Managing safe and inclusive public library services

A practical guide

'A library should be a place of wonder and safety for children and adults.

It is a place in which people can discover themselves and learn about the world around them.

It is a place in which complex, sometimes conflicting ideas can be held up for scrutiny.

It is a place of dialogue and respect, tolerance and inclusion.

It is a place in which cultures can meet and be reconciled.'

Contents

September 2023.

1 Foreword

When the original *Guidance on the Management of Controversial Materials in Public Libraries* was published by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in 2008, it was against a backdrop of public concern about radicalisation and extremism.

As we come to renew this guidance in 2023, thanks to the support of Arts Council England, we do so in the context of renewed concerns about freedom of expression, online harms and the marginalisation of entire communities because of their identity.

Both sets of issues highlight the central challenge for librarians and library staff wishing to deliver safe, trusted and inclusive services for communities, including learning communities in schools and prisons.

Much has changed since 2008. The Equality Act 2010 has created a new legislative environment, including the prohibition of discrimination, harassment and victimisation of people on the basis of their protected characteristics.

Our professional practice has moved on too in the last 15 years. Librarians and library staff are able to draw on a significant body of knowledge and expertise when seeking to develop services and stock that are broad, balanced and inclusive while addressing the issues of systemic bias and prejudice.

These positive developments have happened in parallel with an increasing polarisation of our public realm. The challenges of misinformation and hate speech mean that librarians and library staff are operating in an environment that is both more challenging and more exposed than it has ever been.

What has not changed, however, are the fundamental principles that lie at the heart of our professional ethics. The library must maintain its focus on intellectual freedom and freedom of expression as core pillars of our democracy.

This guidance provides a core set of 'key principles' which draw on CILIP's Ethical Framework[1] to provide library staff with a clear 'decision-making framework' when dealing with complex and challenging issues. It then suggests how these principles can be applied in four specific contexts:

The development and management of library stock

The provision of public internet access

The appropriate use of public spaces (including meeting and event spaces)

The provision of publicly accessible events and activities

This guidance is based on the best currently available knowledge and experience and has been developed in consultation with library workers and leaders in public, school and prison libraries.

The nature of guidance such as this is that it will evolve as practice evolves over the coming years. This should therefore be regarded as a 'living document' and source of ongoing reference for library staff.

Although it makes reference to relevant legislation, this guidance does not constitute legal advice. We strongly advise Public Library Authorities to seek specific legal advice when implementing the recommendations contained here.

1. http://www.cilip.org.uk/ethics

2 Who this guidance is for

This guidance is intended primarily for public librarians and library staff who are responsible for making decisions, and defining and implementing policies in the library relating to stock, public internet access, use of space and public programming.

A secondary audience for this guidance are Councillors or local authority commissioners/managers.

The guidance may also serve as a useful source of reference for librarians, library staff and decision-makers in other types of libraries, since the key principles apply across all contexts. Since Public Library Authorities are often involved in the provision of library services to schools and prisons, we have sought to include references to good practice in these areas too.

The guidance may be used as a point of reference when explaining or justifying decisions made by librarians or library staff. As noted above, nothing in this guidance constitutes legal advice, and Public Library Authorities should always ensure that specific professional legal advice is taken where necessary.

The guidance acknowledges that the UK's library system now includes a much broader range of statutory and non-statutory (volunteer-run) library services than it did in 2008. Although we believe that in practice, this guidance should be applicable across all types of library service, irrespective of

their governance arrangements, it is also clear that some elements of the legal context – such as the Public Sector Equality Duty – will be different for different types.

We do not anticipate that this guidance will be read in its entirety like a book. Instead, we anticipate that people will use it primarily as a reference resource or 'checklist' when strengthening their own policies, practice and preparedness.

We hope that some library services will use the guidance as a structure for workshop or group discussions.

The guidance contents are freely available and licensed for open re-use (subject to attribution). This is to ensure that Public Library Authorities can excerpt and make use of elements of the guidance when responding to challenges or proposed service changes.

3 Introduction

Libraries play a unique and exciting role both at the heart of our communities and in our democracy. In addition to supporting reading and literacy, they have a positive impact in a wide range of areas, from business and enterprise to digital skills, creativity and local participation.

In addition, Library Authorities are often involved in the delivery of services to the community via outreach, as well as activities including local school library services and access to library services in prisons.

The British public library tradition is built on the principles of intellectual freedom, free access to information, ideas and knowledge, free expression and democratic dialogue. In a time of increased polarisation in our society, it is more important than ever that library services are managed and delivered in ways that both protect and promote these values.

Fulfilling the educational role of libraries means providing access to a wide range of views, opinions and ideas, some of which may be offensive to some members of the community.

The role of the library is not to hide or withhold access to challenging ideas – the librarian should never act as a censor – but to present them in their proper context and in such a way that enables the library user to hold them up for critique and scrutiny.

In the context of a public library system that is increasingly diverse in terms of professional staffing, governance and accountability, this guidance is necessarily broadly drawn. It is also both practical and pragmatic.

Too often, librarians, library staff and decision-makers find themselves faced with an impossible choice between their professional values and their duty to the safety and welfare of their users. In an attempt to reconcile these conflicts, this guidance draws on current practice and examples, aligning our legal, ethical and professional responsibilities with the practical decisions made every day by library staff.

A library should be a place of wonder and safety for children and adults. It is a place in which people can discover themselves and learn about the world around them. It is a place in which complex, sometimes conflicting ideas can be held up for scrutiny. It is a place of dialogue and respect, tolerance and inclusion. It is a place in which cultures can meet and be reconciled.

The successful management of a safe, trusted and inclusive library services should be an ongoing process of reflection and learning for the professionals and decision-makers to whose care they have been entrusted.

We hope that this guidance will be a source of simple, practical support to them in their work.

4 Freedom of expression for libraries

Freedom of expression and the free exchange of ideas are central to the role, purpose and value of libraries as trusted civic institutions committed to serving their whole communities.

Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the universal right to freedom of expression:

'Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.'

CILIP's ethical framework commits librarians and library staff in all sectors to 'uphold, promote and defend intellectual freedom, including freedom from censorship.' This commitment is central to the design, management and delivery of library services.

Affirmation

'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 third party for any reason other than that they are expressly proscribed by law.'

Statement of professional commitment

When considering the development of libraries and information services, we encourage governing bodies, funders and policymakers to support the following statement:

1. Intellectual freedom – the freedom to read, to learn, to question and to access information – is central to a functioning democracy.

2. It is a core role of libraries, librarians and other library staff to promote intellectual freedom on behalf of their users, to empower users to enact their information rights and to oppose censorship in all its forms – both tacit and explicit.

3. Librarians and library staff are responsible for promoting and preserving intellectual freedom by working with governing bodies, decision-makers and non-library colleagues to support every user in their development as informed and responsible citizens.

4. It is the responsibility of the librarian or library worker to:

   • Provide materials that will enrich and support learning and empowerment, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of individual learners

   • Provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, societal values and critical literacies

   • Provide a range of information resources which will enable users to make informed judgments in their daily life

   • Provide materials that illustrate and illuminate different views on controversial issues so that users may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking

   • Provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups in our society and their contribution to our national heritage and identity

   • Place principle above personal opinion, and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library

Librarians, library staff and decision-makers are expected actively to oppose censorship for any purpose other than material that is proscribed by law, which risks the incitement of illegal acts or which constitutes 'hate speech' as defined by the Public Order Act 1986, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006.

Book bans

This guide is being developed in the context of an increased incidence of 'book banning' in the US, whereby specific titles or categories of titles are proscribed by law from being included in the collections of school and public libraries.

The incidence of 'official' book banning in the UK is still relatively low. The majority of titles that have been censored by governments have tended to focus on sexual obscenity and very few bans – such as those that prohibited the publication or sale of the works of Joyce or DH Lawrence – have outlasted the administration that implemented them.

There is no UK equivalent of the ALA's list of banned titles, or titles that library users have requested should be removed from the shelves, and there are at the time of writing no plans to create one. Several lists of historically banned titles are available online.

As noted in the guidance below, librarians do not censor books for any reason other than restrictions placed on them by the law. We actively oppose censorship, both overt censorship by authorities and the tacit or self-censorship that can accompany repressive regimes.

Where a librarian finds themselves asked to remove titles, for example by the governors of their school or local councillors, they are encouraged to resist, as far as reasonably possible, to explain to the complainant the implications of censorship and to make CILIP and other bodies aware of the situation (in confidence where necessary).

Contested spaces

We recognise that librarians, library staff and decision-makers are working in the context of a highly polarised society. We also recognise that rights are intersectional and that there is often not a single clear answer which decides definitively between conflicting interests.

Librarians and library staff are therefore obliged to use 'best endeavours' to carry out their work in the interest of the public good and in a way which satisfies their mission of providing access to knowledge and learning and the promotion of universal access, inclusivity, tolerance and mutual understanding.

5 Key principles

The most fundamental principle for libraries to remember when managing safe, trusted and inclusive services is 'don't be scared, but do be prepared'.

Librarians, library staff and decision-makers are responsible for delivering information, services and programming to a hugely diverse audience and the decisions we make have a significant impact on the communities we serve. By taking time to reflect on the risks and develop appropriate policies in advance of any issues, libraries can ensure that they are well prepared and confident in their decision-making.

From selecting stock to hiring out meeting rooms, there are a common set of 11 'key principles' which you should always consider.

These are not 'hard and fast' rules and should always be applied with judgement and appropriate reflection.

