CITY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

How can the collection of an LGBTIQ+ library best meet information needs? Towards a collection development policy

Isadore Auerbach George

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Supervisor: David Bawden
Abstract

Many public libraries in the UK may not be adequately meeting the information needs of LGBTIQ+ patrons. Research has shown that this is due to a variety of factors, such as slashed budgets, lack of staff knowledge and the lingering effects of Section 28, which sought to prevent the ‘promotion’ of homosexuality by Local Authorities. This study examines how Book 28 Library, a special library that seeks to address and advocate for these unmet needs, could formulate a collection development policy that would best further the library aims. In doing so, it looks at the literature on LGBTIQ+ information needs and best practice in collection development to see how policies can be targeted to create an effective collection of LGBTIQ+ materials for an LGBTIQ+ userbase.

Practice-as-Research was used to create a collection development policy while providing insight into the thought processes that informed each section. This was successful: referring to the literature on LGBTIQ+ information needs and best practice in collection development during creation led to a policy that could usefully guide collection decisions. This research found that, while it is possible to create an effective policy in this way, there remains significant gaps in the research on LGBTIQ+ information needs and library service, especially in the UK. It is recommended that more research be undertaken in this area, and that practically-oriented research methods such as Practice-as-Research be used more in collection development to elucidate the links between academic theory and professional implementation.
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Glossary

Queer

Originally (and still) used as a slur against LGBTIQ+ people, “queer” has been used as a positive self-descriptor since the 1980s (Barker and Scheele, 2016, p. 10). It now has three related meanings: an “umbrella term”, interchangeable with LGBTIQ+; to describe practices that transgress mainstream ideas of sexuality and identity; and in “queer theory”, which interrogates all binaries and fixed identities (Barker and Scheele, 2016, pp. 11–14). It is used in this project as a general adjective (e.g., “queer libraries”). However, credence should be given to the continued use of the word as a slur, so it may not be appropriate in all instances.

Transgender and Cisgender

This first term is taken to mean anyone whose gender identity is other than, or in addition to, that assigned at birth. For example, a person assigned female at birth who identifies as a man would be considered ‘transgender’. Its counterpart, ‘cisgender’, means anyone whose gender identity is the same as that assigned at birth (Ewing, 2018). The shorter ‘trans’ is used as an umbrella term.

Non-binary

The term “non-binary” is used along with terms such as “genderqueer” to capture identities “that fall between or beyond the gender binary” (Barker and Scheele, 2016, p. 145). Within this research, this term also encapsulates gender identities outside of a Western binary, e.g. “nádleehí”, a term from Navajo culture for those who are “two-spirit” or “both a boy and a girl” (Independent Lens, 2015).

BAME

The acronym “BAME”, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, is a UK-specific term that has its origins in the “political blackness” movements of the 1970s. Although as another umbrella term it suffers from issues of elision and imprecision, it is “government terminology” reflected in the census and other statistics available in the UK (Barrett, 2018). This congruity is its main advantage in a UK-based research context and the reason it is used in this project, over other American-centric alternative such as POC (‘People of Color’). It is understood here to refer to those outside of a “White” ethnic group, and / or people who experience racism.

Disabled

This research assumes the Social Model of disability, which considers “disability … a social phenomenon produced by a society’s failure to respond adequately to impairment” (Titchkosky and Michalko, 2014). This has influenced disabled activism in the UK and led to the preferred terminology of “disabled people” over “people with disabilities”, as this “accurately highlights the oppression a person with impairment faces” (Mallett and Slater, 2014).
Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without the patient support of my family, partner and friends. I am indebted to Dr Harry Josephine Giles, who took time to share her thoughts about the direction of this research at a crucial stage. The guidance and wisdom of Dr David Bawden, Dr Lyn Robinson and the whole CityLIS team was invaluable, as was the support of the City Library staff throughout an unprecedented academic year. My coursemates provided a lifeline during the pandemic and kept me going. Finally, I am forever grateful to the researchers and activists who have thought and fought before me.
1 Introduction

1.1 General introduction

This research examines how an LGBTIQ+ library service can formulate a collection development policy so as to try and meet the information needs of its users. The library is ‘Book 28 Library’, currently housed at the Outside Project LGBTIQ+ Community Centre and Homeless Shelter in Clerkenwell, London. This dissertation uses Practice-as-Research to record the process of creating a collection development policy, thus demonstrating how a base of research on LGBTIQ+ information needs and best practice in collection development can dictate policy creation. As such, we outline the context of Book 28 as a service, before undertaking two literature reviews on collection development and LGBTIQ+ information needs; the heart of the research is then formed by a reflection-in-action log, which records the thoughts processes behind each part of the policy, and its reciprocal, a reflection-on-action passage, which evaluates this process.

The complete policy can be viewed in Appendix A. Overall, this research is successful in demonstrating how a collection development policy can be informed by research in order to maximise the chance of a collection meeting the information needs its target users, while being in keeping with the goals and values of the library. The scope of this research is limited to the creation of this single policy for Book 28 Library and is not intended as a template for building LGBTIQ+ collections. However, it makes a useful contribution to the literature by showcasing one process of policy writing, in a way that might guide others and signpost information needs to consider when undertaking collection development for LGBTIQ+ users.
1.2 History and Context of the Book 28 Project

I began ‘Book 28 Library’ in 2019, after reading the research of Dr Elizabeth Chapman about the “woefully inadequate” provision for LGBTIQ+ teens in UK public libraries (Chapman and Birdi, 2016). This poor provision has been connected to ‘Section 28’, a 1988 amendment to the Local Government Act that prohibited the ‘promotion’ of homosexuality by Local Authorities; even after its repeal in 2000 in Scotland and 2003 in England and Wales, many feel it still has a chilling effect on public library provision of queer resources (Bennet, 2020). This confirmed my anecdotal experience as a queer library user, and that of others I had heard: as LGBTIQ+ people, we often could not find material to meet our needs at our local public libraries.

Some experienced “library anxiety”: “a fear of both the library space…and of the process of using the library to find materials” (Nicol, 2020), and preferred to go to queer bookshops. Research supports that, for many LGBTIQ+ people, “bookstores are … supplanting libraries as sources of expertise about information” (Nowak and Mitchell, 2016). In the UK, after a long period of London’s Gay’s the Word being the only specialist LGBTIQ+ bookshop, in 2020 alone at least three UK LGBTIQ+ booksellers launched online (Queer Lit, 2020; Spencer, 2020; Van Dyke, 2020) and a new LGBTIQ+ bookstore opened in Leeds (Dzinzi, 2020). With this trend, it seemed important to have a space that provided free access to queer literature similar to that which could be found in specialist bookstores, along with a space for culture and community based around books.
And thus Book 28 Library was born. It is now housed at the Outside Project and run by a team of five volunteers. The current collection is an amalgamation of LGBTIQ+ titles found amongst books held at the Outside Project and resources added through donations, totalling a collection of around 300 titles (currently uncatalogued). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no public access to the physical collection throughout most of 2020. Book 28 is a “special library”, following Johnson’s library typology (2018, p. 20), and aims to collect LGBTIQ+ materials for an LGBTIQ+ userbase. It sits alongside queer literature collections such as the Bishopsgate Institute library, which holds “around 10,000 LGBTQ+ titles” (on-site access only) (“LGBTQ+ Archives,” n.d.). The unique offering of Book 28 Library is that not only are the books free (and, eventually, borrowable), their surroundings minimise possible library anxiety. Whereas Bishopsgate’s collection is housed in an “old fashioned” building (“Charles Harrison Townsend,” n.d.), Book 28 Library’s bookcases are surrounded in the community centre by beanbags and a bed for reading on. Visitors might be dropping by for a drag show, to grab food at Café Queero, or a resident of the shelter space upstairs: it is in this context that they encounter the library’s collection.

1.3 Definitions and Scope of Research
This research is not a general investigation into developing LGBTIQ+ collections in public libraries: instead, it aims to create a policy for the collection of Book 28, in the context and with the goals and values outlined in section 1.2. Limited resources mean some collection areas (like an eBook library) are currently impractical. It is assumed that the primary matter of the collection is printed material, and the scope of this research is to create a policy on the collection development of such material. Debates
about the library itself are outside the scope of this research. Neither will this research examine other issues, such as poor cataloguing of LGBTIQ+ materials, that have no doubt “impaired users’ access to information” in public libraries (Nowak and Mitchell, 2016, p. 3); the focus is on collections.

As for defining a ‘collection’ and its ‘development’, the collection is the “aggregation of individual items”, whether “objects” or “resources”, for which the project library has the direct responsibility for maintenance and patron access (Johnston and Robinson, 2002). Third party resources we signpost on our website’s ‘Digital Library’ are not considered to be in the collection. We take ‘development’, as encompassing two terms for overlapping activities, ‘collection development’ and ‘collection management’. Where a distinction is made, the first is generally taken to be the building of a collection, whereas the second is how to manage this collection once built (Johnson, 2018, p. 1). Here, it is assumed to govern such key areas as acquisition, disposals, and maintenance; its precise scope is defined in section 3.2.

As Book 28 Library is based within the Outside Project, we define our userbase using the same acronym as they do: people who are LGBTIQ+, or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans[gender], Intersex, Queer [/Questioning], and Other (“The Project,” n.d.). The “lack of cohesion” of the acronym (Nowak and Mitchell, 2016, p. 2) is explored in section 4. However, for ease of simplicity, “LGBTIQ+” is used throughout in keeping with official terminology of the Outside Project and Book 28 Library. Use of the word “queer” and other specific terminology is defined the Glossary.
As for the defining the needs of these users, there has been much contention about “information needs”: how to understand them, name them, and contextualise them within the wider field of “information behaviour” (Robinson and Bawden, 2015, p. 189), “the totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information” (Wilson, 2000). The literature reviewed encompasses a variety of terminology and models, and a single, precise definition of information behaviour or needs is outside the scope of this research. Rather, it is assumed that people have both explicit and implicit wants or needs that compel them towards certain kinds of information behaviour, such as searching for books at public libraries or using search engines. By examining a wide variety of literature, we can identify whether there are wants and needs prevalent amongst LGBTIQ+ people. A desire for pleasurable and satisfying leisure reading material is here encompassed within “information needs”.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

‘Aims’ are taken to refer to general goals of the dissertation project, whereas ‘objectives’ refers to specific goals, with concrete tests to confirm whether they have been met.

**Aims:**

- Complete policy document that (i) aids the librarian in making collections development decisions and (ii) helps build a collection that will meet the information needs of LGBTIQ+ people in the UK.
- To further the work of the Book 28 Library project, which in turn aims to:
- Fill a ‘gap’ in public library-style LGBTIQ+ literature provision in the UK.
- Provide an example that promotes the need for LGBTIQ+ library provision and offers insight into best practice.
- Increase knowledge and confidence amongst patrons to use public library systems wherein robust LGBTIQ+ provision already exists.

- Adapted from Auerbach George, 2020.

Objectives:

- Have policy on areas of ambiguity/controversy already known at the beginning of research, namely:
  - Addressing the idea of what ‘counts’ as LGBTIQ+ collection material, both in which sexual and gender identities are considered relevant; and what forms of representation are ‘legitimate’ (e.g. as author, protagonist, side character, general themes, etc.).
  - How to deal with challenges to material.
  - What types of material should be included e.g. leisure fiction, educational materials, photobooks.
  - Intersectionality: how to meet the needs of those that experience other forms of marginalisation alongside being LGBTIQ+, e.g. BAME people, disabled people.
  - A consideration of the role of “Own Voices” literature, books about people from minorities written by members of that same minority (Duyvis, n.d.).
Accessibility: consideration of collection format and content to ensure access regardless of literacy or disability.

Consideration of language of material.

A policy for selection and disposals.

A policy on content warnings.

A method for transparency, accountability and updates that allows the collections development policy to continue to grow after its dissemination into the community.

- Have policies for any other areas that are encountered as necessary during the research process.

- Have the policy successfully guide decision making in hypothetical scenarios.

2 Research methods

2.1 Introduction
The research method for this project is Practice-as-Research (PaR). Following Pickard’s layers of research hierarchy, my methodology is interpretivist and qualitative, where I as a human researcher form the research instrument (Pickard, 2013, p. xvii). I am particularly influenced by John Vincent’s stance that “working with people, especially those who are disadvantaged, has to be an organic, iterative process, based on the needs of those communities” (Vincent, 2014, p. 286).

Professional judgement and practice, my experiences as a queer person in the community, and my personal biases will all play a role in creating the policy. A normal collections development policy is unlikely to describe the conflicts their author faced in its creation, whereas using PaR, Barrett argues, gives us a chance to
make transparent the discourses influencing a researcher and their subject, rather than obfuscating them (2010); I hope that this method will allow the policy challenged and discussed by the community affected by the collection, so it can continue to grow after this research.

2.2 Research Strategy

I was faced with several options when deciding which research strategy to use. A case study made some sense, but this method would traditionally imply a researcher who “observes the characteristics of an individual unit” (Cohen and Manion, 1995, p. 106, cited Biggam, 2017, p. 156). In this case, my research instrument (myself as researcher) does not merely observe, but rather creates and then grows throughout the research. Also, this is not quite “action research” by Biggam’s definition because there is not “a particular problem to be solved” (2017, p. 164) beyond the absence of an existing framework; it would be hard to evaluate the success of an intervention as any policy would solve the absence of one.

Overall, these “traditional research strategies are ill-suited to those who wish to create something and write about their creation in a critical way” (Biggam, 2017, p. 208). Instead, “practice as research” (Biggam, 2017, p. 208) offers a chance to “[consider] the essences of traditional research models in order to understand, critique and appropriate them according to need” (Barrett, 2010, p. 138). In PaR, an artefact is created as the central output of the research, which in this case is the Book 28 Library Collections Development Policy (Appendix A). The artefact in and of itself contributes knowledge as an example of specialist collections development and highlights the problems in UK public library provision for LGBTIQ+ people. The
other key component to PaR is a rigorous, critical commentary sustained throughout the process of creating the artefact (Biggam, 2017). A contextual literature review reveals the issues and provides parameters for the artefact’s creation.

