



FALKIRK COUNCIL LIBRARIES COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

August 2025

1. Introduction

This Collections Policy will outline how and why we buy the stock that we do, and how we look after that stock once it is on our shelves.

2. Aims and Objectives

Falkirk Council Libraries' approach to stock management reflects the Council's goals and values and ensures that stock is treated as a service-wide resource.

Our aim is to provide and make available a comprehensive collection of print and non-print resources that meets the diverse needs of customers in an engaging and exciting way.

We aim to provide an up to date, responsive service with a collection that supports reading for pleasure, information and learning.

Our key objectives are to:

- Maintain and provide access to quality and wide-ranging resources that meet the needs of the whole community, recognising the needs of people with disabilities and those from diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds.
- Make effective use of the resources available in delivering library services to the community.
- Support and encourage reading for pleasure, lifelong learning and literacy.
- Provide information services to individuals and groups.
- Monitor and respond to changes in community needs.
- Effectively manage stock, staff, and systems to maximise the use of all resources.
- Effectively promote library resources to increase participation, encourage new members and retain existing members.
- Ensure stock is well-presented and in good physical condition.

3. Library Collections

3.1 Lending Services

A wide range of books, spoken word (audio books), and electronic resources (e-books, e-audio books, e-newspapers, and e-magazines) are available for loan.

3.2 Children and Young People

We welcome children of all ages, and our libraries have books, and audiobooks suitable for all children and young people, from babies to teenagers. We provide a wide range of interests in fiction and non-fiction and a variety of formats (board books, picture books, comics, novels etc.).

We stock accessible reads to help develop confidence for children learning to read, as well as dyslexia-friendly titles from Barrington Stoke.

3.3 Reference and Information Services

Libraries have a range of reference and local history resources, including maps and bound copies of old local newspapers. If you want to know whether we have a specific map or local history source, you can contact libraries@falkirk.gov.uk or contact us on 01324 503605

Reference sections are small as most reference information can now be easily accessed through free online resources. Our libraries offer free Wi-Fi and access to computers with Microsoft Office software, internet access, and a range of electronic resources (e-services).

3.4 Newspapers and magazines

Individual libraries provide The Falkirk Herald weekly, and Bo'ness obtains the Bo'ness Journal. Libraries also provide access to e-magazines and e-newspapers through [Press Reader](#). These can be accessed in the library on our pcs, or on a library member's internet-enabled device, such as a PC, tablet, or smart phone.

3.5 Community Languages

The community languages section is based in Falkirk Library and has books in a range of languages. Branch libraries have smaller collections and can access the collection at Falkirk. Customers can request titles from any branch using the free reservation service.

3.6 Home Library Service

Where long-term illness, disability or mobility issues prevent someone from visiting the library, we can visit readers at home with a tailored selection of books and/or audiobooks. If this service is something that would be of interest to you or someone you know, please contact:

The library service also makes regular visits to residential care homes to deliver book collections for residents.

3.7 Support for disabilities

Libraries are keen to support readers affected by disabilities, including e.g., hearing impairment, sight loss, and visual impairment.

All libraries are fitted with an induction loop system and can provide magnifying sheets on request for use in the branch.

We provide an extensive range of audiobooks on CD, e-audiobooks, and large print books. Customers of Home Library Service with sight loss can access Daisy Players on loan to access audiobooks at home.

4. Stock Selection

4.1 Introduction

A huge amount of material is published each year. Both physical and financial constraints prevent the library service from purchasing everything.

We aim to ensure a balanced and comprehensive collection with sufficient range and breadth to meet the demands of our diverse community.

This section of the Collections Policy outlines how we select our stock and defines the principles of the underlying processes.

Stock is selected by a team of library staff guided by the overall aims and objectives of the Collections Policy where they relate specifically to stock i.e.:

- Maintain and provide access to quality and wide-ranging resources that meet the needs of the whole community, recognising the needs of people with disabilities and those from diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds.
- Support and encourage reading for pleasure, lifelong learning and literacy.
- Provide information services to individuals and groups.
- Monitor and respond to changes in community needs.

