being housed in Ashton Library. Branch collections reflect the perceived and expressed needs of the community, including the socially excluded and those whose first language is not English. Resources are finite so in judging a title we compare it with other available titles already being stocked. Selection criteria include price, intended audience and level, coverage, source, and appearance. A large selection of free digital magazines and newspapers are also provided 24/7 to library members to allow them to read full digital copies from their PCs, tablets and smartphones.

### **E-books and E-audiobooks**

We offer a free e-Books and e-audio books service to Tameside Library members. Books can be accessed on smartphones, tablets, PCs and some e-readers. We share this platform with all Greater Manchester and other North West Library Authorities to ensure we offer as wide a selection of titles as possible and provide value for money. Content is selected by a nominated individual on behalf of the consortium with input from the other member authorities.

### **Local Studies Material**

A small selection of local history material relating to Tameside and Greater Manchester is available in each library.

More extensive resources are available at the [Local Studies and Archives centre](#) which has a separate collections policy.

## **Donations**

The library service is not obliged to accept donations; they are only accepted if they enhance the stock of the service. They are accepted on the understanding that they conform to the same criteria as purchased stock. Items must be in good physical condition and up to date. Donations may not always be added to the library receiving the donation; their deployment will depend on the subject matter and existing holdings. Donations not required will be disposed of in the same manner as purchased stock.

## **Unsolicited Stock**

Some authors and publishers send items that have not been ordered. These will not be accepted unless they are genuinely wanted for our collection. Should the sender require its return, the cost of postage must be provided.

## **Self-published Materials**

Self-publication is defined as being where an author has sole control of the content without the collaboration of an established publisher to provide editorial processes. Our policy is not to purchase self-published books. Consideration will, however, be given to titles with a significant local history interest and to titles by established authors whose works have previously been commercially published.

Our policy does not imply any judgement regarding the quality of self-published material. It reflects the fact that we cannot undertake the editorial review and evaluation role of a publishing house.

## **Readers' Requests and Stock Suggestions**

Requests from customers for books that are not in stock will be given careful consideration and may be purchased if they conform to our stock policy and are available from our suppliers. Requests will not be allowed to distort the general buying pattern. Where a non-fiction book is either out of print or not thought to represent a useful permanent addition to our stock, it may be borrowed through the Inter Library Loan Service for which a charge will be made. Out of print junior and fiction titles are only borrowed through the inter-lending service in exceptional circumstances.

## **Collection Management**

This section addresses how we manage, maintain and edit our stock.

Identifying gaps in subject/ title coverage, is a continuous process to which all library staff contribute. Customer feedback is also important.

A combination of planned work and regular maintenance should ensure that the entire stock of each library is examined at least once a year. We use the library management system to produce reports as an aid to stock replacement and to identify heavily used stock, missing items that may need

replacing and stock for circulating to other libraries. Professional judgement of librarians is important.

When reviewing stock, we will look at the following:

- Loans – three issues in the last 18-month period will be used as the trigger for examining the viability of all stock remaining on the open shelves
- Physical condition of the book stock – is it fit for purpose? e.g. clean jacket, binding should be intact, pages should be clean, book should not look old or dated, any labels should be clean and legible.
- Critical date parameters by subject for non-fiction – we have guidelines for the optimum time span a book should be on the library's shelf according to its subject. They are used as triggers for further investigation as new editions may not have been published within the recommended time span and a decision is then made as to the currency of the information. This will have implications for stock editing as well as buying patterns.

### **Stock Maintenance and Editing**

We have set standards for the age, quality and condition of our stock and it is the responsibility of branch staff to ensure that the stock is regularly edited and maintained according to these standards.

As part of their daily routine staff will be aware of physically damaged or dirty material, damaged bindings, duplicates or out of date material and should actively be involved in taking this material off the shelves or intercepting it at the counter. Where damage is minimal and does not affect the overall condition of the book and it is still suitable for loan, then staff should make a note of this.

### **Stock Withdrawal, Retention and Disposal**

An item of stock will be discarded when:

- its physical condition is such that it cannot or should not be circulated
- its use has fallen below the benchmark for that category of stock, and it is felt that it is no longer of any use.
- it is out of date.
- textbooks that have been superseded by later editions, which incorporate substantial changes. (Sometimes it is valid to have the previous edition on the shelves if it is known the changes have been minor, but these should not be older than 3 years).
- books in which the facts may be correct but the whole presentation is dated, for example interior decoration, crafts, fashion.
- it is very overdue and is unlikely to be returned.

Some of the stock that is withdrawn from a branch will be offered for sale to the public. If its physical condition is poor, then it will go as recycling immediately. Stock that has been offered for sale in the library for at least a minimum of three weeks that has not sold, is sent to a third party for onward sale/disposal.

Stock that is of local interest may be transferred to the Local Studies and Archives Centre. Other stock will be transferred into the book store providing it meets the criteria.