



The Law Society

## Collection management policy

Version 1: October 2013



**Monitor and review**

This policy is scheduled for review by November 2014. This review will be conducted by the Library Services Manager.

**Authorisation**

This policy has been approved by:



Fausto Felice  
Head of Service Delivery (last checked: October 2013)

## **Contents:**

Introduction	3
Role and aims of the Law Society	3
Overall scope of the Library collection	3
Our users	3
Responsibility	3
What do we purchase?	3
Books	3
Journal and Law reports	3
Parliamentary material	4
Database and other electronic resources	4
Special collections	4
How do we purchase?	4
Donation	4
Financial control	5
Stock management	5
Printed material	5
Microform	6
Retention and disposal	6
Methods of disposal	6
Cataloguing and collection arrangement	6
Collection care	6
Handling	7
Storage	7
Exhibitions	7
Business continuity	7
Conservation	7
Preservation and binding	8

## **Introduction**

The material held by the Law Society Library forms the cornerstone of all the services provided by the library. This policy provides guidance on how the library collection is managed and the criteria to be used by the library team when making decisions about the collection. The document should act as a work instruction for staff to use when managing the collection and should be read in conjunction with the Selection Policy and Retention Policy.

## **Role and aims of the Law Society Library**

The Law Society aims to be the leading representative of the world's best legal profession, valued as a vital partner by all we serve and engage with. The Library supports the Society's members by providing access to a high quality practical legal collection. The collection is available for reference and forms the basis for all the library services including Lawdocs and our research service.

## **Overall scope of the Library collection**

Within financial limits, the Library aims to be an excellent reference resource of legal material in the English language. Our collection dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The dominant criterion for selection and retention is usefulness to present and future members of the Law Society in their professional practice, irrespective of where they may practice. Detailed selection criteria can be found in our Selection Policy.

## **Our users**

The primary users of the library services are members of the Law Society who are mainly practising solicitors and their agents. Others may use the collection at the discretion of the Library Services Manager and for a fee. The information needs of members both present and future are the main criteria for selection. The law and information about the law both current and historical are considered to be the primary need although non-law material may be required as part of their work. Library staff use their practical experience, expertise and judgement, and the methods set out below to determine the material to add to the library collection. The Library is also used by Law Society employees and Council/Committee members. Their information needs whilst carrying out work on behalf of the Law Society are also a criterion for selection.

## **Responsibility**

The Library Services Manager has overall responsibility for the management of the library collection. All Librarians are responsible for noting possible material for purchase and for informing the subject librarian who has been delegated with the responsibility of selection. Each librarian has delegated responsibility for managing a part of the overall collection. This includes organising the collection and deciding when to transfer material to storage or withdraw.

## **What do we purchase?**

### **Books**

To date, the library has only purchased books in hard copy. E-books may be considered in the future where they provide better access and value for money for the library and our users.

### **Journals and law reports**

The library has a combination of electronic and hard copy journals and law reports available for members. In some instances, titles may be held in both formats. A record of all titles to which the library has access, either paper or electronic is available via the library's online catalogue, [Knowledge Base](#).

### **Parliamentary material**

The library can access parliamentary material in a variety of formats. We have some material available as hard copy or microform as well as material such as legislation which is also available via the government websites and through our subscription databases.

### **Databases and other electronic resources**

The library aims to increase the digital resources available to members within the library. Current digital resources are reviewed annually ensure value for money and relevance. Any new digital services are closely reviewed prior to purchase. Networked resources are preferable to standalone datasets.

### **Special collections**

Some of the material from the Society's Special collections were acquired at a time when the Society acted more along the lines of a 'club' rather than its current position as the representative for solicitors profession in England and Wales. Over time, the library has sought to reduce the overall size of its collection by disposing through donation or sale of the non-legal aspects of its collection.

The Library Services Manager has overall responsibility the library's Special collections, including the Law Society's Corporate Archive.

These collections include:

- All material printed prior to 1901,
- All manuscripts held within the library collections
- All material within the Law Society's Corporate Archive collection, including Law Society publications and architectural drawings.

Printed material for the Special collections is acquired primarily through donation. The library no longer accepts material on deposit.

### **How do we purchase?**

Books are ordered 'on approval' wherever possible unless ordering new editions of well used favourites. Material is ordered monthly to arrive soon after publication although ordering may be delayed should the librarian wish to investigate level of demand from users.

Traditional and emotional considerations such as holding all previous editions are of minor importance. Other factors which are taken into account in specific subject areas are set out in the Selection Policy.

Priority is given to well established or tried and tested works as well as to material where there is evidence of demand from a significant number of users. Practical material on the current law of England, Wales and the European Union is given precedence over laws of UK smaller jurisdictions, historical and academic works and

non-legal material.

### **Donation**

The library is grateful to those who have made donations and offer unsolicited material to the library. Many of the items accepted would not otherwise be obtained by the library and these provide a valuable contribution to our collection and the resources we are able to make available to our members.

All donations are evaluated for condition and relevance to the Library's collections before being added to stock. Ownership is transferred to the Library on acceptance of a donation.

Any accepted donations will be interfiled with other material and will not be retained as a discrete collection. The Library reserves the right to refuse donations and dispose of items, either at time of receipt or subsequently. Disposal may be by sale, offered to an alternative institution or by disposal in an environmentally responsible manner.

### **Financial control**

The library is committed to rigorous financial monitoring and reporting of both expenditure and income. All expenditure and income is reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure that the library is spending in line with the funds available and anticipated expenditure. Fluctuations in spending patterns and unexpected increases in outgoings in any given month are discussed with the library's Management Accountants. The library aims to maximise its purchasing power by investigating alternative purchasing models for both its hard copy and electronic resources.