These key principles are:

1 Take a risk management approach

2 Promote the safety of library workers

3 Understand the law and its limits

4 Engage with professional ethics and values

5 Reflect on your biases

6 Engage your stakeholders

7 Develop appropriate policies

8 Maintain access to appropriate expertise

9 Make (and document) evidence-based decisions

10 Train your staff

11 Reflect and learn from experience

Principle 1

Take a risk management approach

Libraries have long been aware of the risks inherent in providing open, inclusive and welcoming services to the public. From managing the health and safety of staff and users to dealing with challenging behaviour, librarians, library staff and decision-makers commonly take a 'risk management' approach to the design and delivery of their services.

Although the context of increased polarisation and conflict in society is different, an approach based on good risk management, planning and control is still the best way to navigate these complex challenges.

As with any other area of service delivery, this approach involves:

Working together to try and predict the main risk factors

Understanding the likely impact of those risks on service users and staff

Developing and implementing adaptations which help to control these risks

Monitoring the effectiveness of risk controls, and adjusting them as needed

Libraries should therefore consider reviewing, revising or updating their risk register to identify the risks associated with stock, public events, internet access and the use of public spaces.

It is also very important to consider the risks, not just for the library service, but for the staff who may find themselves confronted with difficult, challenging or even potentially aggressive behaviour.

Your risk assessment should explicitly consider how staff will be supported in the event of a dispute, protest or other intervention (see also Principle 2 below).

At the same time, it is essential not to allow the actual or perceived risks associated with a particular activity to overwhelm the values of the library as a universally welcoming and inclusive space focused on intellectual freedom.

In times of challenge or conflict, self-censorship or exaggerated risk controls (such as cancelling entire classes of event to activity, or removing access to stock that is perceived as 'risky') can be as damaging to the core purpose of the library as the conflict itself.

It is helpful to note that some protests focused on disrupting library services or events have included a request to see the library or Council's risk assessments. Although the Council may conclude that it is not proportionate to share these materials, it is generally wise to proceed on the understanding that the risk assessment may become public knowledge.

Library workers have a right to work without fear of abuse, harassment or harm.

Principle 2

Promote the safety of library workers

Library workers have a right to work without fear of abuse, harassment or harm. In all cases, when assessing how to deliver safe, inclusive and welcoming library services, library leaders should always consider the emotional, psychological and physical safety and security of staff as being paramount.

Where appropriate, library leaders should seek to work with staff representatives and unions to develop policies and procedures which allow the library to deliver a full range of services to the public, while protecting the safety and welfare of library workers (staff and volunteers).

Principle 3

Understand the law and its limits

'Access to information, events, activities or public spaces should not be prohibited unless it has been prohibited by law. There may be circumstances in which the library may place conditions on access to information, events, activities or public spaces, but only where obliged to do so by their responsibilities to safeguarding, public safety or their public duty under the Equality Act 2010 and related legislation.'

All library services must be delivered within the context of the prevailing law. Previously, the simple form of this principle was that 'access to information should not be restricted on any grounds except that of the law'.

However, the reality is that this simple formulation is not sufficient to guide libraries in the practical interpretation of their legal responsibilities. For example, there remains a risk that even though a piece of material or an activity may not be prohibited by the law, it falls into the category known as 'lawful but awful' (also known as 'legal but harmful' – see later section on 'The law and its limits').

By way of illustration, books which include assertions that constitute 'Holocaust denial' may not be prohibited by law, but may clearly be either harmful or offensive to many library users.

Similarly, there may be circumstances in which the provision of access to information, events, activities or public spaces would bring the library into conflict with its other statutory duties including (but not limited to) the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (the specific duty of public authorities to consider how their decisions impact people with characteristics protected under the Equality Act).

A revised version of this principle would be that 'access to information, events, activities or public spaces should not be prohibited unless it has been prohibited by law. There may be circumstances in which the library may place conditions on access to information, events, activities or public spaces, but only where obliged to do so by their responsibilities to safeguarding, public safety or their public duty under the Equality Act 2010 and related legislation'.

In school and prison library services, librarians, library workers and decision-makers must obviously also act with due regard to their responsibilities under the regulatory regime for their sector. In schools, this is likely to include clear guidance on safeguarding as well as specific provisions for privacy, data handling and compliance with Data Protection regulations.

In prisons, library services must comply with the Prison Rules 1999 and Young Offender Institution Rules 2000, as interpreted by the Prison Service Instructions and Prison Orders.

Principle 4

Engage with professional ethics and values

In implementing Principle 3 (Understand the law and its limits) librarians, library staff and decision-makers should be mindful of the professional ethics which lie at the heart of all library and information services. The *Ethical Framework* maintained by CILIP sets out the commitment of librarians and information professionals to uphold, promote and defend:

1. Human rights, equalities and diversity, and the equitable treatment of users and colleagues

2. The public benefit and the advancement of the wider good of our profession to society

3. Preservation and continuity of access to knowledge

4. Intellectual freedom, including freedom from censorship

5. Impartiality and the avoidance of inappropriate bias

6. The confidentiality of information provided by clients or users and the right of all individuals to privacy

7. The development of information skills and information literacy

Librarians, library staff and decision-makers in public libraries therefore have a public duty to promote intellectual freedom and to oppose censorship in all its forms. In practical terms, this means that library staff should make all reasonable efforts to avoid censorship (which for the purposes of this guidance includes the restriction of access to events, activities and public spaces), except where expressly required by law or their statutory obligations.

Library staff and decision-makers are also advised to refer to CILIP's policy and supporting guidance on intellectual freedom for librarians and information professionals in all sectors.[2]

It is increasingly common for Public Library Authorities or library services to make a public statement of their corporate or organisational values, or to share such a statement with their local authority or other governing body.

When making decisions about the provision of access to information, events, activities or public spaces, librarians, library staff and decision-makers should ensure that their actions are consistent both with their stated organisational values and the requirements of professional ethics and the law.

For example, it is common for library services to express a corporate commitment to inclusivity or universal access. However, situations may arise from time to time whereby access to events, activities or public spaces is refused to specific groups – where for example a group is proscribed by law, or their presence in the library may result in an incitement of hate speech or violence.

In these circumstances, it is important that the library staff and decision-makers involved have reflected on the conditions under which their stated corporate values would be in contradiction with their legal responsibilities.

This is of particular importance when considering 'blanket' approaches, not just to individual groups, but to whole categories of groups or activities. Some libraries, for example, maintain a blanket prohibition on the use of library spaces by religious or faith groups. It should be possible to justify all such 'blanket' provisions as part of a proportionate response.

It is also important to ensure that all members of library staff understand the values of the service and the circumstances under which access would be refused to specific groups, individuals or activities (since it is often frontline staff who act as the first point of contact for such enquiries).

2. CILIP, 2023. *Policy on Intellectual Freedom for Librarians and Information Professionals.* [pdf] London: CILIP. Available at https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/intellectualfreedom N.B. The final policy with accompanying guidance note will be available at this link from late autumn 2023.

Library staff should make all reasonable efforts to avoid censorship.

Principle 5

Reflect on your biases

The idea of libraries as a 'neutral' service has fallen increasingly out of favour in recent years. We are all susceptible to bias which comes from our background, our education and the circumstances of our lives.

In addition to our personal biases, we must be aware of the systemic biases in our society which are beneficial to some people while marginalising or disadvantaging others. It is the ethical responsibility of librarians, library staff and decision-makers in libraries to be actively conscious of these biases and to work to correct them through the design and delivery of inclusive and welcoming services.

Instead of being 'neutral', librarians and library staff should be aware of their biases, accountable for them and provided with effective and proven examples of ways they can mitigate the impact of those biases on their services.

In practical terms, the best way to overcome the impact of bias on library stock, events, activities, spaces and services is to include more people in their development.

This means:

Actively working to create a diverse and representative workforce

Creating an environment in which people – particularly people from traditional marginalised backgrounds or communities – feel safe and encouraged to express their perspectives

Including users and user communities in discussions about the development of key policies and programming

Principle 6

Engage your stakeholders

In all cases, the library service should make sure that it has engaged with its local authority or governing body and reached an agreed position on the management and provision of safe and inclusive public library services.

The library should discuss with Council officers and, where appropriate, elected members to explain the need for a broad and inclusive approach to stock, programming and the use of premises and facilities. Examples of possible contacts within the Council include the safeguarding team, or teams involved in public health and community safety.

These discussions should address:

The potential risks arising from the library's policies and programmes

The controls for these risks, including the support provided by the local authority

The circumstances under which activities would require a specific risk assessment (such as an event addressing a subject matter that is known to be controversial or potentially offensive)

Any crisis communications or communications management plan in the event of complaints concerning stock, activities or the use of premises and facilities

A positive and proactive approach to risk and crisis management between the library service and the local authority or governing body is often a decisive factor in the event of a public issue.

Principle 7

Develop appropriate policies

'Be prepared' is the watchword for librarians, library staff and decision-makers in managing safe and inclusive library services. The times of greatest risk are those when library staff either need to 'make up' decisions themselves, or the library service is forced to establish its position *after* the problem has occurred or a challenge has been raised.

Clear, publicly available policies agreed ahead of time are the best way, both to ensure that the library service is able to move forward in confidence and that the public, stakeholders and library staff are informed about the 'terms of engagement' with information, events, activities or public spaces.

Types of policy which the library service may typically wish to consider include:

Collections development or stock policies

Standards/rules for acceptable computer or Wi-Fi use

Codes of conduct

Safeguarding or child safety policies

Library access policy

Policies for home delivery/outreach services

These policies may either be specific to the library service (as in the case of stock selection or collections development policies) or – often preferably – shared in common with the local authority or governing body (such as safeguarding policies).

However, it is important to ensure that where a Council policy impacts on a specific library activity, such as the provision of mediated or filtered internet access, the policy has been developed with the library service in such a way that it is compatible with the professional ethics and values of the service.

Policies must be an active part of the management of the library or information service. They should be used for induction and staff training and referred to when key decisions are being made, including when procuring content or services from third parties.