4.2 Definition of Stock Areas

We will purchase stock for the following areas:

Adult Fiction, including Large Print	E-books, E-newspapers and E-magazines	Local History and Reference
Adult Non-Fiction	Junior Fiction	Spoken Word
Community Languages	Junior Non-Fiction	Teenage and Young Adult

4.3 Stock Selection Criteria

When buying stock we will consider the following for individual items:

- Content - the quality, accuracy, currency of information contained, as well as its authority.
- Relevance - to the development of the collection, both community and service-wide.
- Accessibility - the physical content and format of the item. We will not buy items that are primarily for completing, e.g., workbooks, nor ring bound items.
- Cost – library staff will measure the cost of expensive material against the benefits of adding the item to overall stock provision.
- Specialist material – library staff will measure the cost of specialist material against the benefits of adding the item to overall stock provision.
- Scottish content – library staff will consider items with Scottish content preferentially.
- Local material – library staff will consider quality material with a local subject matter, or by a local author preferentially.
- Potential popularity and demand - author or genre
- Accessibility - physical content and format of the item

We will take an overview of the whole Collection when selecting stock to:

- Review the range of material currently available.

- Acquire appropriate levels of stock for children and young people.
- Keep the stock of the library service up-to-date and in good and attractive condition.
- Ensure a representative selection of available books in all libraries whilst also responding to popular demand.
- Ensure the purchase of Scottish titles and Scottish publishers in line with Falkirk Libraries responsibility as a focus for the expression of Scottish literature.
- Provide reference and information services which at a minimum meet the requirements of the COSLA standards.
- Provide access at all service points to material on welfare rights, consumer information, jobs and careers, and community issues.

4.4 Stock Selection Mechanism

Falkirk Libraries purchase most of the material for our collection using a pre-publication stock selection process which enables items to be available to readers as soon after publication as possible.

Fiction and non-fiction material: library staff select titles at monthly meetings and stock is purchased via approved library suppliers. On occasion, titles that are not available from approved suppliers can be sourced elsewhere as an exception to the approved framework.

Large print, spoken word, and community languages: titles are selected from catalogues distributed by these specialist suppliers. Spoken word titles are selected by librarians, and these titles are placed on a circulating rota so that every library regularly receives different spoken word stock. This ensures that the spoken word budget is used most efficiently and that users have a wide selection to choose from.

E-book and e-audiobooks: titles are selected from a supplier providing an electronic publication platform. These titles are available service wide.

E-magazines and e-newspapers: titles are provided from our supplier's electronic platform. These titles include UK and international titles in a variety of languages.

4.5. Request Policy

Items in stock at one branch, but not at another can be reserved and delivered to any nominated branch free of charge.

Customers can use an automated link on our website or complete a form in branches to suggest additions to the collection. These suggestions are anonymous.

It is also possible to pay a small non-refundable fee to request that a specific item not currently in stock be purchased and reserved for a named customer.

Library staff will consider purchasing requested items not in stock, including books, audiobooks, e-books, and e-audiobooks if an item:

- is in print and available in a suitable binding from a mainstream UK publisher (book)
- is available from our e-book platform provider (e-book)
- costs less than £40.

In addition, the following criteria are considered:

- Non-Fiction – we may consider sourcing obscure titles or items unavailable from library suppliers through the inter-library loan network (ILL). This scheme has a fee for the customer. Car maintenance and computer manuals are not applicable for ILL.
- Specialist or Research material – as a public library, it may not be appropriate to purchase specialist material where usage would be limited. Research papers can often be provided easily via electronic inter-library loan.
- E-Book and E-audiobook – due to licensing restrictions, not all titles are available from every platform provider.
- Self-Published items – Falkirk Libraries does not purchase self-published material unless it is of significant local interest.
- In exceptional circumstances librarians may exercise their judgement regarding obtaining a requested item where balance of the collection is compromised, or the potential use of a requested item is limited.
- Requests cannot be placed more than four months in advance of publication.
- Items will normally be lent for a reduced loan period if another person has placed a request to reduce waiting times.

4.6 Censorship

Falkirk Libraries collection represents a wide choice of published material and items will not be excluded on moral, political, religious, racial or gender grounds, except where legal penalties have been incurred.

Falkirk Council Libraries follows the guidelines laid down by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP):

“It is the role of a library and information service that is funded from the public purse to provide, as far as resources allow, access to all publicly available information, whether factual or fiction and regardless of media or format, in which its users claim legitimate interest.

Access should not be restricted on any grounds except that of the law. If publicly available material has not incurred legal penalties, then it should not be excluded on moral, political, religious, racial or gender grounds, to satisfy the demands of sectional interest. The legal basis of any restriction on access should always be stated.”