The library carries out a regular review of its purchasing arrangements and makes use of the Society's competitive tender procedures to ensure the most appropriate and cost effective means of purchasing the library's collection.

## **Stock management**

### **Printed material**

The Law Society library is a practitioners library and concentrates its collections on material that will be used by the practitioner; either current or future.

The Library aims to organise its printed collection using the following guidelines:

- **Main library:** The Main library carries approximately a third of the Law Society collection; consisting mainly of material of relevance to current practitioners such as current text books, open holdings of law reports and journals, legislation, Law Society publications.
- **Local stores:** less used stock but still close enough to be accessed with relative ease and speed. Material from a local store can usually be retrieved on the day of request, although certain exceptions apply eg access to the Common Room may be restricted because of an event.
- **Offsite storage:** rarely used stock but still falling within the core selection area. Mostly closed runs and early superseded textbooks. Material from an offsite store is collected monthly at the beginning of each month. Material which is

constantly requested from an offsite store may be moved to a local store when space is available.

- Special collections: Law Society's Corporate Archive collection including architectural drawings, Law Society publications and all pre-1901 material. Where possible these are kept in secured local stores.

The library continually reviews the space available within the Main library and local stores to ensure the most effective use of the available space.

### **Microform**

The Library has a significant collection of material available in microform. Suitable equipment is available for access to this collection within the main library.

### **Retention and Disposal**

The amount of space the library can utilise within the Society is finite. Within the Main library the emphasis is to maintain a working collection of practitioner material. Where material has closed, is no longer current, or has a low usage by members and staff, it may be moved to a store or identified for disposal. For more detailed information about our retention and disposal policies see our Retention Policy.

Stock for disposal will be identified by the Library staff. The Library Services Manager will be consulted for their agreement on any disposal. In some instances it is necessary to seek the approval of the Membership Board for approval to dispose of high value material or items from the Special collections.

### **Methods of disposal**

Material selected for disposal will be dealt with in one of the following ways:

- Making use of charitable organisations who accept donations of legal material
- Selling to legitimate booksellers or through auction
- Giving away to another law library or similar organisation through services such as the quarterly BIALL list
- Disposal using an environmentally responsible method

### **Cataloguing and collection arrangement**

Access to the Library's holdings records and unique indexes are available via [Knowledge Base](#), the library's online catalogue.

Cataloguing standards are defined in-house and are intended to meet the research requirements of the library staff and our members.

The textbook collection in the main library is arranged using a broad subject term approach, ie all texts on intellectual property are arranged together, shelved by author. This encourages the ability to 'browse' the collection as all material on a particular subject is located together. Journals and law reports are arranged alphabetically by title.

Textbooks held in local stores are arranged by date range and either by broad subject area as in the main library collection, or by author. Wherever possible, similar material is held in the same store, ie closed journal runs are held in the same stores.

Material held in offsite storage has no formal arrangement but is retrieved by allocated box number.

### **Collection Care**

The library's general policy is to preserve and maintain the integrity of the items contained in the Library. This includes the historical, textual, pictorial and physical content of the items and takes into account the rarity of the material, access requirements, and physical condition.

Material in original format will be preserved for as long as possible and access will be provided to original and surrogate formats as appropriate.

### **Handling**

The Library encourages correct handling of material by staff and users. Library staff will provide guidance to members on the handling of old or fragile material and will provide book supports, cushions and weights where appropriate. The photocopying of material pre-1801 is at the discretion of the library staff.

### **Storage**

The Society does not have the facility to ensure correct environmental conditions following the recommendations of BS5454, however, the Hanwell monitoring system is in place throughout the library stores including the Main library. In addition, 3 local stores have equipment to regulate the humidity. All local stores have monitors for flood and temperature/humidity which are recalibrated on a yearly basis.

### **Security**

The library has a security system in place within the main library and the entire library's collection is tagged to prevent removal. In addition, material within the Special collections is housed in secure stores with restricted access.

### **Exhibitions**

The Library Services Manager has responsibility for arranging exhibitions within the library. All exhibitions should consider the overall condition of any item prior to display and the Society's conservator will be consulted regarding the exhibition of particularly fragile material.

### **Business continuity**

The Library Services Manager is responsible for ensuring that the library has contingency plans and procedures in place to react to and recover from emergency situations that may have an adverse effect on the Library service and collections. Details of disaster preparedness are available in the Library's Emergency Plan. In addition, the Law Society has a Business Continuity Plan which would also come into play in the event of a building wide situation. These are confidential internal documents and not distributed outside the organisation.

### **Conservation**

The role of the Society's Conservator is to enable access while prolonging the life of the library collection and minimising the risk of damage. The Library also encourages routine collection maintenance to help reduce the likelihood of serious damage to its collection.



Collection maintenance includes:

- Using appropriate containers – boxes, sleeves, wrappers and similar materials to protect the collection.
- Maintaining cleanliness in the storage areas and endeavouring to clean the collection and stores on a systematic basis.

### **Preservation and binding**

Preservation treatments are undertaken to prolong the life of material by conservation, either in-house or using a specialist book binder. Where possible, conservation treatment is of minimum intervention and is sympathetic, leaving the integrity and originality of the item unchanged. Each item will be individually assessed and conservation limited to what is necessary for its long term stability and expected use.

The library regularly binds journals and law reports within its collection. It also arranges for the repair or rebinding of older material in the collection which has been damaged through use or age. As with conservation, rebinding of the older material within the collection is sympathetic to the original binding and of minimum intervention. More complicated rebinding is discussed with the Society's Conservator and the external book binders to agree the most appropriate methods.