Principle 8

Maintain access to appropriate expertise

Because of their central role in the life of our communities and their professional responsibility to provide services for the whole community, libraries are often at the 'frontline' in addressing some of society's most controversial topics.

As is hopefully illustrated in this guidance, navigating the implications and risks of decisions about access to information, events, activities or public spaces is a specialist role requiring specialist expertise.

Whatever its governance or staffing arrangements, any library service should ensure that it has access to an experienced professional with expertise in professional practice, policy and decision-making.

Professional librarians and library staff are trained to be conscious of their own biases, how these might influence their decision-making, and how to counteract the effects in both the selection and presentation of stock and public programming. Volunteers, casual or other non-specialist staff should not be left to establish the library's approach or policies without support.

Principle 9

Make (and document) evidence-based decisions

Given that decisions relating to the management of safe, trusted and inclusive library services can be complex, and the increased scrutiny under which librarians, library staff and decision-makers are operating, it is important to ensure that decisions are made based on the best available evidence.

Where possible, key decisions about stock, events, activities or the use of public spaces (including internet access) should be made on the basis of exemplars from elsewhere in the library sector.

It is always valuable to reach out to the library network to solicit experiences, example policies and methods for dealing with contentious issues.

To be fully implemented into the culture of the organisation, the evidence base needs to be discussed with the library team and regularly updated, so that the full team feels confident in the rationale driving decisions.

It is also important to ensure that decision-making is well documented, so that the library service is able to evidence the approach taken and the rationale for specific choices. Where libraries have experienced challenges to decisions, the outcome has commonly been best where they were able to provide evidence of considered reflection and accountable decision-making.

Principle 10

Train your staff

It does not matter how good, thoughtful or well evidenced your policies are if your people are not aware of them. It is often frontline and administrative staff who are responsible for dealing with enquiries, implementing policies and receiving any resulting complaints.

It is essential to ensure that staff are inducted, trained and periodically re-trained in the library services' values, policies, practices and processes so that they can implement them with confidence.

Not all frontline staff need to be trained in the legal basis of the library's position, but they do need to understand enough about the context and the library's policies either to defend them where unavoidable or to pass any challenging feedback along to a line manager or decision-maker.

Consider how staff will be supported should any issues arise, particularly if they arise outside core hours. Do staff know whom to approach for escalation, support or help in reaching a decision?

Principle 11

Reflect and learn from experience

As noted elsewhere in this guidance, these principles do not constitute a 'hard and fast' set of rules. The external environment has changed significantly since the publication of the 2008 MLA guidance, as has the legal context.

It is important for librarians, library staff and decision-makers to be alive to this changing context and to adjust their policies and practices accordingly. What may be considered acceptable in one generation may not in the next.

It is recommended that library services review and reflect critically on their policies, practice, training, leadership and governance on a periodic basis (at least every five years) and agree any necessary adjustments to ensure that the provision of services continues to fulfil their legal and societal responsibilities.

6 Checklist

We have not provided template documents to accompany this guidance, since it is important for libraries to have had the opportunity to consider and develop their own policies. However, the following checklist has been included to help librarians and library staff to think through the issues.

☐	**Assess and manage the risks**	It is helpful to undertake a risk assessment of your services, events, activities, stock and other aspects of your public programme, and to develop a clear plan for how you will manage these risks.
☐	**Promote the safety of library workers**	Where appropriate, seek to work with staff representatives and unions to develop policies and procedures which allow the library to deliver a full range of services to the public while protecting the safety and welfare of library workers (staff and volunteers).
☐	**Take legal advice**	Speak to your Council or governing body's legal advisers to ensure that legal risks have been identified and planned for.
☐	**Engage with ethics and values**	Hold a discussion about the professional ethics at the heart of the library – what does CILIP's Ethical Framework mean to you and your teams? (www.cilip.org.uk/ethics) Hold an internal discussion with your team(s) about your shared values, and the values that you want to shine through in your service to users. You might want to refer to the new CILIP *Welcome to Libraries* induction pack (www.cilip.org.uk/inductionpack).
☐	**Consider your biases**	Take some time to reflect on your unconscious biases and how they might impact on how users experience your services. You might want to refer to the CILIP/Libraries Connected resources on *Recognising Bias* in libraries (https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/Leading4Inclusion2_3).

☐	**Engage your stakeholders**	Many libraries do this already as part of service planning or via a Friends Group, but if yours doesn't (yet), then consider developing a stakeholder map and engagement plan – a strong relationship with local users and stakeholders can often really help in the event of a dispute. You can refer to CILIP's *Impact Toolkit* for guidance on mapping and engaging stakeholders (www.cilip.org.uk/ImpactToolkit).
☐	**Audit/update your policies**	Do a quick audit of your policies for stock and events, particularly your collection policy. Is it up to date and do your teams know what it says? Is it clear on what to do in the event of a dispute? You may find it useful to refer to the National Acquisitions Group (NAG) template for a *Model Collections Development Policy* (https://nag.org.uk/development/cdp_template).
☐	**Maintain access to appropriate expertise**	Making clear and effective decisions, both about service design and in response to challenge, depend on access to the knowledge and expertise of a professional librarian. You may wish to consider reviewing your staff profile to ensure that your service has adequate access to professional library skills and leadership.
☐	**Make and document evidence–based decisions**	When reviewing your policies, staffing and 'preparedness' to respond to challenge, ensure that you write down the basis of your decisions. This can be invaluable in any future dispute.
☐	**Train your staff**	Undertake a quick skills audit or 'pulse survey' of your teams to ensure that they feel equipped to manage challenge and to make evidence-based decisions. CILIP provides a wide range of training and support materials to help library staff build confidence with their professional practice (www.cilip.org.uk/TrainingandCPD).
☐	**Reflect and learn from experience**	Once you have dealt with a challenging situation, consider holding an 'after-action review' with your staff to examine what worked well, what didn't work so well and how you might be better prepared the next time. You might want to create an 'action plan' to act on any lessons learned.

7 The law and its limits

Access to information, events, activities or public spaces should not be prohibited unless it has been prohibited by law.

There may be circumstances in which the library may place conditions on access to information, events, activities or public spaces, but only where obliged to do so by their responsibilities to safeguarding, public safety or their public duty under the Equality Act 2010.[3]

Libraries should be aware of the legal frameworks governing hate speech and hate crimes in the UK and should engage with efforts by their local authority or school to create a safe space for the victims of hate crime to speak out.

3. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

The law should obviously be the first port-of-call for librarians, library staff and decision-makers involved in the management of safe, trusted and inclusive library services. It is important for the people involved to have a broad understanding of what the law says, and to ensure that their policies and day-to-day practices are legally compliant.

It is important to note that the legal system in England and Wales is based on 'common law'. This means it is derived from the decisions made by judges based on custom and precedent.

Rather than operating as a set of fixed rules, the law is constantly evolving and adapting to the changing needs of society, based on the decisions that preceded them. In practice, this means that librarians, library staff and decision-makers need to maintain at least a basic familiarity with significant changes in the law, and to have reflected on how these changes will impact on their practice.

In England and Wales, for example, the introduction of both the Equality Act 2010 and the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation into the Data Protection Act 2018[4] have significant implications for the role of librarians in promoting patron privacy and safety.

4. https://www.gov.uk/data-protection

Intellectual freedom in UK law

The central law in the UK relating to censorship, freedom of expression and intellectual freedom is the Human Rights Act 1998. Article 10 of the Act[5] states:

'Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontier.'

This principle is further reinforced by Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* (UDHR):[6]

'The right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impact information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.'

However, Article 19 of the UDHR does not currently have legal force in the UK, whereas Article 10 of the HRA does (at the time of writing).

The law is clear that this is a *qualified* right – which means that there are some circumstances in which it can be constrained or restricted.

Article 10 goes on to say:

'The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety.'

This principle – that intellectual freedom should only be restricted (for example, through censorship) on the basis of public safety – creates an ambiguity for people like librarians, library staff and decision-makers who need to make practical decisions about the provision of library services.

The fundamental principle is that libraries ought only to restrict access to information, activities, events, public spaces and related services where they can evidence that the provision of access would adversely impact public safety and security – for example by encouraging or contributing to the incitement of hate speech, violence or public disorder.

5. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/schedule/1/part/I/chapter/9

6. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

Limitations on intellectual freedom

Various laws provide a broad set of exceptions or restrictions to the freedoms set out in the Human Rights Act 1998. These include:

Material likely to cause 'harassment, alarm or distress' (Public Order Act 1986)

Material likely to cause 'incitement to racial or religious hatred' (Public Order Act 1986, Equality Act 2010, Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006)

Material likely to cause 'incitement to terrorism' (Terrorism Act 2006)

Material likely to constitute obscenity (Obscene Publications Act 1959)

It is also worth being aware that UK law operates on a principle known as 'prior restraint' – which essentially means that if material or activities have previously been subject to legal prohibition, it is reasonable to assume that other similar material or activities which fall into the same broad category are also prohibited.

Equalities and protected characteristics

The most important legal framework for librarians, library staff and decision-makers to be aware of is the Equality Act 2010 and, for people specifically in public libraries, the *Public Sector Equality Duty*[7] which accompanies and reinforces the Act. School librarians should also be aware of the *Guidance to the Equality Act 2010* published by the Department for Education.[8]

The core purpose of the Equality Act 2010 is to protect people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaces a series of anti-discrimination laws with a single law which defines:

Who is protected from discrimination

The types of discrimination under the law

What action people can take if they feel they have been unfairly discriminated against[9]

The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine 'protected characteristics' and clarifies that it is against the law to discriminate against anyone on the basis of:

1. Age
2. Gender reassignment
3. Being married or in a civil partnership
4. Being pregnant or on maternity leave
5. Disability
6. Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
7. Religion or belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

The Equality Act 2010 defines four 'categories' of discrimination:

Direct discrimination – treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others

Indirect discrimination – putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage

Harassment – unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them

Victimisation – treating someone unfairly because they've complained about discrimination or harassment

It is important for librarians, library staff and decision-makers to note that the failure to provide equitable access to information, events, activities or public spaces for their users may potentially constitute an offence under the Equality Act 2010. It is also important to note that this responsibility extends to library staff as well as service users.