There are two parallel literature reviews, to establish two key frameworks: possible information needs of LGBTIQ+ people in the UK, and general principles of collections development. These literature reviews aid in “locating … [myself] in the field of theory and practice” (Barrett, 2010, p. 140). In this context, we can then structure the key areas that policy needs to cover, with a “reflection-in-action” log (Biggam, 2017, p. 217) partitioned into each of these sections for recording the thought process behind the policy. The completion of this log, if the policy addresses all areas outlined 1.4, will meet our research objectives. The aim is to create a policy that can act as a tool to aid in making collections decisions; the success of which can be measured by applying hypothetical scenarios and seeing if the complete policy gives clear guidance that is useful in making a decision.

In summary, the steps of my research strategy are:

i. **Literature Reviews**: establishing information needs of LGBTIQ+ in the UK and how they are currently met in public libraries; and key areas of collections development policy and best practice, yielding a policy outline.

ii. **Reflection-in-Action**: Using the outline, which will have a log-space for each section, I will then work my way through recording my thought processes and references to the literature.
iii. **Stress-testing:** referring to the finished artefact, I will consider several
difficult scenarios or controversial materials. I will evaluate whether the policy
helps guide me in making decisions in these areas.

iv. **Reflection-on-Action:** a log of key questions that allows me to evaluate data
such as: the reasoning behind my decisions, the outcome of the stress-testing,
and any other input or commentary that has arisen during the project, against
my original aims and objectives.

v. **Synthesis:** this concludes the PaR by making a holistic evaluation of the
action and the artefact created.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques
Data will be collected from the research subject (myself) in the form of written
observations about the issues that arise in the creation of the policy, and the
justification of resolutions with reference to the literature. These observations will be
in the form of: a formal “reflection-in-action” log, split according to the policy section
being developed; the inclusion of immediate personal observations made in response
to themes from the reviews; insights from personal correspondence as I discuss these
issues with others in the community; a record of my thought process as I ‘stress-test’
the finished policy through hypothetical scenarios.

2.4 Analysis and Evaluation
This will provide me with appropriate data to then evaluate how well I have reached
the overall aim: of helping the librarian of the collection (in this case, myself) easily
resolve decisions about collections development; the successful creation of a
framework that is based on best meeting the information needs of the collection users;
and furthering the Book 28 Library goals. I will analyse these with a “reflection-on-action” log (Biggam, 2017, p. 221 - see Table 1), ‘stress testing’ the policy with several difficult examples, and attempting. In PaR, “synthesis” is an all round [sic] in-depth evaluation of your work” (Biggam, 2017, p. 222).

**Table 1: Reflection-on-Action Log**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book 28 Library Collections Development Policy</th>
<th>Reflection-on-Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What were you trying to achieve?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you achieve that?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your views on what you achieved?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does it relate to the literature?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do others think?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a similarity / difference of opinion?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What key factors influenced the process?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What lessons have you learned?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you do differently?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the next step?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from Biggam (2017)

### 2.5 Limitations and Potential Problems

I believe that PaR is a valid research strategy to meet my goal of creating a useful collections development policy. However, that does not mean it is without its limitations. Although these cannot be fully eliminated, they can be addressed, so that
their impact on the reliability of the research is reduced or at least made transparent (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Limitations of the project, and how to address them**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limitation</th>
<th>How it will be addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The influence of personal bias on my work</td>
<td>This is a limitation of all work in the interpretivist paradigm. I do not seek to eliminate it, but rather, to make it transparent. Thinkers such as Haraway have called for “re-admitting embodied vision and positioning in research” (Barrett, 2010, p. 145): to draw strength from making clear the self of the researcher and their relationship to the discourse. As “the information professions are now in the midst of a conversation about whiteness” (Espinal et al., 2018, p. 149), there is an ever-growing body of resources discussing racial and others biases in librarianship, which I can draw on to inform and address the limitations in my own work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of input from the community using the collection</td>
<td>This limitation is striking, but unfortunately not possible to address within restrictions of the current project, due to ethical issues around collecting data from often doubly vulnerable (homeless and LGBTIQ+) subjects. However, there are mitigations. Firstly, my literature review will look at data collected by others about people similar to Book 28’s userbase. Where there are patterns, I can make informed predictions about needs. Secondly, I myself am both queer and actively involved with the community, and frequently have informal discussions that influence my thinking. Although I will not be formally surveying the community at this stage, future feedback on the policy will be important to the library’s work. This is why I seek to build a mechanism for improvement into the policy so that it can grow beyond this research project. This is in keeping with PaR research methods, in which Foucault’s “concomitant utilization” of a work is translated into thinking about how this work “may be used and applied by others” (Barrett, 2010, p. 139).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential ‘check-box style’ of using the reflection-in-action log</td>
<td>There is a possibility that I will record thought processes limited to what I believe is the ‘correct’ answer. This can only be addressed by my commitment to transparency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of coherent identity amongst user group</td>
<td>Much terminology for queerness appears in the literature. This poses a problem in literature searches, as it may be that relevant literature is described using unsearched terms. This can be addressed by (i) the use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of multiple search terms, (ii) the use of search engine commands such as the wildcard symbol (‘*’) after ‘LGBT’ to capture different suffixes and (iii) mixing review methods (e.g. incorporating citation searches). As this problem is widely encountered, it is reasonable to expect that most literature will be multiply tagged. Some have proposed a general “lack of cohesion” to the LGBTIQ+ ‘community’ (Nowak and Mitchell, 2016, p. 2), which means there may not be a single userbase with shared needs. However, no userbase shares identical needs and previous research suggests that there are likely enough similarities to justify a shared collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The research can only answer questions in relation to this artefact</th>
<th>The main limitation with PaR is that it is not generalisable: the artefact cannot be replicated as a generic collections development policy for LGBTIQ+ collections everywhere. It is still a valid strategy for the goals and aims of my project; and can still contribute to knowledge. Others working in similar areas may be influenced by my journey, research and decision-making process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of the literature</td>
<td>This author knows of only two career researchers in LGBTIQ+ library provision in the UK, John Vincent and Elizabeth Chapman. Much research production in this area comes at Master’s dissertation level, which means it may not be published and discoverable. Valuable queer writing and work outside of formal academia may also be in less easily discoverable formats, e.g. zines and Instagram posts. This limitation is mitigated by endeavouring to create a literature overview that can inform policy, rather than comprehensive literature review; and by my active work in the field, which makes it more likely that I will encounter relevant work through chance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic</td>
<td>The COVID-19 Pandemic has had a profound impact on academic production. However, as this particular project already relied mainly upon desk research the impact of the lockdown has been limited to: a lack of access to hard-copy literature that might otherwise be found in the closed library; and a reduction in immersion in the ongoing engagement and dialogue with the community while the Outside Project centre remains closed; an inability to evaluate the current collection. In August 2020, City University Library reinstated limited access to its physical collection; and throughout this period, both Book 28 Library and the Outside Project have remained engaged with much of the community through virtual discussions and events.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Literature Review(s)

The first comprises both the information needs of LGBTIQ+ people and the current success of UK public library services in meeting them (there is not always a clear distinction between research purely on information needs and that on services). This should result in conclusions about needs that recur in the literature and can then be referred to for guidance in Section 4. Secondly, there is a review of methods for writing collections development policies, what areas should be addressed, etc., from which we can conclude what is appropriate for this particular service. In doing so, we build a framework of key areas of policy to be addressed in Section 4.

3.1 Review of Information Needs of LGBTIQ+ People and the State of Services to Meet Them

The beginning of formal organisation around LGBTIQ+ rights in Western libraries is generally recognised as the 1970 formation of the American Library Association’s “Task Force on Gay Liberation” (Keilty, 2010, p. 3275). The nascent “gay and lesbian library science” movement that emerged focused on the rights of library workers (Vincent, 2014, p. 27) and addressing biased cataloguing rules (Keilty, 2010). The formal study of LGBTIQ+ library users’ information needs emerged in the 1990s, following a general shift from studying the use of specific sources to particular user groups and their needs (Keilty, 2010). In a UK-specific context, there is far less formal study into the needs of and provision for LGBTIQ+ library users.

3.1.1 Method of Literature Review

For this general overview, research began with a citation search through Chapman’s work, as this originally sparked the idea for Book 28, through which key researchers
(notably Vincent) were established. Additionally, there has been some effort to create bibliographic resources on LGBTIQ+ issues in Library and Information Science (LIS), such as the Wikipedia page “Libraries and the LGBTQ community” and the more UK-focused ‘padlet’ “LGBTQIA Resources for Library Workers”, run by Bini Brynholf (a member of the CILIP LGBTQIA+ Steering Committee). There are useful place to find some relevant material but are not formally reviewed or assessed, so can only serve as starting points. There are a few more robust summative sources, such as Keilty’s overview of research on LGBTIQ+ information needs.

The majority of literature was identified through searches on the City, University of London Library catalogue, which contains extensive LIS resources, and LISTA, the Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts database by EBSCO. Terminology posed a potential problem, as is it is so variable, so several keywords were used, as were ‘OR’ functions and wildcards. For example, the City Library catalogue was searched for “LGB*” followed by “library OR information OR information needs”. LISTA offers autocomplete options for LGBTIQ+ terminology searches, the most popular string being “lgbtq OR lesbian OR gay OR homosexual OR bisexual OR transgender OR homosexual OR queer OR sexual minority”. When searching for literature on particular subgroups, such as transgender people, terms were varied as appropriate. Between the use of citation searches, summative sources and database searches, we can be confident that the review produced serves adequately as an overview of the literature, if not an exhaustive review.
3.1.2 History of LGBTIQ+ Information Needs Research

An overview of the literature yielded shows that LGBTIQ+ information needs research is still somewhat sparse, although there was a significant increase in levels of interest towards the end of the 2010s. There are few resources predating the 1990s (with some notable exceptions being Berman’s 1981 *The Joy of Cataloging*, and heightened awareness of LGBTIQ+ information needs during the AIDS crisis (Keilty, 2010, p. 3275)). Some of the few essays that existed were collected for the first time by Ellen Greenblatt and Cal Gough, who remain particularly influential researchers in this field, in *Gay and Lesbian Library Service* (1990).

User studies into the needs of this group began with Creelman and Harris’ 1990 “Coming Out: The Information Needs of Lesbians”. It follows an information behaviour model of sense-making (see Dervin, 1998) and uses data from 50 interviews with lesbian women in Toronto, Canada (Creelman and Harris, 1990). The research of the 1990s and 2000s is characterised by such standalone, small cohort surveys, and essays discussing poor areas of provision. Yeh’s 2008 study is notable, both because it takes place outside the US (in Taipei, Taiwan) and because it uses a “social constructionist” viewpoint for information behaviour that is influenced by models such as Chatman’s 1991 “theory of small world” (Yeh, 2008). This reflects the “affective turn” in 1990s LIS, wherein researchers like Chatman who studied marginalized communities rose to the fore (Hartel, 2019). This was very influential on the models of information behaviour considered for LGBTIQ+ people, e.g. Chatman’s Theory of Information Poverty (Keilty, 2010, p. 3278).
The “first notable literature review” into this early research on users was produced by Joyce in 2000 (Pierson, 2017), followed by Keilty’s influential “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Information Needs” (2010). Keilty writes that the neglect of transgender information needs by Joyce characterises most of the “dozen or so” studies conducted up to his time of writing. The publication of his review coincided with a turning point in the profession and research. At the time, many professionals felt that services and collections had not been adequately addressed (e.g. Jardine, 2013; Robinson, 2016). In this environment, the “Que(e)ry Librarians” group formed in 2010 to, in part, “promote the relevance and accessibility of library collections and services to queer communities” (Que(e)ry, n.d.); and in 2013 IFLA created the LGBTQ+ Users Special Interest Group (Montague and McKeever, 2017).

An updated version of Greenblatt’s essay collection (2011a) included a section on the information needs of previously under-recognised groups, such as intersex people (Strachan and Van Buskirk, 2011), transgender users (Waldman, 2011) and bisexual people (Howard, 2011), as well as the role of the Internet (Greenblatt, 2011b).

This was followed by the *Feminist and Queer Information Studies Reader* (2013), in which contributors reevaluated existing paradigms of information behaviour through the lens of queer theory (Keilty and Dean, 2013). For example, Williams and McKenzie note the ‘turn’ in LIS to “social practice” approaches, moving away from analysing an individual’s information behaviour to the way information is “constituted and shared” in communities (2013, p. 406). This reflects the “socio-cognitive” turn in LIS, led by academics such as Hjørland and the view of information phenomena as “embedded in social, organizational, and professional contexts” (Hartel, 2019).
In the last five years, many researchers continue to lament the lack of literature on LGBTIQ+ information needs and library use (Robinson, 2016); nevertheless it has clearly increased, including continued research on the needs and experiences of overlooked groups (e.g. trans library users, Lyttan and Laloo, 2020). There have been at least two more notable anthologies: *Queer Library Alliance* (Montague and McKeever, 2017) and *LGBTQ+ Librarianship in the 21st Century* (Mehra, 2019a). The latter seeks to summarise and predict the directions of research as the decade draws to a close, and identifies an emerging “LIS perspective” on sexuality (Mehra, 2019b, p. 23). Others have returned to earlier literature to re-examine it, e.g. Stevens’ evaluation of Curry’s famous 2005 study, in which he found that there had not been sufficient progress in either the research literature or service provision; and that Curry’s research, which used “unobtrusive observation”, still stood out in a field dominated by surveys (2018).

Therefore, the literature on LGBTIQ+ information needs and library provision does seem to be maturing, with attention to previously overlooked subgroups, more international voices, changing paradigms of information behaviour, and summative and review literature appearing with more frequency. However, it overall still consists of relatively few research projects that move beyond desk research, and those that do tend to be small surveys. It is still dominated by a US and Canadian context.

3.1.2.1. Research in the UK

As these are drawn from a body of literature primarily based in the US and Canada, they neglect any local information needs. The UK’s constituent countries all have different regulations for public library provision (and a majority of the available
literature is drawn from England and Scotland), but all were subject to UK-wide policies that have been particularly significant to public library service for LGBTIQ+ people: the austerity programme, compulsory competitive tendering, and Section 28. Therefore, it makes sense to discuss these needs in a UK context.

