

## POLICY GUIDELINES ON THE DISPLAY OF POSTERS AND NOTICES IN BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET LIBRARIES

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Libraries are community areas, visited by large numbers of people and in great demand as locations for the mounting of displays, posters, notices and distribution of information and publicity material.

The mission statement of the Library Service is: 'To enrich and empower every individual and community throughout their lives by offering access to resources for information, learning and enjoyment.

With this statement in mind, the Library Service therefore supports and encourages access to information for all, enabling individuals to make informed decisions.

### **1. ACCEPTABILITY**

Subject to the availability of space, reasonable standard of physical presentation, reasonable time for material to be displayed and the conditions detailed below, Bath and North East Somerset Libraries will accept, posters and leaflets in libraries for no charge.

#### 1. General criteria for all material displayed

- a) Material should be legal, accurate and informative
- b) Material should be neatly and attractively presented
- c) Posters should not be larger than A4. Larger posters will only be displayed if space permits.
- d) The language used in the material should be clear and not contain words likely to cause offence.
- e) Material should be non-sexist and non-racist in nature
- f) Material should not promote causes at variance with published Bath and North-East Somerset Council policies or decisions e.g. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- g) All displayed items are for events or information within Bath & North East Somerset

The Library service cannot be held responsible if posters are stolen or

defaced. Defaced posters will be removed.

2. Publications which should be displayed

- a) Material issued which are of a statutory or official nature. Some of these may be accompanied by a form to be signed and returned certifying that the notice was displayed on a certain date and was kept on display for the time required.
- b) Material issued by the Council or local Town and Parish Councils

3. Publications which may be displayed if space permits (priority being given to local material)

- a) Material of an educational nature – classes, courses, lectures, exhibitions etc, regardless of whether or not these are profit making. Material on residential courses and activity holidays may be displayed, but only if tuition or instruction is involved and not if the primary object is leisure.

Subjects such as relaxation and alternative therapies are acceptable if classes are offered and not consultations.

- b) Tourist information – local attractions etc, regardless of whether or not these are profit making
- c) Material of a cultural nature (in the broadest sense of the word) or of a community nature, e.g. Theatre, music, art, craft, museums, houses etc.

Material dealing with any social, sporting or other local events or activities. This can include meetings, events, talks, workshops, shows, and exhibitions.

**For both of these, It does not matter whether the event is profit making (e.g. jumble sale), or what the nature of the organising group is (e.g. talk by anti-hunting group), as long as the aim of the material is solely to advertise a particular event, it may be accepted.**

- d) The advertising of job vacancies is permitted for volunteer and Bath and North-East Somerset Council posts and for posts advertised on officially sanctioned Jobcentre boards only
- e) Material issued by other national/local bodies or agencies such as:
  - Avon and Somerset Constabulary
  - Regional Health Authorities
  - Local Hospitals
  - OFWAT, OFTEL and other consumer watchdog bodies
  - Water authorities
  - Electricity and Gas organisations (informative material only – not advertising)
  - Citizen's Advice Bureau
  - Training and Enterprise Councils
  - Local Health and Welfare organisations

- Other local authorities
- f) Materials from charities raising awareness or calling for voluntary help, but not requesting donations unless linked to an event, e.g. Jumble Sale (see clause 4c)

#### 4. Publications which should not be displayed

Library managers should always obtain full details of any proposed posters/exhibitions in these areas in order to help them come to a decision.

- a) Anything which appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party or political cause
- b) Material issued by religious organisations which has the primary objective of converting people to a particular faith or to urge a particular course of action is not permitted. (Posters and exhibitions which just seek to inform and not convert will be permitted and well as any material which comes under section 3 above, e.g. details of regular services, meetings, poster advertising a church fete).
- c) Any material which make a direct appeal for donations of money or other goods (this includes subscriptions) unless the fundraising is linked to a particular educational, cultural or social event.
- d) Any leaflets advertising a commercial activity or product, unless falling into one of the categories of section 3 above.
- g) Any campaigning material which seeks to put across the ideas and opinions of just one side of a debate and, therefore, is likely to cause controversy. For example, whilst a poster advertising a talk by an animal rights group is acceptable, a poster stating that hunting should be abolished is not.
- h) .Any material which is campaigning or making a comment against Council decisions, past or present.
- i) Any material which is deemed capable of provoking a breach of peace.
- j) Material which is of a personal nature
- j) Anything which promotes a tobacco product
- k) Any material which is likely to cause offence to any recognisable local personalities or political figures

No petitions or canvassing are allowed on library premises

Surveys and questionnaires, other than those generated or specifically sanctioned by Bath and North East Somerset Council, are not normally permitted on library premises, but may be included in the context of a permitted display.