It is also important to be conscious that the challenges experienced by marginalised or minoritized people on the basis of their protected characteristics are *intersectional* – any individual may have experience of any combination of protected characteristics, which intersect with each other in highly specific ways.

This becomes particularly challenging for libraries where conflict arises between groups representing individuals with experience of different protected characteristics, such as those that have arisen previously between faith groups and people who identify as LGBTQ+.

There is no 'hierarchy' of protected characteristics under UK law – all must be treated equally and fairly in the event of any dispute.

The public sector equality duty is a duty on public authorities to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010. For example, Local Authorities are commonly required to consider how proposed changes to library services may disproportionately disadvantage some members of the community.

In developing policies and practice for the provision of library and information services to the community, librarians, library staff and decision-makers should always consider (for example, by means of an equality impact assessment) how their approach could directly or indirectly discriminate against specific groups of people on the basis of their protected characteristics.

7. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance#public-sector-equality-duty

8. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

9. From https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

'Hate speech'

'Hate speech' and the related but slightly different concept of 'hate crimes' are defined by a variety of UK laws. For example, Section 4 of the Public Order Act 1986 makes it an offence for a person to use 'threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviours that causes, or is likely to cause, another person harassment, alarm or distress'. This law also includes language that is deemed to incite 'racial and religious hatred' as well as 'hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation' and language that 'encourages terrorism'.

In the provision of library services, including events, programming and the use of public spaces, it is important for library staff and decision-makers to be aware of the risk of hate speech arising from these activities.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Section 66 of the Sentencing Act 2020 recognise five types of hate crime on the basis of:

Race

Religion

Disability

Sexual orientation

Transgender identity

The police and Crown Prosecution Service have provided the following definition of 'hate crime' as:

'Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person's disability or perceived disability; race or perceived race; or religion or perceived religion; or sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; or transgender identity or perceived transgender identity.'

Public library staff should in particular be conscious of the ongoing work within their Council to prevent hate crime and to encourage the victims of hate crime to feel safe in speaking out.

The Local Government Association provides a useful database of case studies illustrating how Councils are working to reduce hate crime and its devastating impacts on individuals and the community. See https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/community-cohesion-and-hate-crime-case-studies.

Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964)

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 creates a broad framework of expectation around the management of stock, services, events and the use of public spaces:

Section 7(1): General duty of Library Authorities to provide a 'comprehensive' library service for those living, working and being educated within the area

Section 7(2)(c): Specific duty to provide a sufficient number, range and quality of books (and other library materials) 'to meet the general requirements and any special requirements of adults and children'

If local residents want their library to stock particular literature, the library may be bound to do so to ensure a 'comprehensive' service.

This obligation can be interpreted stringently under the law. In 'R v London Borough of Ealing and others ex parte Times Newspapers Ltd and others (1987)' the decision of several libraries to ban The Times on political grounds (specifically, in support of print workers in an industrial dispute) was held to be an unlawful abuse of the libraries' powers granted under the 1964 Act.

Since this original ruling, several other pieces of legislation have come into force – particularly the Terrorism Act and the Human Rights Act – which will also act on the obligation to provide access to broad and balanced collections while operating with due regard to public safety and the law.

Ultimately, the 1964 Act was not designed to be prescriptive in nature – for the most part, it is 'enabling' legislation which details key elements of the governance, operation and superintendence of library services nationally, locally and regionally. When challenging proposals to change library services, including budget reductions, library supporters have found the Equalities Act and Public Sector Equality Duty to be more directly impactful than the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act.

Library byelaws

For many Library Authorities, their local library byelaws are likely to be the most publicly-visible expression of the rules and regulations governing the provision of library services to the public.

The development of local library byelaws is allowed by Article 19 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, and the Government have provided a template set of library byelaws for statutory library services in England at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-byelaws.

Library byelaws – particularly those based on the revised and updated template from the Society of Chief Librarians (2017) – include a range of practical clauses governing specific situations, behaviours or expectations in the context of using the local library.

The library authority should periodically review its local byelaws to ensure that they are (a) fit-for-purpose and (b) representative of the values and outcomes stated elsewhere in the library's policy, strategy or plans.

Examples of local byelaws that were current at the time of writing include:

- Manchester City Council Local Library Byelaws (https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200062/libraries/826/library_byelaws)

- Leeds City Centre Public Spaces Byelaws (https://www.leeds.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/local-byelaws/city-centre-public-spaces-byelaws)

- Newcastle City Council Library Byelaws (https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/local-government/byelaws-libraries)

It should be noted that the majority of the published guidance relates to public libraries that fall within the statutory library service governed under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act. The position of 'community managed' libraries is slightly ambiguous.

Where a community managed library forms part of the statutory service (supported by the Council and with access to systems and staffing), they may draw on the policies and procedures of their statutory service.

8 Management of stock

'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, non-print or digital formats.'

Stock Management Policy, Cumbria Libraries

The careful and accountable management of stock is a core function of libraries in the delivery of their services to the public (or to the prison or learner community in prisons and schools). Stock management is an ongoing process of collections development, selection, review, 'weeding' and future planning and it goes on in all types of libraries all year round.

The library has a responsibility to the local community actively and positively to promote resources for learning, education, cultural inspiration and community cohesion. It is important that all sectors of the community feel able to play a full part in community life and not feel intimidated, marginalised or ignored.

Libraries operate within the law to provide free access to a diversity of information, opinion and ideas in a safe and hospitable environment. The requirement to respond comprehensively and non-judgementally to the needs of learners and researchers should be paramount.

Occasionally libraries will provide access to material regarded by some as culturally or morally extreme or outdated. Each library authority can consider consulting with their communities within the democratic principles of free access that are the foundation of the public library purpose.

It should be noted that views within the professional community diverge on the subject of materials, such as (the often cited) example of *Mein Kampf*. Technically, owning or lending a copy of *Mein Kampf* is not illegal under UK law – although it is understandably very difficult to obtain a copy. The work became public domain on the expiry of the original copyright in 2015, and the text can therefore be accessed via a simple web search.

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.

A library authority shall in particular have regard to the desirability:

- *Of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children;*

- *Of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it; and*

- *Of securing, in relation to any matter concerning the functions both of the library authority as such and any other authority whose functions are exercisable within the library area, that there is full co-operation between the persons engaged in carrying out those functions.*

Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 [7.2.a – 7.2.c]

Collection development policies

All library authorities should have a publicly-available and up-to-date Collection Development Policy that responds to the demography and needs of the community and the library's role to promote information, ideas and the cultural experience.

The Collection Development Policy should inform all aspects of stock management, from selection through access and promotion to eventual disposal.

Good practice will recognise:

Personal and academic freedoms

The rights of individual citizens to access published material

The professional duty of the librarian

A robust Collection Development Policy provides a solid framework for balanced and informed decision-making.

It should reinforce the expert role played by library staff, and support them in dealing with potentially controversial items, responding to challenges in relation to items selected (or not selected), and in deciding whether or not to accept donated items.

At the same time, it should make it clear that the ultimate test against which potentially controversial material should be judged is its legality (see section above 'The law and its limits').

The law reflects the tension between the need to safeguard national security (including the attempt to tackle terrorism) on the one hand, and the need to discourage discrimination and protect human rights on the other. As a result, in deciding whether or not to stock a particular publication, competing interests may have to be considered. This process of consideration can be supported, for example, though engagement with communities and users, or in discussion with professional peers. Ultimately, it is important that a suitably experienced professional librarian is able to make an informed and evidence-based decision.

As local authority services, public libraries are obliged to abide by any authority policies relating to the promotion of political or religious views.

These may occasionally restrict the presentation of stock, events or the use of community facilities but should not conflict with the selection and provision of legal publications for the library. The library service may wish to consider challenging any such policies which are felt to be overly restricting or damaging to its ability to provide a comprehensive range of materials.

Stock selection

Library stock is selected from all published material in print plus other media including audio-visual. Material should be chosen for its literary, cultural and recreational relevance or for its information and learning value reflecting the objectives of the Collection Development Policy.

Librarians, library staff and decision-makers should aim to develop library stock that ensures:

A range of material that reflects the demography of the area and the policy priorities agreed for the library service

A diversity of information, opinion and inspirational literature on any topic from the material available

The quantity of any one publication should be managed with reference to a balance between demand and the need to reflect the widest range of interests across the total stock. Stock should be selected objectively according to the Collection Development Policy, not determined by the personal view of library staff, suppliers or other partners.

Supplier selection

Since the publication of the original MLA guidance in 2008, there has been a significant increase in the use by libraries of 'supplier selection' contracts, in which stock is provided to the library by one or more suppliers against an agreed specification.

It is important to note that the principles set out above apply whoever is doing the selection. The specification for outsourced supplier selection contracts should be reviewed periodically (ideally every one to two years) to ensure that it reflects the changing needs of the library in responding to the needs of their users and communities. This also helps to ensure that the selection of stock by third parties is broad and inclusive and that it continues to reflect and support the ethics, values and public mission of the library service.

Controversial subjects

In the interest of intellectual freedom, material should not be rejected solely because it is considered controversial. A good library should encompass controversial issues and different perspectives in the interests of democracy and discovery.

Challenges to selection decisions should always be considered with reference to these principles and to the library's Collection Development Policy.

Over time publications covering controversial subjects may become matters of historical interest.