As for the research literature, current LIS work on LGBTIQ+ issues is extremely sparse in the UK. Good data is hampered by the fact that sexuality information is not collected in the census (MacDonald, 2015). Chapman and Vincent are the only career UK LIS researchers with an LGBTIQ+ specialism known to this author. Vincent’s *LGBT People and the UK Cultural Sector* (2014) is unique in its comprehensiveness. Much of the other UK-specific research is in the form of master’s theses which, while invaluable, are not further developed (see Townend, 2020; Waite, 2013). This author knows of five surveys on LGBTIQ+ information needs and access based in the UK: Norman (1999); Goldthorp (2007); Waite (2013 - master’s thesis); Chapman and Birdi (2016); and Davis (2019 - master’s thesis). Beyond these, the literature largely consists of recommendations (see MacDonald, 2015), summaries of current issues (see Vincent, 2019) or specific libraries’ literature on their own LGBTIQ+ collection (see Surrey County Council, 2020).

3.1.3 Findings from the Literature

The nature of the literature means that we cannot make robust generalisations about the information needs of LGBTIQ+ people. However, there are patterns that come up repeatedly across in what LGBTIQ+ people seek from public library collections, which can loosely be organised into eleven groups. We can only say that these might be common information needs of LGBTIQ+ library users, which should be given due
consideration in collections development. This must be tempered with the knowledge that they are drawn from research that: is centred on the US and Canada; under-evaluated in terms of race and class; predominantly focused on cisgender gay men and lesbians; discovered through a range of models of information behaviour; and based heavily on desk research and small-scale field studies. See Table 3 for a summary of consistent points throughout the literature, including comments on those that might be particularly relevant in a UK context.

Vincent notes that UK public libraries have lagged behind museums, archives and heritage institutions in addressing LGBTIQ+ services. Historically speaking, provision had been increasing until 1988 when it “plummeted” after the introduction of Section 28, which prohibited local authorities from supplying material that “promoted” homosexuality (Vincent, 2015, p. 288). Much of the literature suggests that even after the abolition of the Section in 2000 in Scotland and 2003 in the rest of the UK, there has been a continued negative impact (see Chapman, 2013). The UK’s professional body for libraries, CILIP, has advocated for the specific inclusion of LGBTIQ+ literature in collection policies since 2004 (Chapman, 2013) and launched an “LGBTQ+ Network” in early 2020 (“CILIP LGBTQ+ Network - About Us,” n.d.). However, many of CILIP’s basic recommendations have not been implemented. For example, where resources do exist, they are not always easily “visible, findable and promoted” in line with guidance (Davis, 2019).
Table 3: Consistent information needs of LGBTIQ+ people relating to library collections, as found in the general literature

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<th>1</th>
<th>Need for LGBTIQ+-specific material in which LGBTIQ+ themes, characters and experiences are central.</th>
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<td>LGBTIQ+ library users consistently want materials where LGBTIQ+ content is central, through which they connect with other LGBTIQ+ people (whether real or fictional) by hearing about their lives and experiences (see Austin, 2019; Downey, 2005; Edge, 2019; Goldthorp, 2007; Keilty, 2010).</td>
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<td>There are barriers to library acquisition of these resources. They are usually supplied by independent publishers (Keilty, 2010). Trans literature in particular is found outside of the mainstream, in formats such as zines and self-published eBooks (Giles, 2020). Acquiring such material often requires libraries to move outside of passive reliance on normal suppliers. Additionally, users might be anxious about asking for such materials, requiring proactive selection rather than waiting for requests (Chapman, 2013).</td>
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<td>In the UK, such proactive selection is particularly difficult. In the 1990s, the introduction of compulsorily competitive tendering and the simultaneous collapse of the Net Loan Agreement shifted pressures in collections development from curating resources to negotiating good deals with private suppliers (Edmonds, 2012). Many researchers note this pattern of passively purchasing stock from mainstream library suppliers rather has a negative impact on UK libraries’ acquisition</td>
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LGBTIQ+-centric material (see Chapman, 2017; Townend, 2020; Waite, 2013).
This is compounded by the circular problem of poor outreach leading to the idea that such collections are not used and therefore unnecessary (Townend, 2020; Vincent, 2015). Austerity measures have led to significant cuts and closures for UK public libraries, shrinking collections (Coates, 2019; Flood, 2019). In these circumstances, LGBTIQ+ materials are often seen as lower priority than ‘mainstream’ materials that anticipate high circulation (Chapman and Birdi, 2016). Therefore, adding and retaining LGBTIQ+-focused materials is particularly difficult in the current environment of UK public libraries, meaning this need is likely often unmet.

| 2 | Need for representations of the real world and LGBTIQ+ people’s existence within it. | This seems important for lessening a feeling of being alone in one’s identity (Yeh, 2008). It should be noted that contrary to the conventional idea of reading as escape from the ‘real world’, many LGBTIQ+ readers seek to affirm the presence of queer people in the real world through connection to a “textual other” (Rothbauer, 2004, p. 65). Doing so refutes the idea that one’s experiences are solitary or abnormal (Keilty, 2010; Mehra, 2019b). |
| 3 | Need for material specific to their particular group within the LGBTIQ+ community. | They want material that reflects their particular identity within the larger LGBTIQ+ community (e.g. lesbians express frustration at “male-centric” collections (Creelman and Harris, 1990), bisexual people feel “erased” within LGBTIQ+ collections and want to connect with other |
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This is affirmed in a UK context by Goldthorp’s survey of Scottish lesbians (98% of whom felt that up-to-date collections of fiction by and about lesbians should be provided in Scottish public libraries) (Goldthorp, 2007, p. 238), and Waite’s survey of trans public library users, who sought “both fiction and non-fiction in relation to their gender identity” (43% had a preference for reading literature for pleasure that included trans characters specifically) (2013, pp. 3–20).

They want material that shows positive outcomes for LGBTIQ+ people; what is possible in “moving forward in life having declared a … queer identity” (Rothbauer, 2004, p. 64); and material that counters negative stereotypes found in mainstream media (see also: Austin, 2019; Robinson, 2016; Rothbauer, 2004; Waite, 2013).

This is particularly relevant in the UK. Section 28 specifically warned against materials “promoting” homosexuality, it was those materials with happy endings that library authorities seem to have been the most cautious about stocking, for fear that a positive outcome would be seen as endorsement of a ‘homosexual lifestyle’; this hesitance has lingered after the repeal of the act (Vincent, 2014), sometimes due to the misperception it is still in place (Chapman, 2013). 75% of respondents to Waite’s study of trans library users said they could not think of
examples of trans fiction presenting trans characters in a *positive* way (Waite, 2013).

During different life phases their needs change. For example, when coming out they may seek information on terminology and how to tell friends and family (see Creelman and Harris, 1990; Keilty, 2010; Stevens, 2018). This may be particularly important during youth, especially as many recognise their identity from a young age yet find information suppressed as “inappropriate” (Austin, 2019; Jardine, 2013; Robinson, 2016).

In the UK, Section 28 was largely a backlash to LGBTIQ+ imagery being introduced to children in library and schools (the inciting book being widely accepted as *Jenny lives with Eric and Martin*) (Vincent, 2014). Despite improvements in many areas, there is continued negativity around LGBTIQ+ resources for children, such as the protests against the “No Outsiders” programme in a Birmingham Primary School, and against Drag Queen Storytime (Townend, 2020). Chapman found that UK library workers were uncomfortable promoting LGBTIQ+ collections to children and young people, with anxieties around legality, and possible negativity from parents (Chapman, 2013); and that young adult collections English libraries lacked LGBTIQ+ representation (Chapman and Birdi, 2016). Many LGBTIQ+ titles for children and young people are also published by US publishing houses,
which are less likely be stocked by UK library suppliers (Chapman, 2017).

Yet the majority of LGBTIQ+ people say they knew that they were not straight or cisgender by the age of thirteen, and LGBTIQ+-headed households include even the youngest of children; moreover, there continue to be significant issues with queerphobia and bullying in UK schools (Chapman, 2017). Trans users surveyed by Waite had wanted information about and representations of their identity from a young age, and felt that trans-inclusive children’s literature and YA could be “an immense help to trans children and young people” (Waite, 2013, p. 20).

Much of the available literature, therefore, suggests that UK LGBTIQ+ library users are likely to have particularly strong information needs in the childhood and young adult phases of their lives that are currently poorly met in public libraries.

These patterns of needs over time will also vary between different groups: cisgender queer people may experience more of a “peak” of information needs in youth, whereas transgender people may experience sustained information needs, especially if undergoing medical transition (Jardine, 2013; Lyttan and Laloo, 2020; Waite, 2013); bisexual people are more likely than other queer people to be parents and need information about discussing their sexual orientation and relationships with their children (Brown and Lilton, 2019; Howard, 2011).
They want information from libraries on support for LGBTIQ+ people, e.g. local social groups, financial support and crisis support (see Pierson, 2017; Waite, 2013; Yeh, 2008). It is important to emphasise here that LGBTIQ+ people, especially youth, are at higher risk of homelessness than the general population, most commonly because of “family conflict” over their sexual orientation or gender identity (Winkelstein, 2019, p. 198). Therefore, they might be more likely to need information about homelessness support, and more likely to seek it from the public library in lieu of a private home or personal devices on which to access it (Pierson, 2017; Winkelstein, 2019).

They want legal information about issues particularly affecting LGBTIQ+ people, such as how to change identity documents, adoption, same-sex partnerships and anti-discrimination legislation (Keilty, 2010; Lyttan and Laloo, 2020; Waite, 2013). Amongst some groups, such as trans people, the literature suggests this may be the most important information need (Jardine, 2013).

They want health information about issues particularly affecting LGBTIQ+ people, e.g. HIV/AIDS, mental health, medical gender transition (see Jardine, 2013; Keilty, 2010; Pierson, 2017; Waite, 2013). Again, different groups will have different needs: bisexual people are widely documented as suffering higher rates of suicide and poor mental health than lesbian and gay peers and may have a particularly acute need of mental health resources (Brown and Lilton, 2019).
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<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Internet and peers as key information sources over and above libraries.</strong> LGBITQ+ people do not consistently use public libraries as a first choice to meet these information needs. Many show a strong preference for using the Internet to find factual information or connect with others (Keilty, 2010; Lyttan and Laloo, 2020; Waite, 2013; Yeh, 2008). Where the Internet is used, there may be a preference for private connections, and issues from LGBTIQ+ content being filtered on public library computers (Waite, 2013). Faced with a dearth of information resources, trans people in particular have been shown to frequently create their own, which they share amongst their communities in the form of blogs, zines and message boards (Austin, 2019; Jones et al., 2019; Waite, 2013). This includes health resources, such as the blog Trans Health UK, run by a group of transgender people as a single portal for accessing trans healthcare information (Trans Health UK, n.d.).</td>
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<td><strong>Desire to get their information needs met in public libraries.</strong> However, this is not to say that LGBTIQ+ people do not want to meet these needs through public libraries: on the contrary, where the literature has specifically investigated this, there is consistent evidence that many LGBTIQ+ people do use public libraries, would want to meet their information needs there, and feel that they should have a right to be able to (see Creelman and Harris, 1990; Goldthorp, 2007; Keilty, 2010; Waite, 2013). Moreover, there are downfalls to the current preferred ways of getting information, such as the prevalence of misinformation, irrelevant results, and queerphobic bullying online, or a lack of a connection to local peer groups, which could be curtailed by robust</td>
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public library collections that address these needs (Lyttan and Laloo, 2020, p. 49; Mehra, 2019b). Trans users in Waite’s study preferred looking for information on the Internet, but struggled to find quality information and were often faced with information overload (2013). Library collections could offer an avenue for quality information (e.g. a guide to reliable websites). Keilty also notes that the Internet may be over-represented as a source of information in research surveys, as these are often distribute through Internet communities, and therefore cannot reach participants who are not online (2010).

There are also some singular observations from the literature that are worth noting. In the *Feminist and Queer Information Studies Reader*, Williams and McKenzie discuss the benefits of giving information, e.g. a feeling of relief when discussing traumatic events (Williams and McKenzie, 2013); although now a part of the mainstream discourse on information needs (see Robinson and Bawden, 2015), this is relevant here as a queer reading on information needs that resonates with my anecdotal experiences of LGBTIQ+ people benefiting from creating literature and information resources. Secondly, Pierson notes that there is a tendency in collection development to “collect more LGBTQ fiction than nonfiction and small amounts of LGBTQ nonfiction in general” (Pierson, 2017). This suggests there might be a general need for factual information amongst LGBTIQ+ communities.
3.1.4 Gaps in the Literature

Only the most visible sub-sections of the LGBTIQ+ community are evaluated: cisgender gay men and lesbians, regardless of whether the literature is presented under the complete acronym, often with no attention given to the influencing factors of race or class (2010, p. 3277). There is some literature that specifically addresses aspects of socioeconomic status, e.g. the library use of LGBTIQ+ youth who are homeless (see Robinson, 2016) or the fact that lesbians are at a disadvantage in accessing literature about themselves, as women tend to be poorer than men but lesbian fiction costs more than average (Goldthorp, 2007). However, other intersection, such as with race, have been given even less attention.

For example, this author knows of no research that is specifically focused on the information needs of, or public library services for, BAME LGBTIQ+ people in a Western library context. There are some passing references, e.g. Austin highlights that trans youth of colour may require resources on navigating racism for psychological and even physical wellbeing (2019, p. 75). This is despite the fact that in England, BAME people make up as many as 68.3% of regular library visitors (while only constituting 13% of the general population) (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 2019). Yet a search on LISTA on the 16th October 2020 found no research focussed on this group, when combining various terminology for BAME people with LGBTIQ+ search terms (described in 3.1.1). This disparity is not as prevalent in the literature on archives, which includes UK-specific research (see X et al., 2009 on “rukus!”, the UK’s Black Queer Archive). Others gaps exist around people whose inclusion in the ‘community’ is seen by some contentious, such as asexual people. At
the time of writing, a LISTA search suggests that only one article has been written concerning asexuality and LIS: Watson’s recent publication on critical cataloguing perspectives about asexuality in relation to Library of Congress Subject Headings (2020).

However, there are still a few insights to be gleaned from literature outside of LIS. For example, the UK Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) guidance for supporting trans people of colour (Choudrey, 2016) and a Stonewall 2018 report both highlight issues faced by BAME LGBTIQ+ people that could entail unmet information needs. For example, both discuss the importance of resources specifically by and for BAME people, with 51% of those surveyed by Stonewall having experienced racism within general LGBTIQ+ spaces (Gooch and Bachmann, 2018). Both discuss faith communities as often particularly important to queer BAME people, and that people often have a complicated relationship to ‘coming out’. For some, a faith community may also be their only connection to their heritage (Choudrey, 2016); fear of rejection from these spaces, and thus loss of cultural heritage, may be why higher numbers of BAME LGBTIQ+ people are not open about their sexual orientation (Gooch and Bachmann, 2018). Materials that centre these specific, nuanced experiences and offer help in navigating them or connecting with others who share experiences may be particularly needed.

