



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

**Title: Books/E-Books Collection Development Policy  
National Health Library & Knowledge Service (NHLKS)**

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## 1. Table of Contents

<b>2. POLICY STATEMENT</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. PURPOSE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4. SCOPE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5. TARGET AUDIENCE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6. OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>7. OUTCOMES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>8. LEGISLATION AND OTHER RELATED POLICIES</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>9. SUBJECT SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>10. GENERAL CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF MATERIALS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>11. CORE COLLECTION – PRINT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>12. SPECIAL PRINT COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>13. RETENTION/WEEDING</b>	<b>5</b>
Out of Date Information Compromises Patient Care	5
<b>14. DONATIONS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>15. ELECTRONIC BOOK COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>6</b>
CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SELECTING E-BOOKS/COLLECTION/CONTENT	6
<b>16. MODELS AVAILABLE</b>	<b>6</b>
16.1 PERPETUAL ACCESS	7
16.2 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION	7
16.3 PATRON DRIVEN DEMAND/DEMAND DRIVEN ACQUISITION (PDA/DDA)	7
<b>17. E-BOOKS/PACKAGES</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>18. OPEN ACCESS (OA) RESOURCES</b>	<b>8</b>
APPENDIX I DEWEY CLASSIFICATION AND AREA SPECIALITIES	9
APPENDIX II EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	10
APPENDIX III MEMBERSHIP OF THE WORKING GROUP	11
APPENDIX IV MEMBERS OF THE SERVICE MANAGEMENT GROUP	11

## 2. Policy Statement

This policy is designed to guide the development and management of the **NHLKS** collection of print & e-books to support the clinical information needs, learning, teaching and research requirements of all HSE staff. Changes in technologies, resources and user demand may warrant the revisiting of previous selection decisions. Prevailing access issues defines “**a digital first approach**” where necessary.

## 3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a standard approach to the purchase of books and e-books across all HSE Libraries in the **National Health Library & Knowledge Service (NHLKS)**.

## 4. Scope

The scope of this policy identifies what will (and will not) be covered by the PPPG.

## 5. Target Audience

Any **NHLKS** staff involved in the purchase of books in both print & electronic format (local, area and national).

This policy does not apply to HSE staff outside of the **NHLKS** who purchase books/e-books nor does it apply to **NHLKS** staff who purchase books/e-books on behalf of other HSE Staff e.g. Departmental Collections “housed” in other locations.

## 6. Objectives

- To standardise the approach to the purchase of books/e-books in line with financial regulations.
- Include user feedback and preferences in the decision-making process.
- Base collections on user need, staff CPD requirements, future usage and be discipline inclusive.
- To eliminate bias in material selection, promote equity of access and achieve collection balance.

## 7. Outcomes

- All registered HSE Library users will have access to a core collection of books in both print and electronic format.

- Flexibility to manage local print stock as deemed appropriate and cognisant of area collection specialties.
- **NHLKS** staff will have a streamlined/unified approach to purchasing decisions irrespective of library location with a common understanding for all staff.
- To function as a decision making tool for **NHLKS** Staff in selection/de-selection practices.

## 8. Legislation and other related Policies

The **NHLKS** is required to pay particular regard to license agreements by publishers and aggregators of online content. In addition, the **NHLKS** must adhere to the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000.

## 9. Subject Scope of Collections

All areas of the health sciences including medicine, nursing, dentistry, optometry, public health, allied health and the basic medical sciences, biology, biochemistry, psychology, pharmacy, bioengineering & biophysics. Coverage is also provided in subject areas which are not specifically biomedical, but contribute to the overall vision of the **NHLKS** strategy of *“everyone working in Ireland’s health service will have access to knowledge, and will apply it whenever and wherever they need it, to deliver the best possible health and care”*. This includes subject areas like education, social sciences, library science, statistics, health management, health economics & human resource management.

The Subject content of books is the primary reason for purchase and criteria for purchase consideration remain the same, irrespective of format.

## 10. General Criteria for Selection of Materials

- Is it of benefit to multiple disciplines across the healthcare faculty?
- Does it fulfil a gap identified by iterative audit/analysis of collections?
- Statistical metrics (usage figures, LMS circulation data) on the same/similar subject area.
- Is it considered a seminal/core title in its field?
- The development of new clinical programmes or academic initiatives.
- Staff recommendations relative to allocated budget, currency and existing stock.