CILIP, Statement on intellectual freedom, access to information and censorship, 2005

The library service welcomes requests for addition to stock, suggestions for new material and feedback on collections policy. However, library staff will not add or remove any item from our shelves solely at the request of any individual or group.

Library staff are responsible for the management and disposal of stock following the principles outlined in this Collections Policy. The final decision as to whether an item is considered suitable for library stock rests with the Libraries Team Leader.

It is the responsibility of parents or carers rather than the library staff to determine the suitability of materials used by their children.

5. Acquisition

5.1 Introduction

Timely acquisition of high-quality, relevant and accessible stock supports effective collection management. Falkirk Libraries acquisitions process is outlined below.

5.2 Acquisition Procedures

Stock acquisition is a process that follows clear procurement procedures, supported by a robust Library Management System (LMS) and stringent financial regulations. Resources are ordered through Falkirk Council's invoicing systems, to ensure financial accountability. Economy of scale when selecting stock is critical to best value. Expertise in the book supply process and the efficient administration of the ordering and invoicing system, including Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), are provided by librarians.

5.3 Stock Processing

A centralised stock processing operation is crucial to the efficient and effective stock acquisition process. Technical bibliographic support and necessary cataloguing and classifying of material is all performed undertaken at this stage.

Although ordered centrally, most items are delivered directly to libraries, where they are usually available for loan within a day of delivery.

5.4 Best Value

Purchase of resource materials using the approved Scottish Government Scotland Excel procurement framework ensures best value is achieved.

Better value can be achieved by managing stock movement within the system. We circulate specific areas of stock such as westerns, romances, and spoken word.

6. Management of Resources and Collections

Library stock is managed to ensure:

- Collections stay current and relevant.
- Stock is physically attractive and well-presented.
- Best value is achieved.
- A wide range of subjects and interests is covered.
- Local and important material is included at appropriate levels.
- Responsiveness to customer requests and feedback.

6.1 Stock Audit

Library staff are responsible for the ongoing audit of stock in their library. Performance and evaluation of library stock is monitored using automated stock management tools, customer feedback and surveys.

This audit process enables staff to:

- take account of current demands
- identify stock gaps
- identify appropriate stock levels
- identify appropriate formats
- monitor the condition and currency of stock

Material is periodically removed, and library staff analyse the stock gaps and demands to inform the stock selection for each library.

The library service regularly undertakes stock checks to identify missing items. The catalogue is then updated to reflect this stock check.

6.2 Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)

Falkirk Council Libraries provides customers with virtual access to their library account and resources. The library catalogue can be accessed online from the Falkirk Council website - <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk> or at <https://falkirk.spydus.co.uk> and enables customers to access resources anytime and anywhere. The catalogue provides guidance as to where resources are located within each library and adds categorisation and further information to material.

7. Withdrawal and Disposal

7.1 Withdrawals

We use evidence gathered from the library management system to assist in identifying items for withdrawal. Criteria for withdrawal include:

- Physical condition
- Rate of usage
- Currency of information
- Information available in a more appropriate format or a newer edition
- Part of a series – where the series is still popular the volume will be replaced by a new copy

Damaged books and audiobooks are withdrawn and discarded.

7.2 Disposal

Items for disposal are identified through the stock management process. Where appropriate, materials identified for disposal may be:

- Offered for sale in branch libraries at set rates
- Offered to sustainable book recycling organisations

All books are checked for rarity and resale value before disposal.

8. Local History Collection

The main Local History Collection is held centrally at Falkirk Library. It should be noted that Falkirk Archives holds the Archives Collection for the locality and is the main place of deposit for any unique archival records.

Local libraries also have local history collections relating in the main to useful published general material and especially locally specific material. Lending copies are also available where possible in addition to the Local History copy.

The Local History Collection's objective is to collect and organise anything published that significantly contributes to knowledge of the locality in the past.

In assessing the possible value of material for future use we must consider its relative importance in local affairs at the present time. Items will be considered for inclusion in the Collection if the subject matter is about the Falkirk Council area (later referred to as 'the area'). Items relating to certain subjects which extend outwith the boundaries of the area (such as canals and the Antonine Wall) may still be acquired. We will add:

- two copies where a major part of the subject content is the Falkirk locality, or it significantly adds to the knowledge of the area.
- one copy of other material which mentions the locality and adds to the knowledge of the area.
- Local history collections in branch libraries may be reduced only if Falkirk Library has sufficient copies of the relevant titles.
- Items damaged beyond repair and/or any form of conservation will be withdrawn.