3.2 Review of Literature on Collection Development
The purpose of this review is three-fold: firstly, to overview the history of and trends in collection development to contextualise this research; secondly, to identify which
areas are considered necessary to address in a collection development policy; and finally, to consider literature particularly relevant to an LGBTIQ+ collection.

3.2.1 Method of Literature Review

In light of this, a comprehensive literature review was not sought, but rather one by which an overview of the field could be created. Collection development and management is a well-established field in LIS, with many secondary materials such as bibliographies available. For example, that prepared by Dr Deborah Lee for the ‘Information Management’ course taught at City, University of London’s Library Science MSc programme in 2019 was particularly useful. There are several insightful summative texts, such as *Fundamental of Collection Development and Management* (Johnson, 2018) and *Collection Development and Management for 21st Century Library Collections: An Introduction* (Gregory, 2019). From these, we can identify seminal primary texts, such as *Collection Development in Libraries: A Treatise* (Stueart and Miller, 1980). Citation searches of these key texts identified what they referenced and more recent material that has built on them.

This was complemented with keyword searches of the City, University of London Library catalogue and LISTA, using the terms ‘collection’ in conjunction with ‘development’ or ‘management’; and later, also LGBTIQ+ terminology to identify any existing work specifically on these areas. These searches yielded journals such as *Collection Building* and *Collection Management* dedicated to current developments in the field. The collection policies of existing LGBTIQ+ library services, some identified through 3.1, formed useful research material for findings more specific to the current topic. For example, the Queer Zine Library’s ‘Collection
Development Manifesto’ (“Collection Development Manifesto,” n.d.) was an insightful example of an LGBTIQ+ collection development policy.

3.2.2 History of Collections Development Research

Johnson gives a comprehensive overview of the history of library collection theory in Fundamentals of Collections Development and Management, which is widely cited and respected in the field (although it focusses heavily on the US and Canada). Drawing from her research, it is clear that modern public library collections are shaped by an opposition to censorship; and the three purposes of collection as articulated by Drury: information, education, and recreation (Johnson, 2018, p. 4; Librarians, 2013). There has been a perennial tension in collection building between “demand” and “value” – or, as Johnson phrases it, “what people want and what librarians believe is good for them” (2018, p. 21).

The term “collection development” was introduced in 1977 (Johnson, 2018, p. 24). Over the next decade or so, “numerous textbooks” on collection development were published, including seminal texts such as “Collections Development in Libraries: A Treatise” (1980) (Johnson, 2018, p. 25). By the end of the 20th century, collection development had been connected to information needs: Evans and Saponaro describe collection development as “the process of meeting the information needs of the people (a service population) in a timely and economical manner” (2000, pp. 15–16). In recent years, much of the academic writing about collections development has been about curating digital collections and e-licensing (see Thomas, 2016).
Other key issues include: whether to have a politically active or neutral stance in collections development; the issue of ‘weeding’, which even formed the topic of an episode of one of the world’s most popular podcasts, *99% Invisible* (“Weeding is Fundamental,” 2019); the possibility of libraries collecting self-published material, again partially due to the advent of digital technologies (see Brown, 2013); and developing specialist collections (e.g. school libraries) or those for particular populations (such as LGBTIQ+ users). For special libraries, there are many useful manuals and professional guides, such as *The Special Libraries Handbook* (Cullingford, 2017). There are a few entries in the academic record advising on collection creation for LGBTIQ+ people (see 3.1.2), as well as bibliographies of recommended LGBTIQ+ books for public library collections (see Clutterbuck-Cook, 2019).

Drawing from this literature, we can conclude that collections development is a process of creating and managing a library collection so that it meets users’ key information needs; that such activities can be governed by a collection development policy, which may include areas such as selection, acquisition and deselection; and that use of the collection styled after current models for public libraries should promote information, education and leisure. This dissertation contributes to current trends in research about the development processes for specific user groups based on information needs.

3.2.3 LGBTIQ+ Collection Policy Statements

There are not very many publicly available collection policies for LGBTIQ+ collections; some are archived, such as the ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives at
USC Libraries, which had listed a policy on its website in 2011 but now has none. Given that there are a limited number of policies to reference, it is useful to look at a couple of key examples: the 2011 policy for the ONE archive and the ‘Collection Development Manifesto’ available for the UK’s Queer Zine Library both have several features of interest to note.

Firstly, both policies define the collection as catering to LGBTIQ+ users. Both discuss the way LGBTIQ+ identity intersects with the creators of and themes in their materials. ONE’s policy states its primary users are the community itself but it also serves those who are not "gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered [sic]", such as researchers (ONE - National Gay & Lesbian Archives, 2011); it does not mention users who identify outside these terms, but nor does it exclude them. In their scope, they state that they seek materials that “are primarily about or which otherwise reflect on or impact the experience of ... [GLBT people]” (ONE - National Gay & Lesbian Archives, 2011). As for the materials’ creators, they “do not collect or retain materials by or about reputedly gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals unless there is some substantial verifiable evidence of the author's or the subject's likely or probably identification as being [GLBT]” (ONE - National Gay & Lesbian Archives, 2011).

The Queer Zine Library dedicates a section to “What do we mean by ‘queer’?”. They say their mission is to make their collection accessible to “queer communities across the UK”, and acknowledge the term as “massive” (i.e. widely encompassing). They elaborate their userbase through listing specific identities, "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual ...", etc., and stating that they ultimately “leave ‘queer’ open
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to self identification [sic] by zine makers” (“Collection Development Manifesto,”
n.d.). This relies on acquiring zines directly from creators. Even where zines are
donated by a third party, the library attempts to contact the original author to ensure
they consent to the collection. Confirming the author’s identification with the
collection is thus possible and allows a broad, self-determined use of the term ‘queer’.
They seek material that is either (i) by people who identify with ‘queer’ (although not
necessarily about being queer) and / or (ii) about ‘queerness’; they broadly summarise
their collection as having a “queer focus”.

The policies differ in their political stances. ONE reference censorship, and in
doing so align themselves with the ALA’s bill of rights and its interpretations (ONE -
National Gay & Lesbian Archives, 2011). Beyond this, there is no explicit discussion
of political positioning or ethical issues. QZL, on the other hand, state in their opening
paragraph that “Queer Zine Library is political” (presumably to distinguish
themselves from collections that define themselves as politically neutral) (“Collection
Development Manifesto,” n.d.) and discuss ethical issues throughout. For example, as
well as calling their policy a ‘manifesto’, they state early on that they seek to collect
zines as part of a “rejection of capitalist mainstream publishing” and as a resistance to
fascism (“Collection Development Manifesto,” n.d.).

Having clearly established their political stance, much of the ethics they
discussed is not centred on the usual issues of censorship and neutrality, but rather the
economics of acquisition: they seek to pay zine donators where possible, as only
acquiring from those who can afford to donate is not “fully inclusive”; they do not
purchase from third party sellers as they “don’t believe in book sellers profiting from
Another ethical issue discussed in cataloguing, which the manifesto states should include “queer voices” in determining the metadata for self-published works (“Collection Development Manifesto,” n.d.). When comparing these two policies, it is worth considering that, whereas ONE archive apparently consider that the ALA general guidelines are appropriate for their specialist collection, QZL state that the nature of their collection requires a specific set of political and ethical principles. This is not only because of the historical marginalization of queer people (including in libraries) but also the counterculture nature of zines (“Collection Development Manifesto,” n.d.).

Finally, it is also notable that both policies cover similar areas of collection management and are structured along these lines: an introduction to the collection and the policy’s purpose; the history of the collection; an overview of the collection’s current size and makeup; issues of access and preservation; limitations and items outside of scope; their emphasis; and methods of acquisition. This suggests these are core areas. ONE’s policy has more granular detail about editions, quantities, etc., and what is ‘emphasised’ (i.e. prioritised) amongst materials that all fall within its scope. QZL includes more detailed information about the priorities for future collecting (i.e. “zines by and about queer sex workers”) (“Collection Development Manifesto,” n.d.).

3.2.4 Areas to be Considered in a Collection Development Policy

Drawing from this, we can review the areas covered by most collection policies, taking into account professional recommendations. A key distinction at this point is which model of policy we are using. Johnson divides existing models into narrative,
classed, or combined narrative and class (Johnson, 2018, p. 94). The first is a textual
description of the collection, sometimes known as a collection profile, and may
comprise multiple profiles for different sections. A classed model uses numerical
encoding that translates to a classification scheme, such as Dewey Decimal, and not
only describes the current collection levels but outlines desired ‘depth’ of collection
area on an incremental scale (Johnson, 2018, p. 95). A combined model takes aspects
of both as they are useful to writing the collection plan. For Book 28 Library, a
narrative model is appropriate.

Within narrative models, Johnson suggests the following areas should be
addressed:

- The user community
- Limits to the collection and its emphases
- Material type(s) (collected or excluded)
- Who is responsible for collection
- “other local factors”

(Johnson, 2018, p. 95)

This is encompassed within her broader recommendations for areas to be
addressed in all collection policies. Guidelines vary greatly, but some areas are often
covered:

- Types of material are (/not) selected
- The criteria that guide selection
- Replacement / withdrawal / weeding / multiples
Diverse perspectives, intellectual freedom, challenges to library materials are often covered (possibly in sections above)

Self-published materials are frequently referenced because of their volume, sometimes just to say normal criteria apply

Donations and special collections / reference materials may be addressed in supplements

Policies should consider accessibility of the collection (although it may do so in other sections).

(Johnson, 2018, pp. 91–92)

Others take a slightly different approach that still yields similar coverage. For example, Hibner and Kelly argue for a more “holistic” approach in which collection policy integrates efficiently into the workflow of the library organisation (Hibner and Kelly, 2013). They recommend structuring a statement around the ‘lifecycle’ a resource will see within the collection, with best practices and workflows for each stage, which will serve as opportunities to evaluate the collection on a continuous basis:

1. Selection
2. Acquisition
3. Processing and cataloguing
4. Shelving
5. Checkout (use)
6. Re-shelving
7. Repair and maintenance
8. Weed or replace

(Hibner and Kelly, 2013)

Synthesising these recommendations with the commonalities found in our LGBTIQ+ collection policies, we can produce an outline of areas to be considered in the Book 28 collection development policy (see Table 4).

**Table 4: Areas to be Addressed in a Collection Development Policy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>History of the collection</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defining the user community</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mission, goals and objectives of collection / library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships to other institutions and statement of responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>Criteria for inclusion (including emphasis / scope)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statement on LGBTIQ+ content and authorship</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Priorities for future collecting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Types of material preferred (including accessibility considerations)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Where suggestions are sourced (e.g. community selection)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statement on political neutrality and censorship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquisitions</td>
<td>Consideration of multiples</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-publishing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Preferred suppliers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Donations and funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>How the items are categorised</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How items are made ready-for-shelf</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disposals</th>
<th>How items can be accessed and borrowed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintenance / repair policy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Criteria for weeding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Process of disposal</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 4. Reflection-in-Action: an account of developing the policy

Having established both the policy areas to be addressed and the standard against which policies should be assessed, here follows a summary of my thoughts and opinions on policy for each section; problems I have encountered and how I addressed them; and the policy section that resulted from these thought processes. These same sections can be read a piece of continuous text in Appendix A. This section is prefaced by a brief overview of the goals and values of Book 28’s collection, as relevant to creation for a policy thereof.

#### 4.1 Focus, Goals and Values of Book 28 Library

The goals and values of Book 28 Library will affect collection decisions. Book 28 Library’s goal is to address some of the consistent, recognised information needs of LGBTQ+ people that go unmet in public libraries (which they might reasonably expect to meet through a “comprehensive” and “efficient” library (Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964)), while advocating for better provision through the mainstream. Our small physical collection in London cannot cover all gaps in provision across the UK, and the local authority, Islington, maintains one of the stronger LGBTQ+ collections in London. Therefore it is sometimes more appropriate to signpost patrons onwards than provide materials ourselves.
As for values, Book 28’s formal values are as follows:

Intersectional: collaborating with the full spectrum of LGBTIQ+ community. Books: harnessing the power of reading for pleasure, celebrating the written word. Accessible: striving to include everyone in our conversations. Public: advocating for funded public libraries that welcome all (Book 28 Library, 2020).

We envision a library’s ultimate purpose as “knowledge creation”, in line with David R. Lankes’ writing on the subject (2012, p. 31), and believe facilitating reading for pleasure to be a particularly important value for any library, especially given the potential psychological and economic benefits to a marginalised community such as LGBTIQ+ people (Billington and Quick Reads, 2015). We are guided by Fobazi Ettarh’s formulation of “vocational awe” and the way it can limit library provision through library workers’ reticence to be critical about what they feel is an inherently benevolent vocation, leaving shortfalls unaddressed (Ettarh, 2018). We do not hold neutrality in our collection as a key value, as the concept has been much criticised in recent scholarship as not only untenable in the face of non-neutral social pressures on marginalised groups, but also a-historical (Gibson et al., 2017). The need for a project such as Book 28 Library is evidence that libraries have not historically been neutral in their provision for LGBTIQ+ people and that adequate provision would not be best achieved by treating such populations ‘neutrally’, rather than specifically and actively engaging with unique needs.

4.2 Introduction to the Policy
This is the section in which I seek to familiarise readers with the role and nature of the library collection, to contextualise the later policy decisions.
4.2.1 History of the Collection

*Reflections*

It is hard to know how to parcel information amongst the introductory statements. For example, the community being served will no doubt be relevant to the history of the collection, but will also receive more attention in a section solely on defining the user community and their needs. Following guidelines such as those of Hoffman and Wood (2005) and Johnson (2018), this should be brief and concerned with orienting the layperson unfamiliar with the library. Hoffman and Wood in particular argue for an overview that includes not just historical information, but geographic and basic demographic data. I believe it should come further through the policy, as both Johnson and Hoffman and Wood suggest that justifying statements such as missions, goals and objectives should be the first items, prefaced perhaps by a justification and purpose for the policy itself.