Catering for future historical significance will require:

A comprehensive Collection Development Policy

The inclusion of current accounts of history

Alternative ways of providing equal access to material that some may regard as controversial

The contribution of national, academic and larger public reference libraries providing on-site, lending and digital access to historic resources

Involving others

In the selection of stock, as in all other aspects of library service provision, librarians are encouraged to work in partnership with others. Working in partnership helps to bring a multiplicity of perspectives to the development of broad and representative stock.

Examples of partners who might be involved in this work include:

Non-library partner agencies that have an insight into community cultures, needs and interests

Local residents, community groups and representatives

Stock suppliers with a language or cultural expertise responding to an informed brief from the librarian

Regional, national or specialist consortia

All partners must be made aware of the legal obligations of the library authority and agree to comply with the library service's Collection Development Policy. Where the library authority is working in partnership, this may impact on stock selection criteria. For example, a library authority working with partners in health and care may need to review stock against the current clinical evidence base and to remove materials that are out of date (and potentially harmful).

Community engagement in stock selection helps the local authority fulfil its duty to involve (as established by the 2007 Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act) by encouraging the closer involvement of local people in library choices.

It needs to complement the Collection Development Policy, increasing the sensitivity and insight with which stock is chosen and allowing users and the community to understand the rationale behind stock selection and to influence the choices made on their behalf.

Taking a collaborative approach can add to the library's standing in the community and support positive community engagement and cohesion. Where the collaboration is with a health charity or the NHS, the health partners are likely to require stock to be reviewed from a clinical perspective and stock that is out of date to be removed. This would be an additional requirement, building on the wider Collection Development Policy.

In all circumstances, Collection Development Policy remains the responsibility of the library authority.

Librarians, library staff and decision-makers should be alert to the potential for material to contravene policy and delegate choice with care in order to fulfil their overall accountability for the collection. As with all forms of engagement, they should also be conscious of the need to ensure that a full range of community views are heard and represented, not just those of a small vocal minority.

Liaison with parents

Parents are naturally concerned about the material to which their children are exposed, particularly in the context of school libraries. Many of the contemporary challenges to titles in US schools, for example, hijack the principle of 'parent empowerment' in order to justify appeals to ban books.

Librarians, library staff and decision-makers have to manage a fine balance between the needs of parents and the rights of the learner, but always with a central focus on the safety, security and wellbeing of the child.

There is a key role for librarians and library staff in educating parents about the need to ensure that their children are exposed to a broad and inclusive range of stock. Librarians may wish to run sessions or provide information for parents about stock selection and the importance of an inclusive reading culture for their children and the school community.

Librarians may also explain to parents the work that is done to equip young learners with the critical literacy and skills to approach difficult texts critically and with good judgement, to better understand the issues that they address.

Access to library material

All material should be catalogued, and information about holdings made available through the catalogue both in-library and remotely, accessible to all.

Inter-lending facilities and the library network allow for a book to be requested at most libraries and supplied from other public, school, college and university libraries, or the British Library. Arrangements vary where library services are provided in prisons and young offender institutions (YOI).

It should be acknowledged that the library may hold catalogue records that are not yet available digitally or for online search. Where this is the case (such as in local history collections, which may be covered solely by card catalogues), the service ought to work towards making these records available within a reasonable timeframe.

Presentation and promotion of stock

Libraries may actively promote holdings on topics of current interest to raise awareness, encourage understanding, improve accessibility and increase library usage.

This is not to promote a particular belief or opinion but to enable people to follow an interest in a topic using library resources, to be exposed to new ideas, and encouraged to debate and at times challenge them.

Librarians, library staff and decision-makers should, on legal advice, withhold from public access material which in case law is proven to be instrumentally linked to unlawful activity and declared illegal.

Donations

Donated material should be subject to the same Collection Development Policy, with donors advised of the criteria.

Any decision on the acceptance, display and promotion of specific publications should remain with the responsible staff.

All staff should be made aware that, occasionally, people may want to use the library as a route to the distribution of material that supports their own views and beliefs, or that is disrespectful of those of others. Such material may contravene the Collection Development Policy, which should be the benchmark for all decision-making. Staff should also be alert to the possibility that material may be distributed by simply leaving it in the library without reference to them.

Weeding

There is a common and widely held misconception that libraries are 'permanent storehouses' of books and other published materials and that once accessioned, collection items do not then leave the collection.

As any librarian or library worker knows, a good collection is dynamic and constantly evolving and adapting to the changing needs of users. This involves not just adding items to collections, but removing them as well.

Weeding is an essential part of good library practice. It allows the library stock to remain relevant and up to date, and provides an important opportunity to remove information that is no longer accurate or which may be misleading.

The Collection Development Policy should clearly address the basis on which materials are periodically and regularly removed from collections. Librarians, library staff and decision-makers may wish to consider providing information to users and stakeholders about why the removal and – where appropriate – destruction of stock is a necessary part of good library practice.

9 Public internet access

The provision of supported public internet access – whether through fixed-access terminals or public-access Wi-Fi – is now both integral and essential to the purpose of libraries.

When considering the safe and trusted provision of public internet access, many of the same principles and considerations will apply as to the management of stock. It is important to be clear that while the library service's responsibility is to enable access, the responsibility for the interpretation and use of information accessed through the internet rests with the user.

IFLA and UNESCO recognise the status of public libraries in the information society and in relation to democracy and human rights:

The concept of freedom of access to information and freedom of expression is clearly outlined in Article 19 of the Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948):

'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.'

In providing internet access libraries should:

Provide it in accordance with the principles of freedom of thought and expression to all regardless of their background

Respect the privacy of users

Enable users to make the most of the internet for information, learning and communications for citizenship, e-governance and innovation through assistance and training

Provide an acceptable internet use policy, advising users of their responsibility to act within the law when using the internet

Provide a published policy on use by children and young people which also advises parents of their responsibility for children's use of and safety on the internet

Be pro-active in drawing users' attention to these policies and educating them about acceptable internet use

Library authorities may also adopt filtering technologies to restrict access to certain kinds of information.

In doing so they should:

Make this known to users and provide the opportunity for them to challenge particular instances of blocking, or request the adjustment of blocking criteria

Recognise that such techniques are imprecise and aim to minimize restrictions and avoid inadvertent blocking of legitimate resources

Library staff may be instructed to intervene if they are aware of apparent illegal activity, and managers should provide clear and accountable procedures for staff to deal with such occurrences.

It is not uncommon for library users to use public access PCs to view pornographic material. Libraries maintain acceptable use policies for supported internet and Wi-Fi access which preclude this activity.

It is important for library staff to be aware of the library's policies relating to acceptable use and pornography, and to be trained in what to do under these circumstances. Frontline staff in particular may find themselves having to challenge and potentially even remove library users, and it is important that they do not put their own safety at risk in so doing.

10 Public spaces

Public libraries were designed with the aim of providing safe, trusted and universally inclusive physical spaces, embedded in the heart of their communities. Although not every library is regarded as universally inclusive by their communities, this should remain our ambition, in keeping with our ethics.

In the case of schools, the library serves as a vital 'third space' for learning, self-discovery and development beyond the classroom. In prisons, the library similarly acts as a non-judgmental and inclusive space for learning and self-development.

The basis of libraries as universally inclusive public spaces is set out in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, which also governs the basis under which access to library services must be made available free of charge.

Promotion

In promoting their physical spaces, Public Library Authorities must do so in a way which proactively encourages use by the widest possible audience.

This includes:

Making information about locations, opening hours and services openly and publicly available, both physically (through signage and advertising), online and via third party platforms and channels

Publishing the basis of any restrictions on access to, or usage of, the library space

Libraries may wish to participate in a scheme such as 'Safe Places' (https://www.safeplaces.uk/about/be-a-safe-place/), which allows public venues to display a sticker confirming that people can enter and receive support if they are anxious, scared or at risk.

In addition, libraries may wish to participate in schemes such as Libraries of Sanctuary which allow them to promote their locations as safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces for specific audiences – such as newly-arrived communities or refugees (https://libraries.cityofsanctuary.org).

It is important for libraries to be aware, when promoting their spaces, of the potential negative perceptions of some partnerships and collaborations of some parts of the community. It should be made clear that the user does not need to pay to enter, nor will they be expected to share personal data or engage with staff.

Accessibility and inclusive design

All libraries, whether public libraries or libraries in schools, colleges, universities, prisons or corporate environments should ensure that their design, architecture, layout, lighting, furnishings and access provisions reinforce their identity as a positive, safe, welcoming and inclusive space.

Librarians, library staff and decision-makers should embrace the principle of 'universal and inclusive design' when approaching the design, fit-out, refurbishment or improvement of the library space to ensure that decisions made do not adversely impact on public perceptions of it.

The seven principles of universal design are that spaces should be designed to be:

Equitable

Flexible

Simple and intuitive

Clear in conveying information

Able to accommodate error

Demanding of low physical effort

Appropriate to intended use

The best person to know how to configure a library space to the needs, capability and requirements of its user community is the librarian or library worker, ideally in consultation with their communities and with people with specific lived experience of protected characteristics which will impact on their perception and use of the space.

Care should be taken when commissioning design, fit-out or new build contracts that library staff are involved in key decisions relating to the configuration and use of space.

Sustainable, safe and hard wearing

Public library spaces are demanding physical environments for surfaces, finishes and materials. They are put to a wide range of uses and may experience significantly higher volumes of usage than might be the case in a domestic or corporate environment.

Librarians and library staff should be involved in the specification and procurement of fixtures, fittings, furnishings, materials and resources to ensure that they meet the need to be welcoming, attractive, functional and hard wearing – appropriate to the range of uses to which they will be put.

Location and locale

The immediate environs of the library (whether it is in a park, a high street, a civic space or other environment) also have a significant impact on how safe, inclusive and welcoming it is perceived to be.

Care should be taken to ensure that the location does not place additional access restrictions on the user which might impact on their use of the library.

