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**Leitrim Library Service – Collection Development Policy**

**Purpose**

Leitrim Library Service aims to create welcoming spaces where all are free to explore and connect. Our libraries are at the heart of communities and this Collection Development Policy is one of the library’s fundamental policy documents. Its purpose is to state the criteria the library service uses to develop and maintain its collections.

Leitrim Library service collects materials in a variety of formats which serves the general educational recreational and entertainment needs of the public. Collections are developed to meet the needs and interests of the communities the library serves and to support targets and initiatives outlined in the national public library strategy 2023-2027 *‘The Library is the Place: Information, Recreation, Inspiration’.*

The library’s collection is a living, changing entity. As items are added, others are reviewed for their ongoing value and sometimes withdrawn from the collection. Great care is taken to retain or replace items that have enduring value to the community. Decisions are influenced by patterns of use, the capacity of each location and the holdings of other libraries. Staff review the collection regularly to maintain its vitality and usefulness to the community.

Leitrim County Council allocates a budget annually for the purchase of library materials. Allocation is dependent on the overall economic environment and the financial situation of the council. The book fund is divided into a number of spending categories across the service: Adult and Children’s Fiction and Non-Fiction, Digital stock, Reference items and Local Studies material. We commit to supporting Irish Language publications by purchasing items for stock and by highlighting and promoting Irish language authors. In line with language needs in the community, we provide a selection of fiction and non-fiction titles in both physical and digital format. Material is acquired through supplier contracts negotiated by the Libraries Development Unit at LGMA. All contracts are subject to procurement rules and regulations.

This Collection Development Policy provides the strategic framework for all decisions and processes related to stock procurement, acquisition, development and management. Stock is defined as all materials provided by the library service including print and digital collections as well as material such as multimedia kits, microforms and sensory toys and equipment.

The purpose of this policy is to provide library staff with the necessary guidelines, within budgetary and space limitations, to assist them in the development of collections to meet library goals and to inform the public about the principles by which materials are selected for inclusion in the library collections.

The library service does not endorse or promote any particular political, social or religious ideology. The choice of reading material to be borrowed is left to the discretion of the adult borrower; guidance in the choice of reading materials for children is the sole responsibility of the child’s parent or guardian. Parents and guardians have sole responsibility for what their children read, view, or hear. Only parents and guardians may restrict their own children’s access to library materials. Selection of library materials will not be restricted by the possibility that materials could come into a child’s possession.

**Selection Criteria**

Library staff use their training, knowledge and expertise along with the following general criteria to select materials for the collection:

* Relevance to interests and needs of the community
* Contemporary significance, popular interest or permanent value
* Extent of publicity, critical review and current or anticipated demand
* Current or historical significance of the author or subject
* Relevance to the existing collection’s strengths and weaknesses
* Reputation and qualifications of the author, publisher or producer,
* Suitability of format to Library circulation and use
* Date of publication
* Statement of challenging, original, or alternative point of view
* Accessibility and durability
* Price, availability and Library materials budget

Not all selection criteria may apply equally to all content or formats. Selection of materials does not imply agreement with or approval of the viewpoints expressed. Materials are evaluated as a whole work and not by selected passages or scenes. Individual items which may be considered controversial or offensive by some may be selected if it contributes to the overall variety and balance of the collection. The collection does not offer textbooks or other school curriculum material and in general does not duplicate resources already provided at local academic and special libraries.

The library online collection is purchased and managed centrally by the Libraries Development Unit at LGMA. It represents a range of diverse viewpoints and interests

The online collection evolves as new formats and products become available. This collection includes e-Books and e-Audiobooks, e-Magazines and Newspapers, e-Languages and e-Courses.

Maximum use is now also made of the National Library Management System, Spudus, when ordering stock for patrons. The National library management system offers library members an opportunity to search reserve and receive library items from any of the 30 local authority library services around the country. This enhances the service we provide for library users around the area of stock management.

Responsibility for the initial selection of library resources rests with library staff, based on the criteria cited above. Designated staff are responsible for specific areas of the collection under the overall direction of senior librarians. The responsibility for selection ultimately rests with the County Librarian.

**Weeding and Withdrawal of Material**

All collections are routinely reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet our community’s needs. Materials that are worn, no longer in high demand, or potentially obsolete may be removed. Library staff assess the need for replacing materials that are damaged, destroyed or lost. Items are not automatically replaced and decisions are based on need, demand and budget.