*Policy Passage*

*Background*

Book 28 Library was founded as a voluntary project in late 2019 by Isadore Auerbach George, after his initial research into the poor state of public library provision for LGBTIQ+ people in the UK. It has so far been a collaborative project with The Outside Project, the UK’s first LGBTIQ+ Homeless Shelter and Community Centre, who had a small donated book collection that they needed sorted and managed. The centre now houses the collection, where it is accessible for onsite browsing by members of the public visiting the community centre and shelter guests. The collection aims to provide LGBTIQ+ material to LGBTIQ+ readers, and has grown through book donations in its first year of operation. However, the site was
inaccessible for most of 2020 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The library’s activities mostly focused on virtual, social programming and signposting to online information resources in its first year. The library is now run by a small team of volunteers and collaborates with other groups who work in the LGBTIQ+ literary world, such as the UK’s specialist LGBTIQ+ booksellers, public libraries wanting to improve service, queer archives, and collectives such as the Queer Zine Library.’

4.2.2 Defining the User Community

Reflections

We have clearly established that the library aims to serve LGBTIQ+ users as their primary audience, with a secondary audience of those who are allies or are otherwise seeking information on LGBTIQ+ issues. Users of the physical library will often encounter it as a consequence of use of the wider centre that houses it. The Outside Project makes no specific statement elaborating on its userbase beyond the acronym ‘LGBTIQ+’, which stands for ‘Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans[gender], Intersex, Queer [/Questioning], and Other (“The Project,” n.d.). The entrance to the centre is discreet, so most visitors arrive knowing what it is there for, which presumably means they have identified with some part of it (perhaps with the nebulously-defined ‘Queer’) or are at least comfortable in the space. There are compelling reasons to not seek to define the LGBTIQ+ nature of centre users too granularly beyond this. The director of the centre has highlighted survey data on the UK’s homeless population that shows that “prefer not to say” was the second most common answer to what sexuality the respondent held after “heterosexual”; yet LGBTIQ+ people make up an estimated 25% of the UK’s homeless population - combined with their professional
experience, they conclude that “our community [LGBTIQ+ people] do not feel safe discussing their sexuality or gender identity when rough sleeping” (Ecola, 2019).

Moreover, the LGBTIQ+ acronym is imperfect and defined within the context of a Western society with certain precepts about gender, sexuality and what is classed as deviation from the norm, which are by no means shared by all cultures. Given that these gender and sexual norms were often imposed violently by European colonists, some peoples have particular motivation to reject identification within the acronym as part of reclaiming their cultural heritage. See, for example, Joshua Whitehead’s withdrawal of his work from consideration for the Lambda Literary Award for trans poetry, on the basis that his identity as a “Two-Spirit, queer indigenous” person is not a concept that fit within Western paradigms of queerness (“Joshua Whitehead,” 2018). I believe we must be mindful that there are those who might use and benefit from our services who will not easily identify with one or two clear letters from the ‘LGBTIQ+’ acronym. I, and several other Book 28 volunteers, must be further mindful of our own assumptions as white people.

It is easy to question whether there is any coherence to this userbase described as a “community”, and whether they might share information needs that could be commonly met by one service. Some argue that intersex people, for example, should not be lumped in with LGBTQ+ people as their identity derives from physical traits (rather than attraction or gender expression) (Alice Dreger, 2015). Further, some of the issues we have found in public libraries are associated with particular groups: Section 28 specifically targeted positive representations of same-gender partners as being “pretended family relationships” (Vincent, 2015), which means that LGBTIQ+
people who seek or are engaged in same-gender partnerships might be particularly adversely affected by the negative consequences of Section 28 on library services. However, as the review in Section 3.1 revealed, there are indeed common threads throughout much of the literature.

Even as people want to find information that reflects their own particular community, they share the common barriers that such information has been suppressed. This is historically due to a perception of abnormality and deviance; stigmatised as inappropriate for discussion in public or by children. Where such information exists, it is often riddled with negative stereotypes or written exclusively from an outsider perspective. Gender and sexuality are the two interlinked commonalities that bring LGBTIQ+ people together, along with stigmas that share roots in sexism and homophobia: essentially, what a man or woman should be, and how they should relate to one another. One or many from: family structure, personal relationships, healthcare needs, legal rights, and sexual practices, will likely differ for LGBTIQ+ persons from the norm presented in mainstream media, and this translates into needs for representation in resources. Further, people who have one minority experience of gender, sexual orientation or practice (e.g. intersex people, asexual people, members of the ‘kink’ community) are often more likely to otherwise identify as LGBTIQ+ (e.g. in one UK survey, trans people were much more likely to identify as asexual (Mourdant, 2018); in a Australian survey, 52% of intersex respondents identified other than as heterosexual (Jones et al., 2016); another Australian survey found that bisexual, lesbian and gay respondents were much more likely to say that they had been involved in BDSM activities in the past year (Richters et al., 2008)).
These commonalities result in information needs that might be met by one specialised service, albeit through diverse and varied resources. Our work with users of the library service goes beyond passive inheritance of a userbase from the centre, to actively curating our collections, outreach and virtual events for our target audience. As such, I believe it is appropriate for us to follow the example set by QZL and ONE Archive and explain how we are defining LGBTIQ+, but to make clear that we take a broad interpretation, based on those whose needs are often unmet in mainstream public libraries owing to their sexuality, gender identity or expression being marginalised and stigmatised by a mainstream culture with tendencies towards homophobia and sexism.

As to demographic makeup beyond LGBTIQ+ identity, there is little information available. The Outside Project does not hold user statistics, and, being based by King’s Cross, is accessible to users from all parts of London and beyond. Being the first organisation of its kind in the UK, it is not unlikely that some people might travel a great distance to use the service. Similarly, Book 28 has so far collected no demographic data about users of its services run independently of the centre, such as virtual talks. There are only two more demographic characteristics we can glean: the centre is technically for people aged 18+ so, although no identification is needed to enter the centre (and it is an alcohol-free space), we can assume that most users will be adults; secondly, as it also serves as a shelter and works extensively with homeless LGBTIQ+ people, we can assume there will be much higher numbers of people experiencing homelessness amongst our users than in the general population.
Policy Passage

‘Target Users of the Library
Our primary audience as a library are those who use the Outside Project Centre, either to visit or as shelter guests, and others in the UK LGBTIQ+ community. We understand ‘LGBTIQ+’ to stand for ‘Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans[gender], Intersex, Queer / Questioning and Other’. We do not police people’s identities and use a broad definition of queerness that recognises anyone whose needs might be underserved by public libraries because of their minority or marginalised gender identity and expression, or sexual orientation and practice. A secondary audience is those who do not identify with any part of LGBTIQ+ but who would still like to engage with LGBTIQ+ material, e.g. as ‘allies’; however, their needs are not centred in our collection. We primarily cater to adults, although we provide some resources aimed at children (which we recognise many adults enjoy or may want to share with children in their life). We recognise that our work with the Outside Project means we will serve many people experiencing homelessness, and we seek to prioritise their needs within our collection.’

4.2.3 Missions, Goals and Objectives of the Collection and Library

Reflections

I have written throughout this research about the missions of the project and library collection, in order to contextualise the research itself. My aim in writing up this section is to recapitulate these discussions into a single, clear statement that is public-facing, and makes clear the role of the policy in achieving these. In doing so I am mindful of the guidance of both Johnson (2018) and Hoffman and Wood (2005) to include the purpose of the policy within the introduction; and, from the latter, to move
from the general to the specific by combining library mission with collection goal and objectives in one coherent section.

_Policy Passage_

‘Mission, Goals and Objectives of the Library and its Collection

The purpose of this policy is to outline how our collection aims to help us achieve our goals, and to make clear to everyone the thought process of what we choose to have in our collection and why. Book 28’s mission is to provide LGBTIQ+ readers with LGBTIQ+ books, while drawing attention to the gaps in public library service for LGBTIQ+ people in the UK and working towards making things better. Our current goal is to expand our collection overall, and in doing so build a collection that is comprehensive, inclusive, and caters to the varied needs and desires in our community. We also hope to promote LGBTIQ+ creators while bringing the benefits of reading to more queer people.

Our current objectives for our collection are to:

i. fill the space we have at the Outside Project, who house the collection, while expanding our representation of …
   a. ‘genre’ fictions such as sci-fi and fantasy
   b. formats to include audio CDs as well as more graphic novels and zines
   c. material centring particular groups, such as asexual and intersex people

ii. implement a loaning system so that the collection can be accessed off-site’
4.2.4 Relationships to Other Institutions and Statements of Responsibility

Reflections

Although Book 28 Library has worked with a number of groups, we have no ongoing relationships with anyone except the Outside Project. There has been a clear boundary established in our working relationship: Book 28 is trusted to provide LGBTIQ+ books in the centre, and is responsible for the material in the library. As it is housed in their space, requests from the team and residents of the shelter are given high priority. Within the team of Book 28 volunteers, responsibility is less clear-cut. By having guidelines that everyone can see and agree upon, there is a possibility of having the director of the library (myself) ultimately responsible, but able to delegate to others. If decisions are unpopular, this means there is a figurehead responsible for addressing concerns. This is the most common model for assigning responsibility about collection decisions (Hoffmann and Wood, 2005).

Queer Zine Library demonstrate an alternative model. They eschew hierarchies and attempt to decrease bias by making decisions about the library collectively and through consensus (“Collection Development Manifesto,” n.d.). There are advantages to this model (community buy-in, decreased hierarchy, and the checks on ‘vocational awe’), but I believe that the first model currently makes more sense for Book 28. There is an unequal distribution of collections knowledge, and a range of confidence in making these decisions, as I am the only person with formal librarianship training. I am also the primary research of this policy and have conducted most the project development and decision-making, while waiting for more volunteers to join the team. However, I believe it would be advantageous to redraft
the policy with the input of the whole team in the future, and to continue to work
towards re-balancing the project input and responsibility towards a horizontal,
collective model to realise the benefits.

*Policy Passage*

‘Statement of Relationships and Responsibility
Book 28 is housed by the Outside Project, but is responsible for collection decisions
made in the library within the centre (albeit with prioritised input from Outside
Project staff, volunteers, users and guests). Within the library team, the director is
ultimately responsible for collection decisions, although these may be delegated to
any and all volunteers to carry out, in line with this policy. As document is redrafted
and reshaped by the community, and our team grows in skills, experience and
confidence, we hope to move towards a collective model of consensus-based decision
making about our collections.’

4.3 Selection

‘Selection’ refers to all activities in which titles and materials are identified to be
added to the collection. As such, it covers many aspects, from which titles should be
chosen, to the format preferred, to statements on censorship, political values and how
to make prioritising decisions between multiple options. Within this, the “evaluative
criteria” form the “core of the collection policy” (Hoffmann and Wood, 2005, p. 41).

4.3.1 Criteria for Inclusion

*Reflections*

In writing about the criteria for inclusion, or the “evaluative criteria” to use Hoffman
and Wood’s term, we must keep in mind the information needs of our target audience
as discussed in Section 3.2. There are also some considerations drawn from anecdotal experience: many of our users have complained about the dominance of American authors in this area, and especially value resources from the UK. When discussing collection criteria, we must first establish whether a resource is within the scope of the collection; secondly, we must establish the criteria by which we establish priority between different items – our emphasis - as the collection cannot hold and maintain every piece of material in scope.

We have already established that Book 28 Library’s scope is LGBTIQ+ literature, which has a working definition of material that is about LGBTIQ+ people, themes or issues (i.e. centres on them); this is the main unmet collection area in public libraries that we seek to address. There is then a question of whether to limit the scope to material by LGBTIQ+ people. To answer this, we can refer to the need established in Section 3.1: the need for representations of the real world and LGBTIQ+ people’s existence within it; the need for information on LGBTIQ+ communities; the use of LGBTIQ+ peers as key information sources; and the need for positive portrayals. Taking the first three together, it is clear that collecting material by openly LGBTIQ+ people, especially where it reflects on their own experience, could act as a key way of meeting these needs.

As for positive portrayals, although a person who does not belong to a particular LGBTIQ+ group is of course capable of writing well-researched and positive portrayals of that group, it is important to acknowledge the precedent for a dominant culture writing negative portrayals of a marginalised group, and having their writing promoted above that which emerges from members of the group itself (Mains,
2009). In the field of LGBTIQ+ literature, Dr Harry Josephine Giles notes that although transgender themes may have enjoyed periods of literary popularity (e.g. crossdressing killers in mid-century pulp books), a book identifiably about and by an openly transgender person was not published until 1993, with *Stone Butch Blues* by Leslie Feinberg (2020). However, this does not mean that transgender people were not creating material about their experiences. Roz Kaveny’s *Tiny Pieces of Skull*, now considered a classic of transgender literature, was completed in 1988 but she was unable to find a publisher until 2015 because of the stigmatised material (Giles, 2020).

This reflects the trend in which material by a marginalised community less often conforms to dominant (negative) stereotypes of that group, and is therefore harder to publish and disseminate in the mainstream. As such, sharing material that is written by LGBTIQ+ people may also lead to more positive, or at least nuanced, portrayals in the collection, as well as supporting LGBTIQ+ creators. There is a wider movement in literature to promote and publish more “Own Voices” literature, a term donating a book is both by and about a member of a marginalised community (Duyvis, n.d.). As well as selecting LGBTIQ+ ‘own voices’ literature, Book 28 may also want to look at DIY and countercultural material published outside of the mainstream. For example, a close contender an early piece of fiction by and about a trans writer was the experimental novella *Tse Tse Terrorism* by CaiRa, also written in the early 1990s; this was never officially ‘published’, but was distributed through the zine ‘Gendertrash’, between 1993 and 1995, and was nearly lost to history before the zine was rediscovered and archived (Giles, 2020).
However, there are strong arguments against excluding material that is not written by LGBTIQ+ people. Creators may not be openly LGBTIQ+, and we are less likely to know the self-identification of the author than collections such as Queer Zine Library who acquire materials through self-identifying creators choosing to donate (“Collection Development Manifesto,” n.d.). Similarly, as was discussed in 4.1.2, it is often problematic to try and pin down exactly who does or does not ‘count’ as LGBTIQ+. There is also a problem of granularity: does someone need to identify with the specific identity portrayed within their work, or any LGBTIQ+ identity? What about works with multiple main characters or broad LGBTIQ+ themes? In addition, how should we class people who created works before modern terminology was available to them?

