

North East Lincolnshire Libraries Policy on Services to Children and Young People

1. Introduction

34,879 or 22% of the population of N.E. Lincolnshire comprises children and young people under the age of 16 (Resident population 2001 Census). This is made up of the following age groups:

0 - 4 9,649 (4,897 boys, 4,752 girls)

5 - 9 10,887 (5,600 boys, 5,287 girls)

10 - 14 12,026 (6,094 boys, 5,932 girls)

Statistically this group therefore constitutes a significant proportion of the total population.

Our libraries have 7,829 active registered readers under the age of 16, (i.e. those who have borrowed an item in the last year). This equates to 22.5% of the under 16s in NE Lincolnshire. In 2002/03 we recorded 158,054 children's issues across the authority, i.e. 20% of the total issue figure for the authority.

An examination of our stock turn for children's material for the last published year (2002/03) shows total issues of 158,054 against a total stock of 40,984 - a stock turn of 2.98.

Our children's issues for 2002 / 03 were 4.53 per head of population under 16, reflecting the general low level of take up of library services within North East Lincolnshire. This policy aims to address that low level of take up by ensuring that services to children match the needs of the children in this community.

The library plays a vital role in ensuring that children and young people achieve success in academic, social and cultural development.

Libraries support a child's learning process by providing books and other materials which:

- develop language
- encourage critical thinking
- stimulate the imagination
- expand knowledge
- encourage the enjoyment of reading

Well-developed services to children will also help to raise standards of literacy.

Within NE Lincolnshire we deliver services to children and young people through the public library service and the Schools' Library Service, each of which has a specific role to play.

The public library provides:-

- loan of books and other materials to children/teachers as individual users
- information and reference materials to children and adults as individual users
- display facilities for pupils' work
- promotional visits by library staff to schools and playgroups etc
- a programme of class visits at public libraries to teach children how to use libraries

The Schools' Library Service provides:-

- bulk loan collections for schools and LEA registered playgroups to support recreational reading
- project loan collections for schools and registered playgroups to support delivery of the National Curriculum
- advice to schoolteachers on book selection, library management and development etc
- stock editing/classification in schools
- talks to children about information retrieval skills
- a religious education artifact loan service, supported by SACRE

For the purpose of this document the term 'children' refers to the 0 - 16 age group throughout, although for specific needs the client group can be neatly divided into the under 5s, 5 - 9 year olds, and 'young people' aged 10 - 16.

[Back to top](#)

Key issues

This policy aims to address two key issues:

1. The need to ensure that the special needs of children and young people in N.E. Lincolnshire are both recognised and reflected in service provision (as highlighted by the L.I.S.C. (Library & Information Services Council) Report 1995, *Investing in Children*, and through the Children Act 1989 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).
2. The need to support efforts to raise standards of literacy both nationally and locally.

Aims of the policy

1. To provide support for educational development
2. To network with a range of agencies to improve service to children and young people in the community.
3. To provide access to books, knowledge, information and support to every child in the community, irrespective of race, gender or creed.
4. To promote the role of books and stories in the development of the imagination; language, literacy and emotional development, by providing a resource of both informal and formal learning experience beyond the classroom.
5. To support children in developing the skills to become independent library users
6. To engender a sense of community in local children by making local history material more accessible and raising their cultural awareness and sense of heritage.
7. To develop and promote provision for children with special needs.
8. To establish measures for reviewing all aspects of provision for children.
9. To maintain common standards of service across all libraries within the authority through a Children's Charter.
10. To create and maintain levels of staff expertise and awareness in the field of children's librarianship.
11. To exploit the potential of information technology to provide children with wider access to learning and knowledge.
12. To raise membership and widen usage levels in an area where they are historically low.

We will produce specific action plans to address these aims in the annual Libraries and Museums Service Business Plan.

[Back to top](#)

Access

This policy reflects the promotion of race equality and the prevention of unlawful discrimination (Race Relations Act 2000 - General Duty). We will adhere to the principles of the Council's Diversity Policy Statement:

'The Council is fully committed to the broad principles of social justice and is opposed to any form of discrimination or oppression.

It therefore willingly accepts not only its legal responsibilities but also wishes to embrace best practice in all areas of its work in order to secure equality of both treatment and outcome for all.

The Council is therefore committed to ensuring that no-one is treated in any way less favourably on the grounds of personal differences such as race; colour; national, ethnic or social origin; gender (including reassigned gender); sexual orientation; religious belief; age; disability; marital status; caring responsibilities or al or other personal beliefs.

The Council will implement all necessary action and training to ensure its commitments with regard to equality of treatment and outcome are fulfilled and will regularly monitor and review progress in this respect.'

[Back to top](#)

Staffing

We deliver services to children and young people through:-

- the public library
- the Schools Library Service

Each of these two have a specific role and jointly they ensure quality and consistency of services.