This includes working with the Council or estate owner to ensure that the locality is safe, well-lit, accessible and not subject to restrictions such as opening hours which conflict with those of the library.

Public realm

Libraries are commonly civic spaces and form part of the public realm, which means that they may be subject to activities such as lawful protest which might disrupt access or seek to deter members of the public from making use of their premises.

Wherever possible, the library should maintain an ongoing relationship with the Council and local law enforcement, public health, fire safety and other services and ensure that they are involved in appropriate contingency planning for disruption.

In addition to ensuring safe and unrestricted access and use by the public, these provisions should extend to ensuring the safety and security of library staff and volunteers.

There isn't a 'hard and fast' set of rules for dealing with protests or disruption inside or outside the library; however, the following checklist covers a number of the main elements to consider *before*, *during* and *after* the event:

Dealing with protest at the library: a checklist

BEFORE

1. **Clarify 'chain of command' and communications**
   - Identify who is authorised to speak on behalf of the library with protestors, the media and authorities.
   - Ensure you have contact details for key spokespeople.
   - Ensure key spokespeople are aware of their role and responsibilities.

2. **Liaise with local police and authorities**
   - If you receive prior notification of the protest, inform local police services and the Council about the planned protest, including the date, time, and expected number of participants.
   - Establish a point of contact with the police and emergency services for effective communication during any protest.

3. **Review library policies and legal requirements**
   - Familiarise yourself with the library's policies regarding free speech, public assembly, and use of and access to library premises.
   - Understand the legal rights and limitations related to protests in your jurisdiction.

DURING

1. **Establish clear lines of communications and decision-making**
   - Designate a spokesperson or team to communicate with protesters and media.
   - Check in with staff to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

2. **Monitor and assess the situation**
   - Assign staff members to observe the protest (safely) and report any changes or potential issues.
   - Monitor social media and local news for updates or developments.

3. **Maintain a safe environment**
   - To the best of your ability, ensure clear pathways and access to the library entrance are maintained.
   - Consider using signage or barriers to guide protesters and library visitors safely.

4. **Communicate with library users**
   - Inform library visitors about the presence of the protest and any potential disruptions to library services.
   - Provide alternative entry and exit routes, or safe spaces for library users who may be affected by the protest.

5. **Facilitate peaceful dialogue**
   - Consider creating designated areas for protesters and counter-protesters, if applicable, to prevent confrontations.
   - Encourage open dialogue, but ensure that library policies regarding respectful behaviour and the safety and wellbeing of staff and users are maintained.

6. **Document incidents**
   - Where safe to do so, assign staff members to record any incidents, disruptions, or potentially illegal activities during the protest.
   - Gather evidence, such as photographs or videos, to assist police services or for future reference.

7. **Support staff wellbeing**
   - Offer support and resources to staff members who may feel stressed or overwhelmed during the protest and in the days afterwards.

AFTER

1. **Review and learn from the experience**
   - After the protest, evaluate the library's response and identify areas for improvement.
   - Update policies and procedures based on lessons learned to better manage future protests.
   - Discuss with staff how best to support their safety and welfare in future.

Prevention of access

Unless otherwise specified, for example in the case of community-managed libraries or services managed by Trusts, library premises are civic spaces to which the public is entitled access.

The library should maintain clear policies governing the basis on which individuals would be prevented from accessing the premises. This might include, for example, behaviour which risks creating a disturbance under the Public Order Act or where the granting of access might put other library users at risk. It would be useful to take some time to discuss examples of how best to respond to such behaviour with library staff and decision-makers in advance.

Where possible, policies should define the period of any exclusions (eg permanent, temporary, over what period) as well as any provisions for appeal by the affected individual.
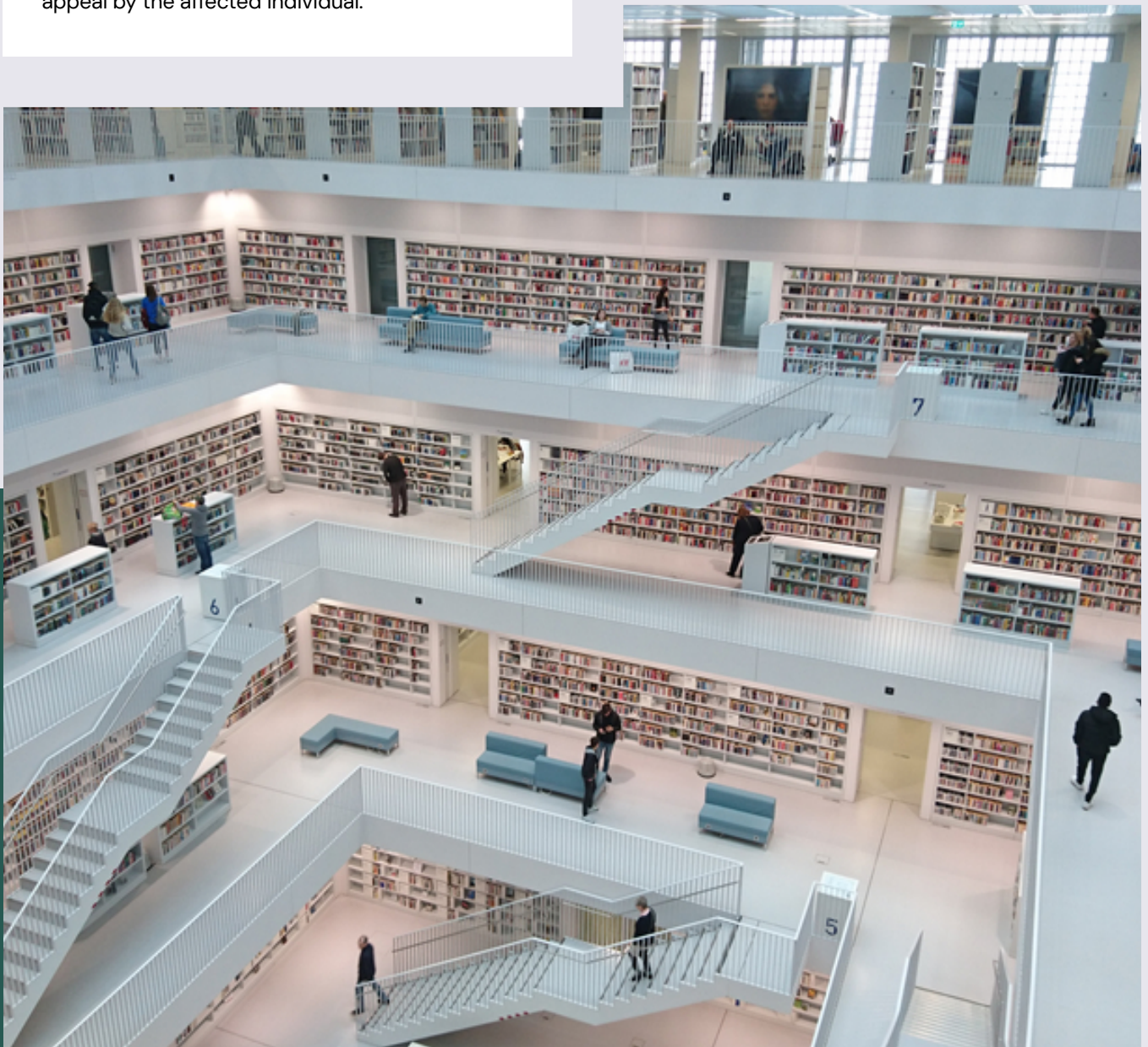
11 Events and activities

Public and school libraries (and in some more limited cases libraries in prisons and young offender institutions) host and organise a wide range of public programming, events and activities designed to attract and engage a diverse range of audiences.

Events and activities can be an excellent way to bring new audiences to the library and to demonstrate added value to local stakeholders and funders. At the same time, virtual events and activities hosted and organised by libraries are providing new ways for people to be involved in their community.

The key principle is that events and activities that take place in the library space (whether physically or online) and should reflect and reinforce the values and ethos which underpin the library itself, ie they should:

Be welcoming, safe and inclusive for all members of the community

Actively promote a spirit of inclusivity, respect, dialogue and understanding

Promote reading, literacy, knowledge and access to and use of information

Be conducted in accordance with the legal and statutory duties of the library

Be organised in such a way as to ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants

Be organised in accordance with any guidelines or requirements set down by the local authority, police, fire or other emergency or support services

Programming

Librarians, library staff and decision-makers in the library authority should develop an annual programme of regular events and activities which meet local needs and which encourage new and existing audiences to make use of the library service.

The library programme should include a range of activities, taking into account:

Equality, equity, diversity and inclusion (EEDI)*

Local demographics and the needs of specific user communities

The needs of different age groups

The need to maximise accessibility and inclusion
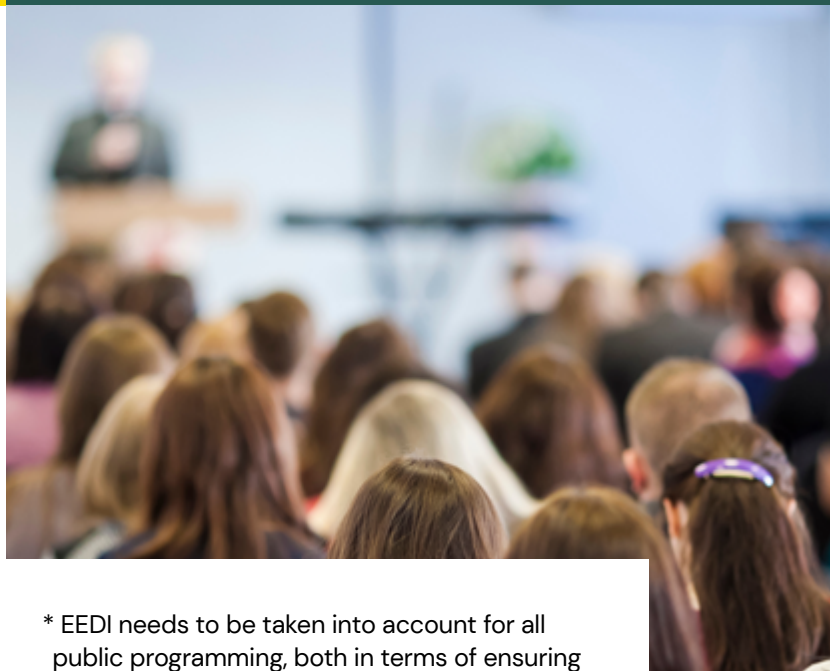
Any agreed priorities with the local authority

Regularly scheduled calendar events such as holidays or festivals

Any significant 'media events' or themes in the public realm

* EEDI needs to be taken into account for all public programming, both in terms of ensuring the inclusivity and representativeness of the events themselves, and in the sense that good programming may purposely seek to promote some EEDI topics or themes as part of the library's public task.