Finally, there is the question of factual, health and legal information. Although it has previously been noted that LGBTIQ+ people are often at the forefront of creating and disseminating such resources within their communities, it is no doubt often contributed to by doctors, lawyers and other professionals who may or may not themselves be LGBTIQ+. I believe, there, that it makes more sense to say that our scope is limited to books that are about LGBTIQ+ people, issues and themes, and that strong emphasis is given to material also created by LGBTIQ+ people. It is worth addressing the issue of LGBTIQ+ authorship and aboutness in its own section within the policy, similarly to the section on defining the user community.

As for other areas of emphasis, these too should derive from information needs, as well as the systemic issues identified. For example, it seems logical that emphasis should be given to material that likely would have been suppressed by
Section 28, and which is not already commonly or easily available in local public libraries (see Figure 1). There are also generally considered in collection decisions, such as whether a resource is considered to be a classic or the only substantial information resource on a particular topic (Hoffmann and Wood, 2005, p. 41).

**Figure 1: Initial conceptualisation of the areas of emphasis (June, 2020).** This diagram was made in attempt to capture my thoughts at the time of our overlapping areas of emphasis. For example, *50 Shades of Grey* (James, 2011) has been interpreted as ‘queer’ by some commentators, for transgressing mainstream portrayals of sexuality (Downing, 2013). This contrasts with *Freshwater* (Emezi, 2019), whose author often views their work’s queer themes through the lens of Igbo spirituality rather than gender, sexuality and ‘LGBTIQ+’ identity (Masters, 2020).

As for areas of de-emphasis, this overlaps with discussions of censorship and political values within the collection, which deserve their own section in the policy. For example, given that so many queer BAME people have been alienated by racism within the LGBTIQ+ community (see 3.1.4), we might de-emphasise material that is likely to be found racist. Yet entirely occluding such materials give the impression that such works have not occurred in LGBTIQ+ literature, and negate opportunities for discussion. Further, in doing so, we might imply that we endorse all views of those
materials that remain in the collection. Therefore, rather than occluding books with offensive material, it makes sense to count this as a mark against their favour, requiring that they be justified in some other way (e.g. widely considered a classic).

In how to present these criteria for and against emphasis / prioritisation, Hoffman and Wood warn that policies often list criteria in arbitrary order, going from general to specific (2005, p. 41). Following Johnson’s three models of collection policy (see 3.2.4), we have so far used a narrative model; but it may be worth considering her comment that a combined model can provide “the most useful features” of both narrative and classed, and thus a possible solution to arbitrary lists of criteria (2018, p. 96). As such, something of a ‘scorecard’ method could be used to evaluate and prioritise materials competing for resources, with areas of emphasis / deemphasis corresponding to higher or lower scores. As long as it is clear that this is only a selection aid to help weight up multiple areas of emphasis within the collection, rather than an objective assessment of the value of the material.

Further limitations of this method, which will need to be addressed in the policy, are (i) it is perhaps most useful for assessing fiction novels, (ii) that it is hard to decide on how much weight each factor should add / detract to the score, and (iii) that the assessments are still ultimately subjective. As for weighing factors, it seems simplest that each factor in favour should be given the same weighting, and that the accumulation of many factors leading to a high score would reflect a material sitting squarely within all areas of emphasis and at a high likelihood for selection. However, some of the possible detracting factors, such as a book being readily available in many public libraries, would realistically lower the priority for this material by more
than a single point. Since there are fewer detracting factors, it makes sense to weigh their occurrence more heavily. When considering particular areas of the collection, such as factual, up-to-date reference information about healthcare, few factors may be as relevant as the reliability of the material. Given all these together, it is important that the evaluative framework is presented in a way that makes it clear that it is one tool that might be used by selectors when appropriate and cannot eliminate subjectivity in collection decisions.

*Policy Passage*

*Evaluative Criteria*
In the Book 28 collection, we only include books that are clearly about LGBTIQ+ issues, people or themes, where these characters and subjects are central to the work. This is because research suggests that many LGBTIQ+ people want to read works where people like them are the main characters, and not side characters to referred to in passing. Compared to incidental representation, this seems to be an area that public libraries in the UK often fail to keep diverse, plentiful and up-to-date in their collections. Common complaints include that collections represent only a small part of the LGBTIQ+ community, are outdated, full of negative stereotypes and dominated by literature from the US. Beyond this, there are lots of factors to consider when we are deciding what materials we should have in the library, such as whether they were also written by people who are openly LGBTIQ+. Because we have limited resources and space, we cannot choose to have every book in the library, and will sometimes need to pick one book over the other.
Our goal is to create a collection that meets the needs of LGBTIQ+ people that often go unmet in public libraries. Below is a set of criteria that can be used to evaluate possible items and give them a score, based on how many factors they meet: a higher score suggests a book may be of higher priority for our collection. The person making the selection decision can then take this into account with any other factors they consider relevant. No one factor will generally rule a book in or out completely, and the score is not meant to represent an objective assessment of how valuable that book is in general. It is merely meant as a guide when making difficult decisions about which books to get for our collection; decisions are still ultimately subjective, and always open to appeal. Neither will it always be appropriate to use this tool, depending on what area of the collection are being developed. Such decisions should always be considered in conjunction with any temporary collection objectives and priorities.

**Table 5: Evaluative criteria for selecting materials**

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Is the creator of this work openly LGBTIQ+?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Would this material likely have been suppressed under Section 28 (seen to be “promoting” homosexuality, presenting it as a “pretended” family relationship?)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Does this material have a happy ending or otherwise positive themes?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Does this material centre an LGBTIQ+ group (e.g. asexuals, bisexuals) that are currently not as well represented in the collection as others?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Does this material represent a genre (e.g. horror, poetry, nonfiction) that is currently not as well represented in the collection as others?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Is this material in a format (e.g. zine, audio CD, graphic novel) that is not currently as well represented in the collection as others?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Is the material set outside of the US, and by a US author?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Does this work centre the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people who also experience racism?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Does this work centre the experience of LGBTIQ+ people of faith?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Does this work centre the experiences of working class LGBTIQ+ people?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Does this work centre the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people experiencing homelessness?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Does this work centre the experiences of disabled and / or chronically ill LGBTIQ+ people?</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.2 Statement on LGBTIQ+ authorship and themes

Reflections

As with clarifying for readers how we are interpreting LGBTIQ+ in terms of our userbase, it is also worth clarifying how we interpret “LGBTIQ+ literature” as this is our main scope. However, having established our interpretation of the acronym itself in 4.1.2, we need only clarify how we are applying this to materials and creators, rather than users, and to restate recognition of the subjectivity of such decisions and the possibility of appeal. As this statement covers the primary scope of our collection, it may in fact create better narrative flow to place it before our criteria for inclusion.

Policy Passage

‘Statement on LGBTIQ+ Works and Creators

The primary scope of the Book 28 Library collection is LGBTIQ+ works. We use the same interpretation of LGBTIQ+ here as when defining the user community. Our focus is on material where the LGBTIQ+ themes, characters and issues are the main and central to the work, although we recognise that judging whether this is the case is
ultimately subjective. Similarly, we prioritise collecting work by creators who we know identify as LGBTIQ+, but due to the various difficulties of knowing how all creators identify, we do not limit our work solely to people who are openly queer. As with all our collection decisions, we are open to appeal and suggestions.’

4.3.3 Priorities for Future Collecting

Reflections

Priorities for future collecting have been addressed in other similar statements examined in 3.2.4. We have already discussed some objectives for the library collection in 4.1.3, which emerged from the everyday running of the library. It is logical that discussing more detailed priority areas would come after a thorough evaluation of the collection, using one or more of the methods described by commentators such as Hoffman and Wood, who regard evaluation as “one of the most important collection management functions” (Hoffmann and Wood, 2005).

However, due to the fact that the collection is currently uncatalogued, and evaluation is limited to onsite methods, the unforeseen disruption of the current COVID-19 pandemic means that, as of January 2021, it has unfortunately been impossible to carry our such an evaluation during the commission of this research. Rather than make conjecture about what areas we might need to work on, it seems better to reserve a discussion of priorities for future collecting until such a time as an evaluation can be carried out. Instead, it seems more important to include a passage on our commitment to evaluating the collection, and methods we might use to do so, along with other statements about maintenance and organization of items in the collection.
Reflections

Consideration of the types of material preferred including both general format (e.g. audio CD vs codex), down to granular preferences for paperback vs hardback, first edition vs later edition, etc., guided by financial, capacity and collection priority considerations. One reason to include such a statement is to make clear the limitations of types of material provided, e.g. the inability to license digital material due to expense (Hoffmann and Wood, 2005). However, format and types of material provided also provide a key juncture at which to consider the accessibility of the collection.

Small et al. note that there are four major barriers to increasing the accessibility of library collections: insufficient resources, decisions not being in the library’s control, patrons not being aware of provisions available for them, and librarians lack appropriate knowledge or skills (2015). Although we cannot eliminate all these barriers, taking the time to consider accessibility in a collection development policy decreases the problems of staff and patron unawareness of what is available, as well forcing library services to consider and justify resource allocation. There are multiple considerations at play. Many people have difficulty reading traditional print books, for reasons including: physical visual impairment; “print blindness”, such as that sometimes resulting from dyslexia; or having a physical disability that means it is hard to hold and manipulate books (The National Accessible Library, 2020). Although no one solution will fit all people, considerations such as audio formats,
large print, dyslexia-friendly fonts and more weighted, coloured paper are key
(Library Services to People with Special Needs and Libraries Serving Persons with

Another important factor is the complexity of the language items, and whether
this is accessible to people who may rely on simple, short content, such as those with
learning difficulties or speakers of English as an additional language; provision of
“easy read” materials is in line with Article 21 of the Human Rights Act 1998, which
states that disabled persons should have free access to information equal to others
through provision of accessible formats at no extra costs (North Yorkshire County
Council, n.d., p. 4). There is also overlap between accessibility to different groups.
For example, audio CD provision might considered for the visually impaired, but it is
also very popular amongst people with learning difficulties as this allows them to
access information privately without mediation from someone to read for them (North
Yorkshire County Council, n.d.).

Looking at LGBTIQ+-specific needs, as discussed in 3.1.4, there is a lack of
discussion in the LIS literature about the needs of disabled LGBTIQ+ people. What
we do know suggests that this is an area in which we must develop our collection to
meet needs: in their evaluation of young adult LGBTIQ+ collections in English
libraries, Chapman and Birdi found that more accessible formats, such as large print
or audio CD, were particularly neglected in LGBTIQ+ collections (Chapman and
Birdi, 2016); a 2018 systematic review of sexuality issues and the needs of adults with
learning difficulties found that a lack of knowledge was a consistent issue, with adults
voicing the desire to be supported in gaining information about sexuality, and that the
needs and experiences of lesbians and transgender people with learning difficulties were particularly neglected (Brown and McCann, 2018). Therefore the accessibility of formats is definitely a key consideration for Book 28 Library’s collection development policy, albeit with reasonable limitations (for example, we currently do not have the budget and licensing ability to run a digital library; alternative formats, such as large print, are not available for all titles, and are usually more expensive to create and purchase (Wood, 2019)).

Finally, a consideration of complexity of language leads naturally to a consideration of which languages are included in the collection. As discussed in 4.1.2, the Outside Project does not currently collect any demographic information on its general users, including that of language, and attracts a diverse userbase through its central London location. Due to the lack of clear information about which community languages might be prioritised, it makes sense to limit our current scope to works in English. However, if more information about the languages of the users becomes available, endeavouring to provide some materials in community languages would be a desirable goal.

Policy Passage

‘Formats, Accessibility and Language
Book 28 Library attempts to collect book in a wide range of formats, to be as accessible as possible, to as many people as possible. This includes considering audio CDs, large print, and easy-read versions of information resources. We also try to provide a range of lengths and types of reading material, including zines, graphic novels and illustrated books alongside longer chapter books.
We are limited in this by a few factors. Firstly, not all books are available in alternative formats, and LGBTIQ+ material is often published by small, independent publishers who are less likely to be able to pay for more expensive formats, such as the professional readings necessary for audio CDs. Secondly, even where material is available, Book 28 Library will not always have the resources to acquire, store and license it. For example, we do not currently have the resources to license our own digital library with eBooks, although we do signpost to free external resources on our website. However, despite these limitations, we are committed to trying to provide as many formats as possible, including by purchasing multiple copies of the same work in different formats, and advocating for the publication of LGBTIQ+ materials in formats that are accessible to all.

As for language, we try to collect as much easy-read material as possible, in order to be more accessible both to those with learning difficulties and those who are not fluent in English. Beyond this, our collection focuses on English language materials. We are enthusiastic about creating collections of LGBTIQ+ materials in more languages in the future, but would like to first research which languages other than English are spoken most often by our userbase.

4.3.5 Where suggestions are sourced (e.g. community selection)

Reflections

Possible materials for selection can be found in a variety of ways. This includes looking at selection aids such as book reviews, for which there are many specialist blogs and reviewers dedicated to LGBTIQ+ works. Others include: discussions with LGBTIQ+ specialist booksellers; the observation of longlists, shortlists and winners
of prizes, such as the UK’s Polari Prize for “emerging and established LGBTQ+ literary talent” (Burston, n.d.); and looking through archives of works that are likely to have open creative commons licenses that would allow them to be printed and housed in the library, such as the Queer Zine Archive Project.

Alongside all of these, sourcing suggestions from the community is key, as this increases buy-in from library users if they feel their voices are heard, as well as being a check on the biases of the normal team of selectors, and a more direct way for users to voice what materials they want to meet their needs. Currently, we are able only to accept suggestions for stock through a digital form, but when onsite provision resumes physical forms and a suggestion box can be implemented, as well as maximising general contact and discussion time with library users to be able to casually field suggestions. Once a material is suggested, it should then be subjected to the same selection process as any other possible material, although we may want to give additional weight to the fact that this work was specifically asked for.

Policy Statement

‘Suggestions

We want Book 28 Library to house a collection that is by and for the LGBTIQ+ community, so suggestions from users for new titles are very important to us. We want to acquire as many suggested titles as possible. Unfortunately, we are not able to add every title as we have limited space and resources, so suggested titles will be through the same process as any other work. We aim for total transparency in our decision-making process, and can keep you up to date and informed about our decisions on your suggestion(s), as well as offering a route to appeal if we decide not
to purchase your requested title at this time. Currently, the best way of suggesting a title for the library is to use the digital form found by following the link below.