## 11. Core Collection – Print

- Library locations shall maintain a core collection of titles and these titles should be current, relevant and in line with local/area user preferences and demand.
- Area library staff shall preserve the responsibility/right to purchase print titles that reflect the local/area user base and interests.
- Library staff should also retain the autonomy to support local, independent bookshops who have demonstrated value added services in the past oftentimes having the ability to quickly expedite orders that larger chains would not.

- Purchase decisions should not alone be based on price. Rather they should constitute all strands of evidence informed decision making (collection gaps, local circumstances, user demand/preference, expert/peer reviews.) Rather than a binary decision based on price alone, a holistic blended approach together with staff experience and knowledge is preferable.
- New print titles for library locations shall be catalogued and classified within the region and made available via the Library Management System (**KOHA**) for the purposes of Inter-Library Loan.
- Not every new edition of a core print title will be purchased, but will be considered if there has been substantial content revision, subject area has undergone rapid change and book is beyond repair (heavily circulated/used).
- It is desirable where possible, that each library location have responsibility for developing a specialised print collection in one discipline and that these titles are available for loan across areas. [See appendix 1]. In some libraries specialist collections may have built up overtime due to local library champions and local funding initiatives.

## 12. Special Print Collections

Space permitting, each Area Headquarters should maintain an archive of printed material including reports, Board Minutes and books relevant to their own former Health Board. Active acquisition of newly published titles relating to healthcare (contemporary or historical) where the subject matter relates directly or indirectly to their own area is encouraged. Where possible an additional electronic copy should be uploaded to [Lenus](#), the Irish Health Research repository.

## 13. Retention/Weeding

### Out of Date Information Compromises Patient Care

Active analysis and audit of collections is an iterative process and aids in identifying titles for de-selection. There is a dual benefit to this on a national and local level. Surpluses and deficits are clear and offer a starting point for area collection specialities. Ongoing stocktakes are preferable to once-off or yearly audits.

Different subject specialities require different approaches and the knowledge base of the subject will guide the de-selection/weeding process. For example, pharmacology is a fast-moving field and material should not be kept for more than 5 years whereas anatomy could be retained for 20 years. The availability of titles as e-books is also a useful guide to any de-selection decision. Where space is a consideration, poor circulation statistics will also be considered as should superseded (by newer editions) duplicate copies. Withdrawn items are updated on the Library Management System (**KOHA**) for reporting & auditing purposes.

## 14. Donations

Each library location welcomes book donations but reserves the right to only accept stock that meets its selection criteria and will only accept items on the understanding that they can be disposed of in line with retention/weeding schedules. All HSE Staff who complete diploma, masters and doctoral theses are actively encouraged to lodge a copy with their nearest HSE library (depending on university policies) and to upload the electronic copy to [Lenus](#) with due regard to any prevailing copyright.

## 15. Electronic Book Collections

There is a growing popularity for material in electronic format and although there are variations this applies to all categories of users and across disciplines. Recognising that our user expectation of content delivery 24/7 has become a standard, it is **NHLKS** philosophy to provide access to e-books where possible. However, understanding that not all materials are available in e-book format and not all library users wish to use digital editions, the **NHLKS** will continue to also collect print titles. Function is important when considering the format; reference material, multi-volume textbooks and compendiums in an online only environment will not change demand for them or frequency of use. Other monographs (seminal works, course textbooks and MCQs) will always require a print presence.

### Considerations when Selecting E-Books/Collection/Content

- Ability to use on or offsite (OpenAthens) authentication for remote users and or/seamless access from within IP range
- Stability of vendor platform
- Interoperability, compatibility of file downloads on external devices/e-readers
- DRM/encryption restrictions
- Vendor mandates: none in place or reasonable restrictions
- Ability to obtain usage statistics compliant with industry standards
- Acceptable licensing agreements, availability and ease of downloads/printing
- Embargo periods (any subscription-based license –not just confined to e-journals)
- Availability of appropriate discovery records for catalogue integration
- Intuitive interface
- Value added features such as keyword searching, highlighting & annotation
- Ease of linking into library management system and other discovery tools (**KOHA**)
- Easily accessible from multiple devices, multiple browsers or apps
- Known vendor responsiveness to access problems
- Vendor capacity for both library staff and end user training

## 16. Models Available

The **NHLKS** will consider a blend of models to provide the best access for all HSE staff. There are different models available and a weighting scale of 60/40 towards mediated PDA/DDA in the first instance. The budget for electronic books will

therefore give a 60% preference towards the PDA/DDA model with the remaining 40% split between perpetual access and annual subscription.

