

Information Governance
People, Policy and Performance

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Our ref: FOI/ E34089

Ask for: Information Governance

Date: 28.02.2020

Tel: 020 8430 2000

Email:

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Dear Mr Barnard,

Request for Information: Freedom of Information Act 2000
Please quote our reference: E34089
Subject: Library Book Procurement Processes

We write with regard to your recent enquiry for information held by the Council under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We trust that the information provided is satisfactory. For future reference we publish information on our website, including our Publication Scheme. It is important to note that under the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 the Council asks not to receive unsolicited marketing communication.

Request and Response

1. Details of documents and processes relevant to the 'evidence based stock management' since the evidence is likely to be based on existing stock.

Evidence Based Stock Management (EBSM) has been used in public libraries for over 21 years and is used to predict how current and forthcoming titles will perform. EBSM uses six Key Performance Indicators that describe what a customer expects of a high performing library, with stock classified in one or more of the following categories: Popular Author, Popular Subject, Overstocked & Understocked, Grubby and Dead.

Newham Libraries uses collectionHQ (cHQ) to provide our EBSM data. cHQ are the world's leading library EBSM provider and manages data for more than 220 million items in 8,000 public library branches in the UK, Europe, U.S.A, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Part of this success is that cHQ's EBSM is based on proven methodology and uses the same machine learning methods that drive Apple's Siri, Google's Assistant and the recommendation engines at Netflix and Amazon.

collectionHQ uses data taken directly from our library management system and we set the parameters based on approximately 200 adjustable settings and targets. This then delivers performance information and up to 100 action plans that support stock purchase, management and development. As all of this is online, there is no hard copy documentation.

More detailed information can be found online at <https://www.collectionhq.com/>

A downloadable brochure is also downloadable at: https://www.collectionhq.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/collectionHQ_Trifold_brochure.pdf

2. Details of documents and processes relevant to staff stock knowledge

Staff training on EBSM and how to action all the cHQ reports is available online via the cHQ website. The training consists of webinars, presentations, videos, and printable summaries for every action plan. The supplier also delivers training in the library twice per year and there is an annual seminar which library authorities across the UK attend to learn about updates and share good practice.

The stock team delivers training sessions to front line staff to increase knowledge of stock and how to promote it and works with suppliers to help deliver training to front line staff and library users to promote the range of eBook and eAudio services we provide. A member of the stock team attends the monthly meeting of front line managers to both cascade stock information, update on new stock initiatives and promotions and as importantly to receive feedback from front line managers and via them the views of front line staff.

Newham is a member of The Libraries Consortium (TLC), previously known as the London Libraries Consortium (LLC) and a member of the team attends quarterly TLC Stock Group meetings with other stock managers from the consortium. These meetings allow stock managers to share best practice, learn from each other, raise and discuss known issues and agree working practices that require all consortium libraries to work to the same set of rules. In addition to this other library staff attend strategy, board and user groups for the TLC ensuring that we are informed about latest library developments.

All information gained from the above increases knowledge of stock and supports the promotion of stock.

Front line staff receive training to increase their skills and confidence in promoting books and reading using a mix of online learning and practical work tasks in their own libraries. This training is delivered by Opening the Book who have delivered this training to libraries across the country.

Libraries connected also provide a number of online library skills courses that are available for all staff to use.

We work with UK wide agencies to promote books and reading including: The Reading Agency (various Books on Prescription schemes, Reading Friends, 6 Book Challenge, Summer Reading Challenge and Winter Reading Challenge) and have worked with them to choose The Reading Agency's booklist for the 2020 Summer Reading Challenge; Libraries Connected for a variety of initiatives including BBC Year of the Novel, where we are one of only five authorities in the UK chosen to deliver one of the large activities "to introduce reading and libraries to new and diverse audiences particularly in areas of deprivation and to groups who face barriers to accessing and engaging with reading and libraries" and on this project we will be working with teenage refugees; and Booktrust for engagement with Under 5s.

London Libraries is the regional body of Libraries Connected and Newham are an active member and currently hold the position of chair. Through London Libraries we receive regular updates on national book and stock promotions from the London regional representative to the Libraries Connected Reading Offer group (there are similar representatives for the other universal offers) and take part in regional initiatives. There is also an annual staff conference where library staff from across London share good practice and learn together. This year the conference will be held in Stratford.