Suggestions form: u.nu/7bv5j

We hope to offer paper forms and a suggestion box when the library reopens.
Alternatively, feel free to chat to us in person about what you would like to see in the library.’

4.3.6 Statement on political neutrality and censorship

Reflections

The values of the project, as they relate to the collection, are discussed in section 1.2.1. Much of this discussion leads naturally to a statement on censorship and political neutrality in the collection: broadly speaking, Book 28 has a specific (and political) mission, that is to address inadequate library service for LGBTIQ+ people. This is done within a wider framework of advocating for LGBTIQ+ rights, which includes non-neutrality on issues that we might reasonably believe to negatively affect LGBTIQ+ people, such as legislation akin to Section 28. We have already identified negative portrayals and stereotypes as an issue in existing LGBTIQ+ content in public libraries. As an extension to this, we are aware of the issue of mistreatment of some marginalised groups within the LGBTIQ+ community, such as BAME people, and do not want to perpetuate this harm in their interaction with our collection.

However, such considerations are tempered with the negative impact of censorship by totally removing resources, discussed in 4.2.1. In this aspect, the American Library Association’s ‘Freedom to Read’ statement is relevant, with its assertion of the need for “affirmative responsibility”: instead of removing ‘bad’
books, the library should take an obligation to also select those books with positive representation (Johnson, 2018, p. 61). Further, judgements of offensiveness are subjective and prone to change; for example, Updike’s *The Witches of Eastwick*, noted for its queer themes, has been considered both “a misogynistic morality tale” (Kakutani, 2008) and a potentially feminist book that “focuses on liberated women who carried quite radical ideas concerning their rights and demands” (Fejer, 2015, p. 155). It is important that the reader understands the need for balance on this issue.

As many of these themes have already been touched upon in this policy, this section of requires only a summary of how we address competing factors around the issues of censorship and political neutrality. This might also be a relevant place to signpost content warnings, which could then be discussed along with other statements about in-collection organisation.

**Policy Statements**

*Censorship and Political Neutrality*

Book 28 Library is not a politically neutral organisation. Rather, we advocate for the rights of LGBTIQ+ people, and believe some specific political policies of the UK’s government, such as Section 28 and Austerity, have been harmful to our community. We also recognise that some groups at certain intersections face further marginalisation with the LGBTIQ+ community, such as people who experience racism, and we aim to combat this.

We therefore take responsibility for listening to marginalized groups and providing material with diverse, positive representations, as well as #OwnVoices literature. However, we do not wish to censor our collection or suggest that we
condone all views put forth in all the titles we stock. We want to be honest about the failings and complexities of LGBTIQ+ creators, and allow everyone the opportunity to confront, discuss and interpret key works even where they are problematic. As such, we will not automatically remove works from the collection even if they contain offensive material. Rather, this will be considered a mark against their favour in selection, which will be weighed against other factors such as historical significance (see Evaluative Criteria). We also hope the use of community content warnings will allow readers to signpost to each other such potentially upsetting material, so that it can more easily be avoided if desire.’

4.4 Acquisition
Acquisition covers all activities involved in actually locating and obtaining an item, once it has been deemed desirable for the collection through selection (Hoffmann and Wood, 2005).

4.4.1 Consideration of multiples

Reflections
This simply needs a short note explaining that usually only a single copy of a work will be needed, with quantity decided upon acquisition based on cost and popularity. It should perhaps be addressed last in the acquisition section.

Policy Passage

‘Multiples
We try to get enough copies of a book so that everyone can have a reasonable chance to borrow it without waiting for too long for it to be free. As a small library, we
normally only acquire one copy of a book at first, unless we anticipate it being very popular. More copies can be acquired as needed and as resources allow.’

4.4.2 Self-publishing

Reflections

In light of LGBTIQ+ people’s highlighted preference for information from peers, history of creating information resources for their own communities, the benefits of supporting #OwnVoices work, and the benefits to creators when sharing information with their community, it makes sense for Book 28 Library to support queer publishing as part of its library mission. This could be through supporting self-publishing authors or acting as a publisher itself. In doing so, we would be able to “curate options for authors and readers that are missing from today's publishing market”, such as LGBTIQ+ creators (Oberlander, 2013, p. XV).

There are three key stages in which the library might help writers: the creation of the manuscript, the production of the work, and access through acquiring and stocking it (Brown, 2013, p. 12). So far, Book 28 has helped with the creation stage by running a creative writing support group throughout November 2020 for queer writers participating in ‘NaNoWriMo’, the National Novel Writing Month project. Although we have yet to produce or provide access to any works, in the future we might extend into these areas. For example, we could host a zine making workshop at which we fund the materials (production) and then offer to host any zines donated (access). In this sense, self-publishing is an acquisition issue: material might be added to the collection as an extension of our support for DIY publishing, whether by
supporting self-publishers in exchange for access to their work or helping to produce and publish works entirely within the library.

Policy Passage

‘DIY Publishing

At Book 28 Library, we want to support LGBTIQ+ works and queer creators. We consider it part of our responsibility as a library to host workshops, support groups and advice sessions that help queer people get their creations into the world. Sometimes, material might make its way into our collection after being created as part of one of these programmes. For example, we might offer to add zines created at a workshop to our collection. All such donations are a totally optional part of our work to support queer writers.’

4.4.3 Preferred suppliers

Reflections

So far, we have found specialist LGBTIQ+ booksellers as one of the best suppliers of material for our collection. This is because of both their expertise, and the ease of finding suitable materials that might not be as easily identifiable from mainstream suppliers; it is in our interests to economically support their continued existence, with the benefit of supporting a queer community space. This is in line with Cullingford’s guidance on managing collections in special libraries, in which she recommends developing mutually beneficial relationships with particular specialist suppliers (2017). Currently, the online bookseller Queer Lit lists desired Book 28 books on its website, available for customers to purchase and donate at a discount.
However, we might purchase from other suppliers where appropriate. For example, some types of material are better sourced elsewhere, such as zines, which are usually purchased directly from creators or distributors, or factual material for the Fast Facts collection, which should be sourced from suppliers we find to be sufficiently reliable and reputable in their information on the topic. Lastly, there is the consideration of cost and resources, for which other suppliers (e.g. second-hand retailers) might be preferred to save costs. Similarly, specialist library suppliers might be able to provide trade discount to the library depending on their policies, although not current arrangement has been pursued. This section should be the first under acquisitions, as this is the most common way of acquiring works.

Policy Passage

‘Suppliers

Our preferred way to acquire our material is to purchase it from one of the UK’s specialist LGBTIQ+ bookstores. In doing so, we can draw on their expertise, find suitable material and support a queer space and business. We also acquire some material in other ways, such as buying zines direct from their creators or finding publishers for our Fast Facts resources. To supply a comprehensive range of material in our library, we sometimes need to prioritise saving costs and resources. This means we will consider other ways of acquiring material if there is a significant saving to be made, such as buying a work second-hand.’

4.4.4 Donations and funding

Reflections
A primary consideration is that "donations are not 'free': libraries must house, care for, catalogue, etc., the material they accept" (Cullingford, 2017). This sentiment is echoed by Johnson (2018) and Hoffman and Wood (2005), who all urge caution in openly accepting donation of materials. Other possible downsides include implicit obligations to the donor, unbalancing the collection, or receiving material that does not meet evaluative criteria (Hoffmann and Wood, 2005). Having a written collection policy against donations can help deflect some of the ill-feeling that might be incurred when rejecting an offer (Johnson, 2018). However, there are benefits to accepting donations, as when acquiring material whose creation the library facilitated as described in 4.3.2. As a small project with no current funds for purchasing, we have so far been entirely reliant on donations and encountered many of the problems commentators warn of. As such, rather than have a statement against donations, it is more suitable for us to explain our preferred mechanisms of donation.

Policy Passage

'Donations

At Book 28, we have built most of our collection from donations and appreciate the generosity behind all offers to give us books. However, we cannot accept all them all. This is because there is a significant time and cost involved in adding books to our collection after we receive them, and we want to make sure all items support a balanced, comprehensive library. We prefer that people donate titles that are on our general wish list, or purchase them through our collaboration with Queer Lit, who offer a discount on purchases for the library. If you have other resources you would like to donate, please email us at book28.library@gmail.com with as much detail as
possible so we can make a decision. We accept donations only on the basis that they are given freely by the donor, with no further obligations expected from the library, and that they belong entirely to the library collection after donation for us to do with as we wish.

Queer Lit page: u.nu/d0xdj

General wish list: u.nu/hhe2b

4.5 Organisation
Different terminology is used through the literature when describing the activities of collection management undertaken once items have been acquired, to make them accessible and integrated into the collection. Here, the term “organisation” is used to reflect that most of these activities are a form of organising material.

4.5.1 How items are categorised

Reflections

Book 28 is a small library with a focus on being a relaxed community space that decreases anxiety. We have found that most of our users are not seeking a particular book, especially as they are often unaware of what LGBTIQ+ books are out there. In this sense, many users may have “imprecisely defined” information needs, which can be well-served by facilitating shelf-browsing as an information-seeking behaviour (McKay et al., 2019). In light of this, we currently organise our collection primarily into a set of categories designed to pique interest in browsing. Individual items belong on a shelf that corresponds to their category, but no precise location upon that shelf; to reduce anxiety from users about having to take and replace books in precise spots.
The ‘Proud categories’ are drawn from the original meanings behind the eight-stripe pride flag designed by Gilbert Baker, Lynn Segerblom and others (see Figure 2). Through this, we hope to create a playful experience that draws in users, influenced by projects such as the Garden Library in Tel Aviv in which books are organised by the “emotional judgements of the readers” (Andrés, 2012). This system rejects clear separation between genres, or even fiction/nonfiction; this latter distinction, it has been argued, is an Anglophones, Western binary into which books are forced (Lee, 2016), a binary that queer theory encourages us to resist in LGBTIQ+ spaces (Barker and Scheele, 2016). When physically interfiling in this way, there are other strategies that can help users find preferred genres, such as displays, guides and reader advisory interactions (Trott and Novak, 2006).

This system has the added advantage of addressing the need for information about real-life LGBTIQ+ experiences, as it integrates history into categorisation; and the need for LGBTIQ+ identity to be displayed as a central, proud feature of the collection. Some of the categories highlight information resources that might be needed. The ‘sunlight’ shelf is an obvious one to browse if you are looking for happy endings, while ‘life’ or ‘spirit’ might guide you towards more real-world LGBTIQ+ experiences. Some books have spine labels to highlight ‘Own Voices’ books by BAME and trans authors in this way, owing to the high frequency of people in these groups finding themselves otherwise underserved in LGBTIQ+ spaces. This avoids a physical separation of these books that could lead to “ghettoization” of these books, and a reduction in users finding them through serendipity who might otherwise think they are ‘not for them’, while still promoting findability (Chapman, 2013, p. 547).
Other spine labels might be trialled in future, balanced with the need to keep spines uncluttered for the system to work.

We also separate out reference material aimed at meeting the need for up-to-date, factual information on legal, health and community support matters. Rather than being defined as solely nonfiction, this section specifically informational material. This separation reflects the fact that such material needs to be identified as different from general reading in our assertion of its reliability and recency, as well easily discoverable so key information can be found quickly. This section is called “Fast Facts” and is primarily made up of leaflet-style material sourced from reliable bodies, such as Public Health England’s guide made in collaboration with LGBT Foundation about population screening for transgender and non-binary people (LGBT Foundation, 2018). Within Fast Facts, material is organised into legal, health and community sections to reflect these information needs. We review these materials twice a year to check for more recent updates.

In presenting these systems in policy, we want to make clear to readers that the categorisation of material is, as with other collection matters, subjective and open to appeal. However, this subjectivity is not unique to our categorisation. Drabinski puts forth the view that rather than working towards perfect and unproblematic systems of organisation, we should encourage users towards critical engagement with imperfect tools such as catalogues (Drabinski, 2013). To further combat bias, Book 28 volunteers decide together where material should go, based on blurbs, reviews, reading the material ourselves or inviting the community to do so. When circumstances allow, we also plan to hold community categorisation ‘parties’,
following the example of QZL’s ‘cataloguing parties’, where members of the community are invited to catalogue books at a relaxed social event (“Cataloguing Zines,” n.d.).

*Policy Passage*

‘Categories

Items in our collection are usually put into our ‘Proud Categories’, inspired by the meanings behind the colours of the original pride flag (see below). The only exception to this is material for our ‘Fast Facts’ collection, which contains up-to-date, reliable information on ‘Legal Issues’, ‘Healthcare’ and ‘Community Support’. We decide which categories works should go into by reading blurbs, reviews or the books themselves, or asking our community to help us decide. As well as giving works a Proud Category, we also highlight #OwnVoices literature from trans and QTIPoC writers with a spine label. These categories are subjective, and are meant as an interesting, playful tool to help you browse books without worrying exactly where to put them on the shelf. All decisions on categorisation are open to discussion, review and appeal.
4.5.2 How items are made ready-for-shelf

Reflections

This passage only requires a short blurb, to clarify and guide users and staff about what steps are currently taken to make a book ready-for-shelf.

Policy Passage

‘Preparing Material

Our primary intention is for people to read our books, not for them to last forever.

However, we do take some protective measures before putting materials on the shelf,
so the maximum number of people get a chance to read them. Books should be given a plastic jacket, information sheets laminated, and other material, like zines, can be put in plastic pouches so they do not get crushed on the shelf. All material should be given a label with the Book 28 logo, a paper slip in the back to write content warnings on, and a sticker to remind users that it belongs to the library and should be returned so that the whole community can share it. Fast Facts material should be given a Fast Facts label, and books in the Proud Categories should be given a coloured spine label that corresponds to their category. We also place 3D, shaped stickers under these coloured labels that are unique to each category, to help distinguish them for people who are colour blind or otherwise visually impaired.’