### **16.1 Perpetual Access**

Titles are bought for perpetuity – no recurring cost except an annual hosting charge. This model gives staff the ability to choose individual “a la carte” titles rather than a prebuilt package where some content may not be relevant to our disciplines. This model is suitable for multiple copy titles that are in high demand.

### **16.2 Annual Subscription**

This model is favoured when the subscription includes the continuous updating of texts. Old text editions will be replaced with newly published ones and where the model shows flexibility to change licences according to usage statistics. This model requires a medium-long term fiscal commitment that enables the package/collection to be embedded into discovery tools and other content management systems; therefore multi-year contracts that invite discounts are preferable.

### **16.3 Patron Driven Demand/Demand Driven Acquisition (PDA/DDA)**

This model works well for “just in time” acquisitions rather than “just in case”. It works on the basis that a set of titles from a vendor are loaded into the Library Management System (**KOHA**) and our Discovery tool. Users will discover and access the books just like they do with all e-book titles within the system. If a book is found and used there is a charge; if then used multiple times, it will be purchased and is owned in perpetuity. This will be a mediated service that recognises existing operational budgetary parameters.

## **17. E-Books/Packages**

E-Books/packages that are considered for purchase will be trialled first, with request for feedback from focus user groups. If feedback is positive and the content is needed to fulfil research discovery or clinical care, the resource will be considered for purchase. However, acquiring new electronic resources requires a long-term fiscal commitment and is subject to existing EU/HSE procurement thresholds. Notwithstanding these legislative considerations, the amount of money the **NHLKS** spends on electronic resources is limited by its annual budget. Requests are accepted on a continuous basis and prioritized, but resources can only be ordered as funds are secured. While there are many factors to consider when adding book titles/packages to the collections, the final decision often comes down to budget.

**NHLKS** staff should consider the cohort of staff that would use the resource and ensure that it is as multi/cross disciplinary as possible. In circumstances where additional area/local funding becomes available, the understanding is that any e-book title/package purchased will be for the whole of the HSE. Purchase recommendations by staff via their area/regional librarian will be sourced, assessed and evaluated according to the criteria outlined in section 10 above by designated teams at the behest of the National Health Service Librarian and Library Resources manager.

## 18. Open Access (OA) Resources

In the Irish context and mindful of the National Statement on Transition to Open Research (NORF 2018), *“all Irish scholarly publications resulting from publicly-funded research will be openly available by default from 2020 onwards”*.

Titles produced under the OA banner are a vigorous and professionally valued alternative to subscription driven commercial and society publications. They represent an alternative means of dissemination of information, yet are often of equal scientific and research stature to subscription titles. OA titles will be assessed on their merits applying the same criteria used in this policy for commercially supplied books and the degree of online access will be equally maintained by the **NHLKS**. It is however understood from the national statement that the *“timeline to achieve Open Access for books and similar outputs may take longer”*.

Resources in the **NHLKS** are not static by nature and this policy is therefore intended to be dynamic with scheduled reviews that reflect changing practices in collection development and management, advancing technology and evolving user behaviour.



## Appendix I Dewey Classification and Area Specialities

The **NHLKS** uses the Dewey Decimal system to classify material in print format. The primary classification range are 150 (psychology), 170 (ethics), 360 (Social Services; Associations), 519, (Statistics) 610.7 (Education, Nursing, Related Topics), 600 (Diseases). Below are listed subjects with Dewey classification and suggested local/area specialities. These will be made visible to users in KOHA in due course.

