

Oxfordshire County Council

Display Policy in Libraries

For the use of noticeboards, display space, posters, community exhibitions & information stands

Libraries are neutral spaces and this policy enables customers to comply with a policy that both supports being a neutral space and provides an environment for the community to obtain ideas and information through its display and noticeboard facilities.

The purpose of this policy is to provide information to the public and organisations as to how to make best use of the library service to support the promotion of educational, cultural and social activities in Oxfordshire communities, and provide information of general interest and benefit to the public.

1. Acceptance of material

Organisations should be made aware that we reserve the right to remove or refuse to accept any material that is considered to be illegal, inflammatory or offensive.

The Library Service's decision is final regarding acceptance of material for display.

Formal complaints can be directed to a member of the Library Service Operations Management Team or the formal Complaints procedure on the Oxfordshire County Council website www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

2. Prioritisation of material

Posters and leaflets should be displayed according to the following priorities and criteria, giving priority firstly by the body producing it and by its subject:

1. Library Service, Cultural Services;
2. Oxfordshire County Council, including statutory notices such as planning applications
3. Oxfordshire District Councils including Oxford City Council
4. Town and Parish Councils
5. Practical local information
6. Local community events
7. Local educational courses
8. Local statutory bodies – public services such as police, health authorities
9. National government; committees and regulators/ombudsmen

Thereafter, priority is given regarding the geographical location:

1. The immediate area local to each service point
2. Oxfordshire
3. Regional – Thames Valley and authorities nearest to each service point
4. National

Finally, priority will always be given to display space for

1. Cultural events
2. Recreational & leisure activities
3. Material from commercial providers such as theatres, cinemas, art galleries, also writing and cultural competitions.
4. Craft and book fair information will also be displayed as these are regarded as local events.

3. Working with community groups

Libraries welcome and actively encourage community groups and all Oxfordshire council services to promote services through Information Drop-Ins which relate to the local community eg. Winter Warmth, Mental Health services.

Such groups should ensure that they

- * promote free courses only
- * are legitimate and offer a local service
- * do not sell products in the library

4. Private individual tuition

Details of private tutors to individuals are not displayed on noticeboards or kept in a manual file. This may include yoga teachers, music tutors, art teachers and the like.

The Oxfordshire County Council Music Service may advertise tuition services.

5. Commercial material

Libraries will not display material that overtly promotes commercial products, unless it is part of a joint sponsorship agreement with the County Council or is endorsed by the Council. Crafts being sold on behalf of/ in aid of charities is considered commercial.

Job vacancies – only County Council vacancies and details of voluntary posts (such as for charities) may be displayed.

Questionnaires, petitions and surveys – are excluded unless they are on behalf of the Library Service or other County Council services.

Posters asking for people to participate in local medical trials may be displayed.

6. Political parties and affiliated organisations

The Library Service is a neutral space and will not display material that directly promotes political causes. Staff must take particular care during national and local election campaigns.

Posters advertising anything politically related must not be displayed during election campaigns (commonly known as ‘Purdah’) but may be displayed under the heading of local events at all other times.

Posters advertising public meetings which will be addressed by political candidates or MPs may be displayed.

Local politicians and MPs may advertise their constituency/ward surgeries in libraries and on occasion may be permitted to use the library as a venue for their surgery – this is regarded as a community event.

7. Religion

The Library Service is a neutral space and will not display material that directly promotes religious causes. Posters advertising public meetings which will be addressed by religious representatives may be displayed.

Sales of work in church premises may be displayed as they are community events.

8. Charities

Material appealing for direct fundraising, appeals and collections will not be displayed.

Direct fundraising in libraries is acceptable if the charity has been endorsed by the County Council (eg Children In Need, Poppy Appeal, Macmillan Coffee Morning)

Posters about jumble sales and similar activities to be held in aid of charities may be displayed as these are regarded as community events.

Appeals for volunteers may be displayed.

9. Displays by campaigning organisations

The Library Service is a neutral space but these is role for libraries to enable the community to discuss and debate matters. On occasion, space can be given to a legitimate pressure group to explain its views. As such, displays (usually in the form of exhibition boards) from all such organisations are accepted.

Organisations need to appreciate that space and time will be made available for a display of an opposing view by any group or individual should it be requested.

10. Content and appearance of material

1. It must be within the law.

All illegal, inflammatory or offensive material will be excluded and staff have the right to refuse display.

2. It must include contact details and make clear who has published the information.

3. Posters for noticeboards only should be A4 size or smaller.

A3 posters will only be accepted for County Council services and for exhibitions or information stands

11. Length of display

When material is not time limited, posters and leaflets may be removed after 3 weeks.

There can be no guarantee as to the length of time that information may be on display. For example, a poster promoting a series of events taking place over 6 months may be removed before the final date due to pressure of space and to make way for newer items.

All posters will be marked (dd/mm/yy) with the date of display.

12. Unauthorised material

Material must only be placed on display by library staff. Any unauthorised material will be removed.

13. Publication of policy

This display policy will be published on the library web pages and the intranet, with brief guidelines to customers about acceptable display available at all libraries upon request.

14. Impartiality

Libraries are neutral spaces and aim to be unbiased and impartial.

The County Council does not endorse or recommend anything displayed in posters, leaflets or exhibitions other than its own services.

Separate staff guidance is available.

Last reviewed: February 2019