Staff also receive training in other areas from Library development officers, partners or commissioned agencies, e.g. How to deliver sessions to school classes, Under 5's storytelling and these include the stock knowledge required to successfully deliver these sessions and give suggestions on appropriate books for each section. Where we receive grant funding for projects, this generally includes an element of staff training – for instance, the library development officers recently received training from the BBC in connection with the Year of the Novel. We also subscribe to the Bookseller and this is available for staff to read, as in addition to having charts, it is also the prime resource for current information about books, authors and reading. We have a good working relationship with a number of authors and publishers and have a number of author events throughout the year.

3. Details of selection by the third party contractor whom supplies all new and rotated book stock in the libraries.

There are only three main library stock suppliers in the UK who have the capacity to supply public libraries and these are:

Askews & Holts – Adult and Children's stock
Bertrams – Adult and Children's stock
Peters – Children's stock

There are additional suppliers for more specialised stock such as Large Print, Audiobooks, ESOL, Reference and community language stock. We purchase local history books from Newham Bookshop.

Newham is currently part of the London Libraries Stock Consortium comprising six London Library Authorities with Askews & Holts providing Adult stock and DVDs, Peters providing Children's stock and Proquest providing reference stock. This stock contract ends on 31st March 2020. From 1st April, we will purchase stock via the CBC Stock Consortium, a consortium of 58 UK library authorities.

For community languages we use Star Books and Books Asia and purchase the 5 other United Nations official languages (French, Russian, Chinese, Arabic and Spanish) as well as every language which is spoken by 2% or more of Newham residents (based on the last census).

Approximately 85% of book stock is purchased via the specifications that we produce with EBSM whilst 15% is chosen by the stock team and purchased by title / genre / subject.

We subscribe to Bookseller the national trade magazine for the book trade including publishers, booksellers, libraries etc. This weekly magazine contains 8 different bestseller lists varying from Top 10 (titles from small publishers, YA titles etc.), to Top 50 (by sales). We check these lists to ensure our contracted suppliers have supplied or are on order and if not we purchase these to ensure we have all titles in the Top 50 Bestselling books as these are what the public is buying/reading. As part of our subscription to The Bookseller, we also receive two annual magazines; one for Adult stock and the other for Children's stock; and these highlight the major book releases for the year so we are aware of current publishing trends.

We deliver a comprehensive stock promotion in all libraries covering the major book prizes as well as stock to support library, local and national initiatives. This stock is usually chosen by the library development officers and the stock team, who work together to compile book lists. In addition local libraries also put on promotions supporting their local programmes and request specific titles or genres / themes that they require. We purchase for all reservations where there are more than 4 reservations per title or where the request for stock would enhance our collection in line with our stock policy. We also welcome suggestions for purchase and again we will make a decision on those suggestions based on the stock policy.

We meet with our Stock suppliers on a regular basis to discuss and review their performance against the targets set for them, and allow discussion of any changes on either side that that might affect stock supply.

Current lack of challenging fiction, Kafka Orwell for example, challenging SF, PK Dick, Vonnegut, any philosophy other than superficial and self help, Sartre, Russell, political science, Wolff, Rawls, real computer science books (not XXX for Dummies) etc..

Newham is part of The Libraries Consortium TLC a consortium of 17 (mainly) London boroughs. The consortium share books and the public library catalogue, and Newham users can both reserve and borrow books consortiums stock without charge. This gives Newham Library Service users access to over 6 million books, a much greater number than Newham would be able to offer if it was a single authority.

A high level search of the Library Catalogue for the authors / search terms named in the request has returned

<u>Author</u>	<u>Number of titles available from the consortium</u> (note number of copies will be larger than the number of titles)
Franz Kafka	27
George Orwell	17
P. K. Dick	58
Kurt Vonnegut	25
Jean-Paul Sartre	40
Russell Bertrand	56
Gene Wolfe	16
John Rawls	1

NB: Although John Rawls is not listed as an understocked author in cHQ, we will purchase some extra titles to see if this increases the interest in this author's work.

<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Records</u>
Philosophy	356
Political Science	578
Computer Science	138
Science Fiction	4,396

NB: using the search terms in the FOI and the result above reflects this, searching using other subject terms eg Computers, IT, ICT, will change the number of records found.

Please note our responses are given in relation to our hard copy stock, however, we also provide a wide range of books in eBook and eAudio format.

If you require any further information or are not happy with our response please do not hesitate to contact a member of our team on (020) 8430 2000 or email us at information.governance@newham.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Information Governance
Newham Council