Broad Subject Areas	DDC Number	Library
Research	001.4	DSL, KILA
Psychology/Applied Psychology/Human Behaviour/Child Psychology/Bereavement/Death	150-158	SLRON KILA DSL
Medical Ethics	174	
Nursing Ethics	174.2	SCH
Social Sciences/Health Research/Health Administration/Public Health	360-363	DSL KILA
Health Education/Teaching	400-	
Life Sciences/Evolution and Genetics/Microbiology/Biochemistry	570-577	
GP Family Medicine	610.68	MRHT
Nursing, Research and Education, Services of Allied Health Personnel	610.7 Nursing Research (RT81.5) LGHEDU	PUH NGH CHL SCH DSH KILA CUH WATA LGHEDU
Midwifery Research & Education	610.73072	OLOLH
Oncology Nursing	610.7368	SLRON
Human Anatomy, Cytology, Histology/Human Physiology	611-612	
Health Promotion	613	DSL, OLOLH
Forensic Medicine/Incidence of Disease/Public Preventive Medicine/Epidemiology	614	DSL
Pharmacology/Therapeutics	615	
Physiotherapy	615.82	
Radiotherapy	615.84	SLRON
Diseases	616	
Emergency/Intensive//Coronary /Palliative Care	616.025-616.029	SCH, WATA (large collection but not updated since c2018)
Digestive/Glandular/Lymphatic		
/Endocrine Diseases/Dermatology	616.3-616.5	
Urology/Kidney/Urogenital Diseases	616.6	UHG
Musculoskeletal Conditions/Diseases	616.7	

Nervous System & Mental Health	616.8	
Psychiatry & Mental Health	616.89	DSL
Other Diseases/Oncology/Blood Diseases	616.9	MRHT
Oncology	616.994	SLRON
Surgery & Related Medical Specialities	617	NGH
Injuries/wounds/results of		
Injuries & wound	617.1-617.3	
Cardiovascular System; Digestive System; Blood-Forming, Lymphatic, Glandular Systems; Endocrine System; Urogenital system; Musculoskeletal System, Integument; Orthopaedic Surgery; Nervous System; Neurosurgery	617.4	
Orthopaedic Surgery	617.5	UHG, OLOLH
Ear Nose Throat (ENT)	617.51	SUH, MRHT
Dentistry	617.6	CUH
Ophthalmology	617.7	SUH
Audiology & Otology	617.8	
Operative Surgery & Specialised Surgery fields	617.9	
Gynecology & Obstetrics	618.1-618.8	MRHP
Midwifery	618.2-618.4	OLOLH
Old Age Psychiatry, Dementia	616.83 Dementia (RC521)	DSL LGHEDU
Paediatrics	618.92	MUH, MRHM, OLOLH
Geriatrics	618.97	UHG
General Management	658	UHG, DSL, KILA
Human Resources management	658.3	DSL
Project Management / Change Management	658.4 / 658.406	DSL
Leadership	658.4092	NGH DSL
Bibliotherapy	Broad range of DDC codes	ALL LOCATIONS
Report Collection (Irish Health Policy) Print collection supporting the Lenus repository	Broad range of DDC codes	DSL

CHL – Connolly Hospital Library (Dublin)  
 CUH – Cork University Hospital  
 DSL – Dr. Steevens’ Library (Dublin)  
 UHG – University Hospital Galway  
 LGHEDU - Letterkenny University Hospital Library  
 MRHM – Midland Regional Hospital Mullingar  
 MRHP – Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise  
 MRHT – Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore  
 MUH – Mayo University Hospital  
 NGH – Naas General Hospital (Kildare)  
 OLOLH – Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital (Drogheda)

SCH – St. Columcille’s Hospital (Dublin)  
 KILA – St. Luke’s General Hospital (Kilkenny)  
 SLRON – St. Luke’s Radiation Oncology Network (Dublin)  
 SUH – Sligo University Hospital  
 WATA – University Hospital Waterford

**Appendix II Employee Acknowledgement**

I acknowledge the following:

- I have been provided with a copy of the Policy, Procedure, Protocol/Guideline document described above.
- I have read and understand the Policy, Procedure, Protocol/Guideline document.
- I agree with the Policy, Procedure, Protocol/Guideline and recommend its approval by the committee developing the PPPG

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name (Print)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

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