

## **Cumbria Libraries Author Policy**

Cumbria County Council's Library Service aims to be a source of unbiased information; to educate, inform and entertain. The Library Service has a strong track record in delivering a programme of high quality author talks, as part of its wider cultural and literary offer. Author events provide cross-cutting benefits and make a contribution to agendas including:

- health and wellbeing
- developing well / living well
- a vibrant economy
- thriving communities

This policy describes the process with regard to author events, including unsolicited approaches from authors, with offers of/request for events to be held in our main libraries and staffed branches.

The policy also covers the approach to requests from authors for the Library Service to stock their books or display promotional materials.

The policy applies to all approaches, whether made by email, letter, by phone or in person, by the author, or their representative.

### **Events**

The majority of author talks commissioned by the Library Service to be hosted in our main libraries and staffed branches, are held to facilitate the delivery of specific reader development projects, or strategic priorities.

An unsolicited event is defined as when an author approaches the Library Service to offer or request an author event.

Each library is expected to pass on the details of any suggested author event to the relevant Library Development Officer, to ensure uniformity and consistency of provision, fairness and best practice. No guarantee should be given about putting on such an event, until it has been approved.

For reasons including appropriate space, staffing capacity, existing event/project commitments, and the delivery of strategic priorities, the acceptance of requests for/offers of events to be staged is not guaranteed.

When deciding on accepting an unsolicited event offer, the following criteria will be used, in addition to considerations of the above capacity:

- a. The book itself should be of an acceptable nature and format for the Library Service and be available for purchase by the Library Service's regular library supplier. (The stock selection policy provides full details on stock acquisition and management.)
- b. A sample copy of the book will be expected, if it is not already held in stock. This and other donated copies will be subject to the same criteria as other stock.

- c. Minimum event attendance will be discussed with each author prior the event and agreed on a case-by-case basis.
- d. The author accepts that the Library Service will charge for tickets to set against costs incurred in staging the event, including staffing costs.
- e. The book should sufficiently tie in with the aims and objectives of the Library Service or Cumbria County Council.
- f. Consideration will be given to authors from the area in or near the boundaries of the Library Service, or whose books are based there.

Libraries are trusted spaces, free to enter, and open to all, in which Cumbria's communities can explore and share reading, information, knowledge and culture, therefore the following events will not be staged:

- Talks with subject matter which may cause offence, or is illegal, or may be considered contentious. This includes anything which is racist, intolerant of a particular minority or anything which contains graphic or obscene images
- Political parties: there is a legal requirement under the Local Government Act 1986 which prevents local authorities from doing anything designed to "affect support for a political party"
- Pressure groups: Talks which campaign for or urge a particular course of action, or any events designed to raise support, or funds, for campaigns or causes other than those supported by Cumbria County Council
- Faith and religion: Talks which aim to convert or proselytize, cause offence to members of other religious groups, or material which emphasizes one particular faction or sect over another.
- Talks which are commercial advertising for businesses goods or services

No book or author event of any kind associated with a political viewpoint or party will be accepted during the period prior to local or national elections ("purdah").

The Library Service may offer authors, at its discretion, and if available, free space for book signings, but with no provision other than that of space. If such an offer is made, no staffing or publicity will be provided by the Library Service, and the event will not be badged as a Library Service event.

An author may hire an available room or space to use for an event, subject to availability, at the standard library room hire rate. Such events will be treated as private, and will not be promoted by the Library Service. Purdah restrictions would still apply in this context.

## **Stock**

The Library Service receives frequent requests from authors, or their representatives, to stock their books. For reasons including the wider range and balance of our stock, the relevance of subject matter, the needs of the local community, available budget, and the production quality, the acceptance of a request to stock a book is not guaranteed.

The Library Service's Stock Policy explains the basic principles and practices governing the selection, purchase, management, promotion and disposal of stock within Cumbria's libraries.

(Stock is defined as books, newspapers, periodicals and magazines in physical and digital formats, as well as maps, printed music, DVDs, music and spoken word recordings, electronic information resources, and any other print, non-print or digital formats).

## **Display Materials**

Unsolicited display material is defined as when an author (or their representative) approaches the Library Service as part of a marketing strategy, with a request for the library to display materials promoting their book.

Whilst the Library Service does display some book promotional materials, for reasons including space capacity, existing display commitments, and the delivery of strategic priorities, unsolicited requests for/offers of materials cannot be accepted.

The Library Service's Display Policy, which includes small displays, exhibitions, and promotional material, explains the wider approach to displays in library buildings.