Weeding is the continuous systematic withdrawal of materials to maintain the integrity of the library's collection. Library staff determine when unused items, unnecessary duplicates, outdated, worn or damaged materials are to be discarded using the same criteria that are applied to acquisitions.

Weeding is done to:

* Ensure the collection reflects the current and anticipated needs of the community
* Utilize in the most economical way the available space in the library
* Remove outdated materials from the collection.

The following criteria are used in selecting materials for weeding and withdrawal:

* Damage, poor condition or beyond repair
* No longer relevant to the needs and interest of the community
* Infrequent use and lack of demand
* Superseded by a new edition or alternative title on the subject
* No longer up to date or inaccurate
* Availability elsewhere including other libraries and online

In addition, staff use the following guidelines for the withdrawal and sale of items from

special collections:

• Curatorial or environmental requirements exceed the resources of the library

• Legal restrictions, possession of valid title and the donor’s intent

• Relevance to the scope of the special collections

## Replacements

Withdrawn or missing materials are not automatically replaced. In general, replacements are purchased following the general collections criteria. Several additional factors are, however, considered.

* Importance of title to collection
* Extent of the present library collection on the subject
* Availability of new titles on the subject
* Historical value of the material
* Public interest in the subject.

#### **Digitization**

In alignment with the library’s aim to serve the needs of the community it serves and enrich lives by providing equitable access to information, the library’s digitization programme serves to produce, organize, disseminate, and maintain a collection of digital content that expands free public access to materials of local significance or value. Physical materials owned by Leitrim Library Service may be considered for digitization based on the following criteria:

* Library must hold the copyright or obtain permission to digitize and provide unrestricted access
* Unique, original items not previously digitized
* Digitization is within the library’s means (format, size, quality, and quantity of digitized content and relative costs)
* Subject matter is appropriate for library collections with clear scope; local or historical significance, community impact or value, and fits the library’s strategic priorities
* Collection must be capable of organization and metadata description

**Local Studies Material**

Leitrim’s Local Studies' Department is a reference and research service dedicated to preserving and enhancing the collective memory of the county. We offer access to the history and heritage of County Leitrim and continuously collect, catalogue and preserve all types of Leitrim-related material. The library holds a wide range of material on the history, geography, antiquities, archaeology, folklore and culture of the county. The collection consists of books, journals, newspapers, photographs, audio visual material, manuscripts, maps and microform.

Leitrim County Library Service within existing resources aims to acquire;

* Material which was created or published locally or created or published outside the locality but with local relevance.
* Material which documents the experience of local citizens
* Material which documents significant aspects of the history, social or cultural life of the local community and enhances the collection.

**Donations**

## Leitrim Library Service welcomes donations of print and non-print materials relating to the history, heritage and culture of county Leitrim which can be integrated into existing collections and which fit collection development policies.

## We regret that we cannot take everything offered to us. Space limitations and the cost of handling donations require the library service to be selective in accepting items for donation.

No conditions or restrictions may be imposed relating to any donation of material either before or after its acceptance. Once accepted, the library retains unconditional ownership of all donations and makes the final decision on acceptance, use or disposition. The classification, shelving, access, location and disposal of donated material will be determined solely by the library service. A donor may not restrict access to, or the use of, donated items. The library will provide a written acknowledgment for donated materials. In certain circumstances donators will be required to provide details of copyright ownership and will be required to complete a Copyright Form.

## The library will not accept items that cannot be properly cared for or secured by the library within normal operations and procedures of the library. The library will not be required to return any donation once it has been accepted.

## The library cannot and does not appraise books, works of art or any other items. It is the donor’s responsibility to establish, as desired, the market value or obtain expert assistance in establishing any value. The library will not bear the cost of such an appraisal. Donors who wish to have the value of a donation specified must make all arrangements for and bear all costs of an appraisal.

The library retains the prerogative to accept or reject any proposed donation of material and does not guarantee that any donation will remain a permanent part of the collection or reside at any particular location.

Once agreement has been reached with regard to a library donation both the Donor and Leitrim Library Service will complete and co-sign a ‘Library Donation Agreement Form’.

## The library regularly assesses the use made of its collections as well as the depth and breadth of their coverage. Librarians judge impartially and evaluate critically.

Leitrim Library Service undertakes to evaluate and revise this Collection Development Policy as necessary to ensure relevancy and to take account of future needs and developments.

**Dated: November 1st 2024**

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