Representatives may staff their displays, but may not approach members of the public directly. Representatives must notify staff at their arrival and sign in before staffing their display. (Representatives will be covered by the Council's Public Liability Insurance while the library is open – please refer to the 'Libraries to Let' or ' Bath Exhibition Room' booklets for information on booking libraries outside opening hours or booking Bath Central Library's Exhibition Room. These booklets contain information on booking fees, Public Liability Insurance and Health and Safety issues)

#### 5 **Procedure to follow if poster/display is acceptable**

Where posters do not have an expiry date or obvious lifespan (eg seasonal material), staff should mark on the date when they are first displayed. The maximum display period is normally two consecutive weeks. (A shorter or longer time limit may be set at the discretion of the local librarian where felt appropriate). The person providing the poster should be informed of this procedure when the poster is accepted.

Permanent displays of posters and non-statutory or non-official notices is not permitted.

**Library staff should retain posters to which they are unable to give display space, until the date on the poster expires. The material can then be discarded unless the owner has arranged in advance for it to be collected.**

Examples of local posters may be added to a Local Studies collection. However Library staff must seek the authority/consent of the poster provider before adding the poster to permanent stock.

#### Responsibility statement

All displays and posters are required to show details of the person or organisation responsible for mounting it, together with contact details through which the press and public may contact the organiser direct.

Posters and leaflets may only be placed on display by members of library staff, except in cases where a specific noticeboard is dedicated to the use of a named organisation. Any posters or leaflets displayed in contravention of this condition may be removed for recycling or other disposal by library staff.

#### 6 **Procedure to follow when staff are unsure whether or not material is acceptable.**

If staff are uncertain about whether or not material may be displayed they should consult the relevant Library manager, who may then refer to the Libraries Customer Services Manager. If further consultation is needed, the Head of Libraries can be consulted.

#### 7. **Procedure to follow if material is unacceptable**

If a poster/display is not acceptable, staff should explain this to the person seeking to display the materials, with reference to these guidelines. If this explanation is not satisfactory, the Council's Complaints Procedure may be used, and this will be explained

to the person concerned. Staff may suggest that alternative material could be submitted for consideration

## **2. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **1. Indecent Displays (Control) Act of 1981**

Staff should be aware of the existence of the Indecent Displays (Control) Act of 1981 (see Appendix 1) The law makes it an offence to display public material which may cause offence, is indecent or obscene

### **2 Local Government Act, 1986 Section 2**

**Political material.** Under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986, Local Authorities are prevented from publishing material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party.

Newsletters and manifestos should be collected for information files and Local Studies Collections. Details of the 'Surgeries' of Local Councillors and MPs and the local addresses and other contact details of political parties may be displayed.

At election time no notices relating to political activity may be displayed for the period (normally three weeks) including 'Surgeries' and lists of MP's etc that are on display, from the date on which nominations close until the day after polling takes place.

The embargo applies to Parliamentary, European, County, District/City/Unitary and Parish/Town Council elections.

### **2. Protection of Children**

This guideline has been received from OFSTED; If any organisations i.e. Play Groups, want to display material which includes pictures of children, and then permission must have been obtained from parents/guardians first. Staff must check that this permission has been received.

## **3. SMALL ADVERTISEMENTS**

- a) As part of their community services, library staff may decide to display small advertisements for local trades people and service providers and for private individuals similar to those found in newsagents. A clearly labelled board should be provided and an appropriate charge made comparable to that made by local newsagents. The emphasis should be on the provision of services by local people and may include small traders, translating, typing, music and language lessons, etc.
- b) No advertisement for any services to do with children or young people can be accepted unless the provider is registered as appropriate for the purpose under the Children Act 1989.

c) A disclaimer must be displayed on each board with the following wording:

“PLEASE NOTE the display of advertisements here does not mean that the services and facilities offered have been vetted, approved or sanctioned by Bath and North-East Somerset Council. The Council will not accept responsibility for any loss, damage, death and personal injury you suffer as a result of employing a person who advertises here”

### **3. GENERAL**

1. Unless agreed beforehand, no additional work should devolve on library staff (except the raising of invoices) in connection with the erection and dismantling of exhibitions and displays.

PLEASE REFER TO THE Libraries hire document for terms and conditions to hire space for exhibitions and for sale

Appendix 1:

Excerpt from:

#### **Indecent Displays (Control) Act 1981**

##### **1. Indecent displays**

- If any indecent matter is publicly displayed the person making the display and any person causing or permitting the display to be made shall be guilty of an offence.
- Any matter which is displayed in or so as to be visible from any public place shall, for the purposes of this section be deemed to be publicly displayed.
- In subsection of the above, “public place”, in relation to the display of any matter, means any place to which the public have or are permitted to have access (whether on payment or otherwise) while that matter is displayed except:

(a) a place to which the public are permitted to have access only on payment which is or includes payment for that display;

or

(b) a shop or any part of a shop to which the public can only gain access by passing beyond an adequate warning notice;

But the exclusions contained in paragraphs (a) and (b) above shall only apply where persons under the age of 18 years are not permitted to enter while the display in question is continuing