To the greatest extent possible, the library's programme of public events should be aware of and sensitive to external events, festivals, celebrations or other commitments which might be of particular significance to different communities, such as faith communities. Such events may provide opportunities for programming that responds to the interests of faith communities, but may also provide a mechanism to avoid clashing with key dates which may risk excluding specific groups.

Libraries Connected publish a helpful toolkit, Making the most of national events, which provides guidance for public libraries to help them maximise the opportunity of national events such as a Jubilee or sporting event.

It is often helpful to work with local communities when developing the events programme to ensure that the library's plans truly reflect the needs of local users.

Types of event or activity

It can be helpful to break down events and activities into a standard set of types, to help staff understand the implications and requirements of each.

For example, in their Events Policy, Bath and North East Somerset Council identify four distinct types of event:

1. Community event

A community event is an event organised and delivered by a registered charity, not–for–profit organisation, community or voluntary group that directly benefits local residents and stakeholders.

2. Commercial event

A commercial event is one that is organised around an identifiable commercial business or group of businesses who will benefit from the event. It is not sufficient to claim an event organised around one business or a group of businesses is, in some way, of wider community or charity benefit.

3. Small event

A small event is one where the total number of attendees (including both participants and spectators) does not exceed 499 people. However, if the event fits one of the criteria below, it may be classed as a major event. If these criteria are met, details will be sent to the SAGE Chair for consideration. Always contact the Events Office for guidance before proceeding.

4. Major event

A major event is an organised public activity that includes one or more of the following:

- Involves 500 or more people (including both participants and spectators)
- Is held outdoors, on public or privately owned land and/or affects the public highway
- Operates on a regular or one–off basis
- Involves risk from the activity which warrants additional assistance and intervention above what is normally expected to ensure a safe and successful event

Major events require substantial forward planning and consultation with SAGE.

Creative events and activities

One of the great advantages of libraries as safe, trusted and inclusive spaces is that they can play host to a vast range of traditional and non-traditional activities which help both to drive repeat use of the library and to engage with new audiences.

Examples of creative events and activities taking place in public library authorities across the UK include:

Code clubs

Board games

'Makerspaces'

Reading sessions
(such as Drag Queen Storytime)

Musical performances

Concerts

Plays

Screenings of films and TV

Live screenings of theatrical performances

Activities aimed at toddlers and young children (such as Rhymetime)

Activities aimed at combating social isolation (such as 'Knit and Natter')

Walking clubs

Community activism

Gardening and green spaces activities

Business and enterprise support

Civic meetings and MP surgeries

Health screenings

Lectures and public debates

There is no 'fixed purpose' for a library in terms of events and activities – as long as an event or activity is compatible with the mission, ethos and values of the library, as well as its legal and statutory responsibilities to local communities, we should be open to it.

Planning

It is important that events and activities in the library are planned carefully and in accordance with any guidance provided either by the local authority or the library's own policies on health and safety and event management.

When planning an event in the library, many library staff choose to use a standard checklist which might include:

Ensuring that the theme of the event is appropriate to the audience

Who is involved in leading/delivering/supporting the event

Any potential conflicts with pre-existing planned events

Dates/times that are appropriate to the needs of your audience

Booking an appropriate room/space/facility

Any requirements for AV and equipment

Catering arrangements

Post-event follow-up

In order to ensure that events and activities are safe, welcoming and inclusive, it is important to ensure both that sufficient staff are on hand to support attendees and that everyone involved is aware of the library's policies for equality, diversity and inclusion (and that where possible they are trained in the practical skills required by these policies).

Risk assessment

When developing plans for an event or activity, it is important to carry out a proportionate risk assessment which includes identifying potential risks, and putting in place appropriate controls to minimise these risks.

Factors which you might want to consider in your risk assessment include:

Whether the audience includes children (particularly very young children) and young people

Whether there are going to be external speakers/presenters/session leads

Whether the subject matter of the event is likely to be controversial to some audiences

Whether the venue is appropriately equipped for the size/nature of the event or activity

Whether the event requires specialist equipment

Whether the event is likely to present any specific restrictions on accessibility

For each risk, librarians, library staff or decision-makers should agree and implement controls which mitigate that risk, including taking professional advice where appropriate.

Some events will carry a greater risk – either of potential harm to participants or of protest from specific lobby or campaign groups. The library should consider these extended risks carefully and ensure that appropriate plans have been put in place to mitigate them – for example by agreeing a planned response with the local authority, communications teams or emergency services.

When considering these extended risks and potential strategies to mitigate them, it is helpful to share knowledge and insight with other library professionals. Networks such as the CILIP Public and Mobile Libraries Group and Libraries Connected can provide an important source of insight, experience and expertise in managing difficult situations arising from events or activities in the library.

Promotion

Library programmes have increasingly to compete with a wide range of events, activities and attractions. Library services have responded by taking a more proactive, creative and dynamic approach to the promotion of their public programmes.

A high–quality, professional and attractive approach to promoting events and activities is a core part of ensuring that they are accessible and relevant to the widest possible audience. It is invaluable to seek professional expertise and advice on establishing a clear brand, effective marketing and promotional channels for the library's offer.

When developing a welcoming and inclusive promotional campaign for library events and activities, it is helpful to consider:

Factor	Description
Audience	**Who are the intended audience for the event? Are they characterised by:** • Age • Demographic • Location • Language Does your intended audience have any specific requirements – such as being able to access information in a second language?
Message	**What do you want the audience to know about the event or activity?** Is it compelling to your intended participants and expressed in language that will: a) Capture and hold their attention b) Simply and easily communicate the key information about how to book/attend/participate When it comes to messaging, there is a careful balance between keeping things very short and accessible, and ensuring that you are providing all the necessary information to enable them to participate. Consider as well that some people won't feel naturally 'welcome' in the library space – particularly if they haven't engaged with libraries before. It can be helpful to explicitly articulate that people are welcome and can feel safe and included in your proposed event.
Channel/ platform	**Where is your intended audience most likely to see/engage with your message?** There's no point sending the message out via social media if your audience is digitally disengaged. Consider where your audience normally engages with information and ensure that your message is embedded into those channels or platforms.
Call–to- action	**What do you want your audience to do as a result of engaging with your communications?** The best message in the right place won't help engage your audience if they aren't clear on what to do about it. When developing your call to action, consider how you can lower or minimise the actual or perceived barriers people may feel when considering whether to attend. Is booking absolutely essential, for example, or can the event be open for people to drop in? If booking is essential, does it have to be online for people who don't feel comfortable filling in online forms?
Metrics	**How will you know if your communications have been effective?** It can be really helpful to ask participants (at the event or afterwards if they are happy to be contacted): a) How they heard about the event b) Whether they found it easy to participate c) What would have made it easier for them By following up and asking these questions, the library can improve its messaging and public engagement incrementally over time.

Safe spaces

Some people feel more confident than others in engaging with public events and activities, and some themes or topics can include difficult, personal or distressing discussions which people may not feel comfortable having in a completely open forum.

While libraries should aspire to create events that are universally welcoming, safe and inclusive, it is also important to recognise that in some situations, a more targeted approach is the best way to achieve this outcome. In these cases, it is appropriate for the library to create events or activities which act as 'safe spaces' for specific groups or audiences, particularly for groups of people who have been marginalised as a result of some aspect of their heritage, identity, circumstances or protected characteristics.

This approach might take, for example, the form of a discussion group for a specific audience or demographic. In these cases, the library ought to ensure that the promotion of the event or activity clearly states that it is targeted to a specific audience or audiences and the basis on which that audience will be identified.

The library needs to ensure that events or activities that are focused in this way are compatible with their published policies and professional ethics, and that other audiences are not being excluded arbitrarily.

It is important to ensure that library staff (and any other staff involved in the activity) are trained in how to create safe and inclusive spaces where people feel able to express themselves freely. Library staff themselves may also need additional support from managers to ensure that they feel confident in managing inclusive discussions.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a vital part of improving and developing a library's public programming – whether in a public library, school or prison library. It provides opportunities to learn from both successes and challenges, and can also help to gauge the extent to which participants felt the library was successful in delivering a safe, welcoming and inclusive event or activity.

There are many different approaches to evaluation. However, it can be helpful to think about it in three distinct 'stages':

- In advance
- On the day
- After the event

The table below sets out some key considerations at each stage:

Stage	Consideration
In advance	**The more clearly the intended outcomes of the event or activity are articulated, the easier it will be to assess the extent to which they have been met.** It is useful to set out a series of SMART objectives for the event or activity, including: • The quality criterion or metric • A means of measuring success in achieving this metric • The data or information source this will draw on When it comes to events designed to meet the needs of specific audiences or groups, or to metrics which address specific protected characteristics, it is always advisable to work with the community or with people with lived experience when shaping these metrics.
On the day	**While staff are often busy running the event itself, this is also a key opportunity to capture formal and informal data about the event or activity which can be fed back into evaluation afterwards.** Some options to consider include: • Giving event staff notebooks and asking them to keep a quick note of issues raised or comments provided by participants • Providing some physical means for participants to provide feedback, including, for example, stickers on a 'thumbs up/down' chart, or a comment book • Publicising an email address or social media handle through which feedback can be provided
After the event	**After the event, it is important for the whole team to come together to review how the event or activity went, what went well/less well and the extent to which the objectives for the event were achieved.** It can be helpful for senior managers to review all formal and informal feedback and to agree any actions or steps needed to address any concerns raised.