Within the Public Library Service the Young People and Children's Services Development Officer and the Young People and Children's Librarian Children's librarian have responsibility for developing services to children across all libraries.

Within the Schools Library Service a qualified librari s the work of three part time library assistants and reports to the Young People and Children's Services Development Officer.

The Young People and Children's Services Development Officer will keep all staff abreast of developments in children's services and children's books.

All staff will show a positive attitude to children and young people, and promote the best service possible. Customer care courses for staff at all levels will include specific training on dealing with children as a client group.

[Back to top](#)

Staff training

The Library management team will provide support for professionally qualified staff t ttend relevant meetings. We will also provide literature to develop personal training and the

principles of Best Value in monitoring best practice elsewhere and applying it wherever relevant to our own service.

We will use the annual training plan and the staff development process to ensure that all of our library staff are able to achieve the aims of this policy.

[Back to top](#)

Stock

We will stock all our libraries with a broad, balanced range of up to date material relevant to children's needs. We will present and promote stock attractively, both in traditional format (books) and multi-media (CD Roms, talking books, videos, DVDs etc).

The provision of stock of high quality and in quantity is subject to both physical and financial constraints, but we will cater for the needs of all specific groups e.g. babies and pre-school children, teenagers, children with special needs, as well as parents and carers.

We will select stock to:

- encourage the love of books and reading from the earliest age
- support literacy and language development and stimulate children's imagination
- support children's educational needs (formal support for teaching the National Curriculum is primarily the responsibility of the LEA , local schools and the Schools' Library Service, but public libraries have a role in supporting homework enquiries)
- support the Council's approaches to racism, promoting a multicultural society
- support the need for information on challenging issues

[Back to top](#)

Availability

All our libraries will have for loan a selection of the following resources:-

- Fiction
- Board books
- Picture books
- Books for younger readers
- Picture books for older readers
- Story books
- Non Fiction
- Reference Books
- Parent/carer collections
- Talking books

Some libraries will also stock children's videos and CD Roms.

In order to maximise access; to reduce barriers to children's learning and to ensure that our libraries are inclusive to everyone, we levy no charge fines on children's books.

Children today are accustomed to using computers and multi-media formats for both recreation and information. We will provide access to IT facilities and a range of software in all our children's libraries.

[Back to top](#)

Selection

We will select stock for our children's libraries in accordance with the Stock Policy .

In selecting stock we will provide material which will:

- Assist in intellectual, social and emotional development
- Develop language skills and expand vocabulary
- Extend skills and knowledge
- Develop an ability to read for information
- Encourage reading for entertainment and enjoyment
- Stimulate imagination and curiosity
- Develop an understanding of and respect for themselves and other people

We will provide stock for loan and for reference use.

Our stock will be made up of material in a variety of formats including

- Non-fiction
- Fiction
- Easy readers
- Picture books
- Large print
- Foreign and dual language books
- Graphic novels
- Spoken word
- Sound recordings
- Videos
- CD Rom
- Other formats as they become relevant

We will provide a wide variety of stock relevant to all age groups from birth to fifteen years, and to all tastes and levels of reading ability. Our stock will be designed to meet educational, informational, recreational and leisure needs.

Our non-fiction stock will reflect the content of the National Curriculum but will not provide completely for its requirements. It will complement, not replace, the project and exchange collections provided by the Schools' Library Service.

We will provide the best available stock from items of literary and artistic merit, to 'fun' material to encourage reading and library use.

Our stock will include items relevant to those with special needs such as learning difficulties or visual impairment.

[Back to top](#)

Arrangement

To help children use books we will arrange our libraries to make it as easy as possible. We will provide appropriate guiding in child-friendly language and books will be arranged as follows:-

- Boardbooks - in Kinderboxes
- Picture books in Kinderboxes, or on shelves where space is at a premium
- Books for Younger Readers will be easily identified
- Story books - alphabetically by author's surname with face-on display to break the sequences.
- Non-fiction - arranged in Dewey order with a shortened class number. We will display a subject list close by to help children find their own books..
- Parent/carer collections - shelved in Dewey order within the children's library. We will also display appropriate leaflets with this collection.

We will categorise non-fiction books in libraries with enough room.

[Back to top](#)

Size of stock

Our holding of children's and young people's material will be at least at national average or above average levels and will reflect:

- the local area (e.g. population figures and other census data)
- the need to offer a level of choice within each stock area

(The International Federation of Library Associations, IFLA, recommends 2 books per child - we will use this figure as a goal to work towards)

[Back to top](#)

Budget

The percentage of the total materials budget applied to services for children will be at least the same as the percentage of children in the population served. We will strive to provide revenue or grant funding to keep stocks refreshed, furniture and environment modern and well-equipped and suitable for the needs of the local community.