Providing safe, welcoming and inclusive events and activities in the library is a learning process, and a commitment to ongoing evaluation (particularly where this is matched by a commitment to implementing recommendations and changes) gives participants and service users reassurance that the library is considering their needs.

Managing challenge

When considering how best to manage challenges to library services, it is always helpful to work with the governing institution – whether that is a local authority, school board or prison governor – to ensure that the library is aligned to the overall approach to crisis management and communications.

The following guidance is intended to help librarians, library staff and decision-makers understand the legal status of protest and disruption, as well as some guidance on effective crisis communications.

Protest and disruption

Protest and disruption have become increasingly prevalent in the public realm, as people seek to promote specific agendas, interests or beliefs and to ensure that they are reflected in the conduct of public services including libraries.

Every individual, regardless of cause, has the right to demonstrate, march or protest. While this right is not set out in one specific law, it is covered by the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly which are protected under articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights. These rights were incorporated into British law by the Human Rights Act.

It is important to be aware of the qualifications and limitations on the right to protest in England and Wales, which have been set out in the Public Order Act 1986 (and subsequent amendments) and more recently in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act (PCSC).

There is also a common law offence in England and Wales of 'breach of the peace'. An offence of the same name exists separately in Scotland, where it is also a statutory offence under Section 38 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010. Northern Ireland has its own legislation governing protests – the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which includes conditions that can be imposed on public processions.

Any intervention by the police or authorities to limit the right to protest must be necessary, proportionate and in service of one or more of the following:

In the interest of national security or public safety

To prevent disorder or crime

To protect health or morals

To protect others' rights and freedoms

Librarians, library staff and decision-makers should liaise with the local authority and, where appropriate, the emergency services to understand the limitations on peaceful protest and when authorities such as the police can intervene to prevent disruption to library services.

Library staff or decision-makers may find it helpful to be added to the Major Incident Duty Officer rota of their Council, ensuring that they are kept informed of potential disorder and/or planned protests which might impact on the library (and that they can in turn alert managers to potential issues).

The JESIP website provides useful information on established standards for joint working between emergency services, and it may be helpful for library staff to make themselves aware of these provisions (https://www.jesip.org.uk).

In many cases, the local authority will have established, or will be considering the establishment of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) or similar protections introduced under new legislation since the 2019 coronavirus pandemic.

The Local Government Association guidance, *Public spaces protection orders: Guidance for Councils*,[10] provides a valuable and comprehensive overview of what PSPOs are and how they can be used to prevent disruption to public spaces. Librarians, library staff and decision-makers may wish to consider speaking with their Council or local police services about these orders and their implications for continuity of service.

When considering the potential risk of disruption due to protests or demonstrations, the library should consider the safety, security and wellbeing of library users and staff as absolutely paramount. In certain circumstances, this may include the necessity of closing branches or restricting access to services until a disruption or threat is resolved.

10. *Public Spaces Protection Orders: A guide for Councils*, Local Government Association

> Every individual, regardless of cause, has the right to demonstrate, march or protest.

Crisis communications

Librarians, library staff and decision-makers are working in a time of heightened tension in the public realm. With so many platforms and channels for communications, there is a significantly increased reputational risk associated with the provision of public services.

It is important for the library service to work with the local authority, to ensure that librarians, library staff and decision-makers are aware of the Council's policy and plans for crisis communications. The local authority's communications team are likely to have stronger and more immediate connections with other key departments and services across the authority and with elected members.

Crisis communications commonly follow a standard pattern or template, comprising a series of steps:

Activity	Description
Assess/escalate	It isn't always clear when a crisis is emerging, nor the reputational risk it presents. Frontline staff should be aware of the process of escalating concerns to managers, and managers should be equipped to assess the situation, formulate a plan and put it into action.
Manage communications flow	A small issue can rapidly become a big one where you have multiple people weighing in on an issue, or seeking to engage with criticism via multiple platforms, channels and accounts. It is almost always best to establish a single point of contact through which all communications relating to the issue can be directed. This should be a person with the seniority and experience to manage multiple internal and external stakeholders, and to make decisions about the flow of information as the situation develops.
Agree/publish key messages	Crises often thrive on dialogue – which creates the risk of further issues emerging. It is commonly advisable either to have a published position ready in advance (see previous sections) or to establish a short, simple and factual statement which can be made publicly available. A published statement can be used to direct media and other external enquiries without requiring library staff to formulate responses on their own. When formulating a statement, it is helpful to remember that critics seldom respond well to being told that they are wrong, particularly in online environments. It is often best to acknowledge the criticism without validating it, and to indicate that the library will reflect on the feedback.
Engage and defuse	If a situation persists beyond the initial published statement and engagement, it can be helpful to identify the key people driving the criticism, and to engage with them in order to take their concerns offline, where they can be dealt with on a calmer and more informed basis. It is important to be aware that any communications with vocal critics can be and often are shared with a wider community as proof of validation and engagement. The decision-makers involved should always consider carefully whether the benefit of engagement is worth the potential cost of legitimising critics within their own social community.

Reassure your team	Many individual library staff are active users of social media, and can often find themselves compromised when their employer is being criticised online – particularly if the criticism suggests that the library's actions have been at odds with their own personal values. It is important to remember to reassure staff teams during times of criticism, to clarify or correct any misinformation surrounding the situation and to let them know what is being done to address the situation in future.
Consider potential harms	Some forms of media crisis and criticism are likely to fall hardest on members of your team who themselves may have protected characteristics or lived experience which mean that they feel particularly vulnerable or exposed by specific forms of protest. It is important for managers and library leaders to have given due consideration to the heightened potential for harm to these staff, and to develop procedures for ensuring their safety and wellbeing.
Limit fallout	Crisis communications can often be an exercise in limiting the damage from the immediate reaction to an issue, in order to create time and space to examine the issue and respond on a more considered basis. It is important to note that online criticism often dissipates after a few days, so it is key not to re–ignite it, for example by publishing a defensive statement which seeks to justify the library's position. It is valuable in the days and weeks after a reputational issue has arisen either to limit other communications such as launches or announcements or to bring forward 'good news' which helps online critique to dissipate more quickly.
Monitor	As noted above, criticism often follows a natural 'curve' whereby it is particularly acute at the beginning and then gradually dissipates. However, a particular feature of online environments – especially social platforms – is that an issue can 'cross platforms' and re–ignite as it finds a new audience via a new channel. It is important to monitor online traffic to ensure that the library knows when an issue has resurfaced in a different form or on a different platform.
Review and improve	All online criticism is an opportunity to learn and to improve. Libraries play a vital role in serving the whole community, and so while the key focus with crisis communications is to minimise the damage of an initial online 'storm', it is important not to lose the opportunity to learn from it. Once the criticism has subsided, it is valuable for senior managers to review the situation. What happened and why? What could the library change as a result? How would the library handle similar issues differently in future? These 'lessons learned' can be hugely valuable in dealing with future issues.

Social media

It is beyond the scope of this guidance to address the appropriate management of social media by librarians, library staff and decision–makers. Social media can present a unique opportunity to connect with new and existing audiences and to deepen understanding and engagement. At the same time, it can be a highly challenging and polarised environment which presents clear reputational risks to the library and its governing body.

Guidance is available elsewhere on this topic, and many of the themes addressed here should be read in conjunction with this.

13 Legal references

The following legal instruments are cited or referenced in this guide:

Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75

Equality Act 2010
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

Public Sector Equality Duty (s.149 of the Equality Act 2010)
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty

Prison Rules 1999
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/728/contents/made

Young Offender Institution Rules 2000
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2000/3371/contents/made

Data Protection Act 2018
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted

Human Rights Act 1998
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents

Public Order Act 1986
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/64

Religious and Racial Hatred Act 2006
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/1/contents

Terrorism Act 2006
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/11/contents

Obscene Publications Act 1959
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/7-8/66/contents

Crime and Disorder Act 1998
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/contents

Sentencing Act 2020 (Section 66)
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/17/section/66

2007 Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/contents

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/32/contents/enacted

Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 (Section 38)
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/13/section/38

Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1987/463/contents

Public Space Protection Order
https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/10.21%20PSPO%20guidance_06_1.pdf

At the time of writing, **'Martyn's Law'** is currently undergoing Parliamentary scrutiny. If enacted, this law will seek to provide clear guidance on the steps that publicly accessible venues will need to take to protect the public from terrorist attacks. More information is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/news/martyns-law-progresses-as-government-publishes-draft-legislation.

14 Further reading

The following sources may also be helpful as a source of reference to the topics covered in this guide:

- CILIP provides a wide range of guidelines, publications and training materials relating to the topics discussed here. For further information and to find out about courses and other support from CILIP visit https://www.cilip.org.uk/general/custom.asp?page=TrainingandCPD

- Libraries Connected provides a wide range of resources, case studies and training which can support public librarians, library staff and decision-makers when managing safe and inclusive library services. See http://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/ for details.

- The Local Government Association provides a comprehensive set of resources, articles, case studies and guidance material, primarily aimed at councillors. The guide, *Delivering local solutions for public library services*, includes helpful guidance on access, location and other aspects of service provision. See https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/delivering-local-solutions-public-library-services

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