[Back to top](#)

Stock Maintenance

To ensure that stock remains relevant and attractive, we will edit all children's stock at least once a year.

Environment

All our libraries will provide attractive, welcoming and stimulating environments for children and their parents/carers.

Layout

All libraries will provide areas for lending and reference stock as well as:-

- areas for pre-school children
- study space
- IT facilities

All layouts will take account of the need for ease of access for all, but specifically for those children, parents/carers with disabilities. Particular attention will be paid to the provision of :-

- soft seating
- carpets
- low level display boards
- low level shelving
- Kinderboxes
- large open spaces to allow wheelchairs to manoeuvre freely
- induction loops
- clear guiding and signage
- adaptive IT

[Back to top](#)

Furniture

We will only use furniture that is safe, sturdy and of good quality. When we buy new equipment we will bear physical disabilities in mind eg height adjustable tables for wheelchair users etc.

Shelving

Shelving will be low level (no more than 5' high) and relevant to the age of children and young people using the stock. There will be a balance between flat and sloping display shelves, and we will display books attractively and as interestingly as possible in order to aid selection.

We will use Kinderboxes wherever space allows, to display books and picture books for the pre-school child.

Guiding

Our children's libraries will be clearly signed within the building. Guiding will be highly visible and in a font which is attractive to children, and the language used will be child -friendly.

[Back to top](#)

Promotion

Promotion of books and the enjoyment of reading will be an integral part of our service to children within NE Lincolnshire. All promotion will :-

- be reader-centered
- meet the aims of this policy
- be cost-effective in the use of money, materials and staff time
- be high quality
- be assessed for effectiveness in meeting the objectives
- be available to both users and non users

Methods of promotion

a) Within the Library

We will provide promotional literature relating to library services for children and young people in all our libraries. This will include:-

- leaflets about library services within NE Lincolnshire
- bookmarks for children
- thematic booklists, regularly updated
- posters relating to library events e.g. storytimes, re
- IT promotions using reader-centered CD-roms / Websites etc.

We will produce all such material to a corporate image using language, illustrations etc. suitable for the target age.

We will organise activities at all our libraries, including:-

- regular storytimes
- a programme of class visits
- reading promotions

All events will be of high quality and accessible by all children.

b). Within the Community

Promotional work within the community will aim to:-

- attract new members
- promote books and reading
- promote NE Lincolnshire Library Service

We will organise activities within the community including:-

- storytimes
- bookweeks
- talks to schools and playgroups, scout and Brownie groups e
- displays at one-off events e.g. festivals, carnivals
- user education programmes, to develop children's information handling skills
- involvement in national schemes

We will produce all promotional materials to a high standard, using appropriate software, packages and display. Material will be held centrally to support all children's promotional work and every opportunity will be taken by staff to obtain media coverage of promotional events.

[Back to top](#)

Monitoring and Evaluation

The library's management team will ensure that all aspects of the library's services to children are monitored and evaluated. The monitoring and evaluation process will incorporate both statistical and qualitative information.

We will use a number of performance indicators to monitor the effectiveness of this policy -

- no of books per child ,to ensure that we work towards the standard of 2 books per child head of population
- budget allocation to children's stock per head of population , in line with the policy statement on monitoring expenditure
- issue comparisons year on year, to establish improvements in issue figures

- issues per item (stock turnover), to ensure that the stock is working to its full potential
- percentage of total children's issues per library, to establish borrowing trends at each library and identify particular shortcomings
- percentage of new children's books in relation to total children's stock, to allow performance comparison with other authorities
- children's stock as a percentage of total stock held in each library overall in relation to child population of NE Lincolnshire
- to ensure that stocks are relevant to the communities they serve

Additional means of evaluating the quality of library stock will be used. These include:-

- user surveys
- user feedback
- stock surveys
- stock gap books and suggestion forms

Qualitative information will be gathered by monitoring feedback from:-

- children's comments forms
- staff
- children's focus groups
- children's letters
- CIPFA PLUS user surveys

All staff will contribute to developments in services to children and young people and this policy will feed into the annual library planning process

[Back to top](#)

Partnerships

We recognise that we cannot achieve our objectives in isolation either in our services to adults or those to children, and we have a history of working in partnership with other local authority departments, schools, specialist agencies, voluntary organisations etc. We will continue to develop an integrated approach to work with children and young people by working towards inclusion in future Education Development Plans, Learning Plans, and the work of the Learning Partnership. We will continue to support and add value to other Council departments such as the Schools' Library Service, Education Department, Social Services, Community Regeneration, and other relevant agencies within the community.

We will continually develop links with other like-minded agencies such as the Pre-School Learning Alliance, SureStart, Study Support Centre and national agencies including CILIP and BookStart, to ensure we maximise every opportunity to improve services to local children and young people.

[Back to top](#)

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