4.5.3 Evaluating the collection

Reflections

As discussed in 4.2.3, we are currently unable to carry out any significant evaluation of the collection due to its inaccessibility. Hoffman and Wood recommend using the policy to outline a preferred method for evaluation, such as comparing the collection to recommended bibliographies, looking at statistics about the collection, or surveying users about their satisfaction (2005, p. 195). On the other hand, Espinal et al. recommend that evaluation be a constant practice that is integrated into the normal operations of the library (2018). Given the current barriers to all normal operations, I believe that it is sensible not to commit to one specific evaluation method for before we know more about what will be practically possible. However, it is still useful to outline our commitment to general reflective practice and continuing evaluation, as well as plans to instigate some specific evaluation projects from the methods suggested by Hoffman and Wood.
Policy Passage

‘Evaluation

At Book 28 Library, we try to practice reflective, critical librarianship in which we are always evaluating our collection as part of everyday work. We plan to balance this with specific, regular projects to assess the collection, such as surveying our users, looking at collection statistics and comparing our titles to recommended lists. Important considerations in these evaluations include whether our collection materials are findable and accessible to our users, whether they meet their information needs, and whether they reflect our value of intersectionality.’

4.5.4 Cataloguing the collection

Reflections

Book 28 Library does not currently have any cataloguing system. Implementing one is one of our top priorities, as this will allow us to organise and evaluate the collection, build a loaning system, and create an online catalogue for users to browse our collection offsite. This may help users better meet information needs as it gives them another route to finding material through catalogue searching. As we do not currently have a cataloguing system, something of a ‘placeholder’ policy passage will serve to signpost users to our intentions to implement one, how it will be used in library operations, and the potential benefits.

Policy Passage

‘Cataloguing

Book 28 Library does not current have a catalogue. Using cataloguing software offers lots of benefits, such as better being able to organise and evaluate our collection. We
are looking for a cataloguing system that will allow readers to view and search our collection to discover what they want to read, and to help us set up a loaning system. When we have a cataloguing system, items will be added to the catalogue as part of preparing materials.’

4.5.5 Content warnings

Reflections

When considering potentially offensive and upsetting material in the collection, we considered signposting readers to content as a partial solution. Content or trigger warnings are put forward by advocates as a way of preparing readers with trauma to encounter themes such as racial violence, and allowing them to make an informed decision about their reading (James, 2017, p. 298). However, there are compelling arguments against using such labels in a library, not in the least because of the resources required to know of all references to potentially upsetting material in a work. There is a risk of stigmatising materials with labels, and encouraging users or even those selecting works for a collection to avoid material that they might have otherwise encountered without problem, thus creating indirect censorship (James, 2017, p. 300). There is also a risk that, when assigned by the library itself, trigger warnings may take on an air of authority that suggests that librarians have both the responsibility and capability to label materials as categorically safe or unsafe for, obscuring that judgements are based on subjective thresholds of reference and anticipation of what readers might find upsetting (Martin, 2015).

However, not all the traditional arguments against using trigger warnings apply to Book 28 Library’s circumstances. As previously stated, we do not claim to
operate as a politically neutral entity. Unlike a library in an academic institution, it is not within our remit to try and educate our users by making them tackle uncomfortable ideas. Further, we have already stated in 4.4.1 that we categorise material somewhat by, for example, having themes most people would find uplifting; trigger warnings may be seen as a natural antithesis to this. Also, arguments that content labels serve as a significant deviation from “viewpoint-neutral directional labelling” such as Dewey Decimal Classification (Martin, 2015, p. 55) seem invalid in light of the extensive literature on non-neutral biases encoded in such classification labels (James, 2017).

Overall, we believe that a solution suitable for our library, given its small scale and the limited resources of volunteers, is a ‘community’ content warning system. We plan to place paper inserts in the back of our books (or in another convenient place for other material) on which we invite readers to write content warnings or other notes for each other. Placing the slips at the back of the books also avoid content labels acting as ‘spoilers’ for people who wish to avoid them, or visually distinguishing books in a way that could be stigmatising. Library volunteers can also write notes on these inserts as and when they are aware of upsetting content, with the anonymity of the system avoiding institutional responsibility and any false air of authority. In many ways, content warnings present similar problems for libraries as other metadata such as cataloguing, and in this way, a community content warning system represents “user-generated content” that can offer benefits similar to the use of folksonomies to enrich traditional subject headings (Pecoskie et al., 2014).

Policy Passage
‘Content Warnings

At Book 28 Library, we want everyone to be able to enjoy our collection. We recognise that content warnings can be a useful for people with trauma to avoid or prepare themselves for distressing material. However, as a small volunteer team we are not able to read all works in the library, judge the threshold at which references to become significant enough to merit a warning, or anticipate what might be upsetting to different readers. We also do not want to implicitly stigmatise works through labelling them, or give ‘spoilers’ to people who want to avoid them. As a solution, we use ‘community content warnings’: books have a paper insert in the back on which we encourage readers to write content warnings for each other, and on which volunteers can add warnings as and when they are aware of upsetting content.’

4.6 Access

Discussion of access should outline how patrons can read the physical collection, any digital collection, and basic circulation policies. At this point there is limited access, so there is only one item in this section.

Reflections

It is sufficient here to make clear to the reader that there is currently only one way of accessing the collection (through onsite access in the community centre), but that we plan to expand this to loaning and even to eventually expand beyond the Outside Project, in order to maximise patron access and the routes through which they might meet their information needs.
Policy Passage

‘Access

The collection can be accessed by visiting the Outside Project community centre whenever it is open. We are planning to set up a loaning system, so that users can borrow material and read them in private, however suits them. In the future we will also look at opportunities to create collections of LGBTIQ+ books the Outside Project.’

4.7 Disposals

As the counterpart to selection and acquisition, disposals covers all activities to do with removing items from the collection: identifying items to be removed, known as ‘weeding’, ‘deselection’ or ‘negative selection’ (Hoffmann and Wood, 2005, p. 185); if / how items might be serviced to avoid them being disposed; and the fate of items that are deselected.

4.7.1 Maintenance / repair

Reflections

When an item is in disrepair, it can either be discarded, repaired, or replaced with a different copy (Johnson, 2018, p. 200). If it is determined that the work should stay in the collection, the team must choose between these final two options, both of which have costs in terms of time and resources. In order to maximise the possibility of meeting information needs, it is useful to maintain our collection “economically and efficiently” (Dowd, 1980, p. 68) while ensuring for diversity and scope. As such, it seems logical that we might be guided by a simple a principle for maintenance and
repair: that items should be repaired whenever it is more economical and feasible than replacing them.

*Policy Passage*

‘Repair

During normal running of the library, we might find items that are in poor physical condition. In this case, the Book 28 team will assess whether it will more economical and feasible to repair the item ourselves or replace it with a different copy.’

4.7.2 Criteria for weeding

*Reflections*

Weeding library materials can be extremely contentious and has received a lot of negative attention. As such, it is important to have a transparent policy available to the public. If an item is permanently removed, no information needs can be met through it, which suggests weeding should be a last resort. However, as libraries have limited space and resources, every item removed could be replaced by one that better meets the needs of the users, especially given the attested desire for ‘up-to-date’ material. As a small, volunteer-run library, the issue of space and resources for the collection is a pressing one; regular weeding cannot be avoided.

Johnson looks at several successful weeding strategies, such as Segal and Larson’s CREW (“Continuous Review, Evaluation and Weeding” (Johnson, 2018, p. 200)) which builds weeding into daily library life. For Book 28, such a strategy can easily be integrated into the normal operations of the library and handling of stock, using methods such as shelf scanning to spot items in disrepair (Johnson, 2018, p.
202). This does not preclude distinct, pre-planned weeding projects when particular issues arise, e.g. a pressing need to bring in more space, or as part of a particular evaluation project. Our Fast Facts section requires more attention to make sure materials remain accurate and up-to-date. Some topics covered in this section, such as the availability and recommended use of NHS-funded pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV, have been undergoing frequent review and changes in the UK, so reviews of our materials must also be frequent (e.g. 6-monthly after their addition to the collection).

All criteria considered when weeding should be outlined clearly in our policy. Perhaps the most popular weeding criteria set is encapsulated in the acronym MUSTIE: Misleading (factually inaccurate), Ugly (physically beyond repair), Superseded (by new edition of different book), Trivial (of no scientific / literary merit), Irrelevant (to user needs or library remit) and Elsewhere (easily available elsewhere) (Johnson, 2018, p. 202). However, some of these can simply be encapsulated by saying that we will discard material that no longer meets the evaluative criteria for selection, as these already codify considerations such as relevancy. Only ‘misleading’, ‘ugly’ and ‘superseded’ are additions to evaluative criteria stated in 4.2.1. These criteria should also be balanced with other considerations, such as user requests for items to be removed (in which we might ask them to state how that item meets our weeding criteria, rather than taking it as a criterion in itself), and circulation statistics once available (which should not be taken as absolute – very short material, for example, a book that is the only available title in its field might be retained even if it has not been recently circulated). Finally, we might consider number of copies: an item might be weeded if there are other copies remaining such that they are likely sufficient to meet current demand.
‘Weeding’ means removing items permanently from the collection. Weeding is an important part of keeping the collection well-balanced, up-to-date, and using the limited space we have to create the most useful collection possible. We are constantly evaluating our collection and the items in it, which means some items might be weeded as part of normal library operations. At other times, we may need to undertake a particular weeding project, such as if there is a space shortage. We think carefully whether to remove material, using the following criteria:

1. Does it still meet our criteria for selection? If not, then it should be discarded.
2. Is it in disrepair beyond fixing? If so, it should be discarded, or replaced if the title still meets our evaluative criteria.
3. If this a material that claims to be factual, but is misleading, out of date or incorrect? If so, it should be discarded. This is an important consideration for our Fast Facts collection.
4. Has this been replaced by a new edition, or a more up-to-date work covering the same area? If so, it should be replaced by the new item where economically feasible, and discarded anyway if it is considered too out-of-date.
5. Has this item seen little to no circulation? If so, it should be considered for discarding. However, take into account whether it might have been used without being borrowed, whether it forms part of a series, or if it is given high priority by our selection criteria.
6. Is this item one of many copies? If so, it should be weeded if there are more copies than are likely to be currently needed.

Users are welcome to nominate a book that they think should be removed or replaced. To do so, please speak to a member of the Book 28 team, or fill out the form below, outlining why you think this book should be discarded in terms of our weeding criteria.

Form for weeding suggestions: u.nu/sdnjh

4.7.3 Process for disposal

*Reflections*

Once an item has been identified for discarding, it should be disposed of through sale, destruction or donation. Johnson gives useful guidance: destruction should be considered if the item is in poor repair or misleading; when doing so, material should be disposed of subtly (e.g. in closed containers) and ownership marks, so as to minimise offence and negative publicity (2018, p. 204). Even if the book is still in good repair, Johnson warns that selling a book often costs more than it generates, and that donating books to second-hand retailers or other institutions still has a human resource cost. However, Book 28 Library has had some previous success with giving away discarded books for free. For example, one Outside Project volunteer took several discarded books home to be used in an art project. The centre is close to several large charity shops and the Bishopsgate Institute, which collects LGBTIQ+ material as part of its archives remit. Therefore, donating and giving away discarded material is a viable option that can be explored before destruction.


Policy Passage

‘Disposing of Material

When we know we no longer want a resource, what we decide to do next will depend on the reason for weeding. Items removed from the collection because they are in poor repair or factually misleading or inaccurate should be stripped of their Book 28 logos and destroyed through pulping or normal waste collection. If an item was removed for another reason, it can be kept at the centre for visitors to take for free, as long as space and resources allow. Books can be given to local charity shops or even donated to other groups, if volunteers are available for the task and items are wanted elsewhere. Unfortunately, if we are unable to give away or donate some materials, these may also need to be destroyed through pulping or waste collection.’

5. Analysis and Evaluation

Having completed the main action of this research, I can now analyse and evaluate both this action (through a reflection-on-action process) and the overall effectiveness of this research in meeting aims and objectives. As previously stated, this includes seeing whether I have created an effective tool by turning to it in hypothetical difficult scenarios, as well as looking at any further limitations to the research that have emerged throughout the process during synthesis.

5.1 Difficult Scenarios

We stated the goal of creating a policy that would aid in difficult decision making. We can now consider some difficult scenarios to see whether the policy succeeds in being a useful aid. In choosing scenarios, I have either based them on actual events or
hypothetical ones that commonly occur in library life, to avoid only scenarios that I know the policy can solve.

5.2.1 Scenario One: Weeding a Controversial Item

In the early days of Book 28 Library, we held a session of ‘clearing out’ the nascent collection at the Outside Project with a group of volunteers and users. One user was drawn to the book *Homo Jihad* (Graves, 2009) by the title, hoping to find information about queer Muslim experience. After reading the blurb, it became apparent that the author, who was white and not Muslim, used negative stereotypes about Islam in writing the book, which also only had one Muslim character, who was secondary to the white, atheist protagonist. The user was disappointed and, as the book seemed to be a trivial work with little critical acclaim, it was discarded.

This decision was made on-the-spot and accompanied by some anxiety and awkwardness. Just the existence of a collection development policy would have alleviated some pressure by providing a clear process to follow in such a situation. By referring to the section on weeding, we are guided to revisit the criteria for including such a title in the first place, as it was not in physical disrepair, misleading or superseded. In using our scoring system, this title merits four points in favour of its British, LGBTIQ+ authorship, content that would likely have been suppressed under Section 28, and the fact it was longlisted for the Polari Prize. Against *Homo Jihad’s* favour, a search on WorldCat on 2nd January 2021 shows that it is stocked in at least three London library systems, including one belonging to the London Library Consortium. It is evident from the encounter with the user and further examination of the content that it contains material likely to offend many Muslim users. This would
merit a total of six negative points, pushing the decision in favour of discarding this title. Although this yields the same conclusion as the original scenario, the policy aided the decision by providing clear guidelines and the reasoning behind them, and depersonalising the decision-making in a way that reduced anxiety.

5.2.2 Scenario Two: Donation Offer

A hypothetical but likely scenario: a member of the public contacts Book 28 Library and says they are ‘having a clear out’, and would like to donate some books. They ask where and when they could drop off their books. In such a scenario, we could direct the potential donor to our policy on gifts. We can ask them if they have any titles to offer that are on our current wish-list, which we would happily accept, and to send us a breakdown of any other titles that they might want to donate so that we can check them against our evaluative criteria. This would likely result in either the member of the public rescinding their offer as it is no longer convenient, or donating books that we are well-suited to our collection goals; either way, the existence of the policy would hopefully minimise any perception of ungratefulness of person ill-will, as well as resulting in favourable acquisition on the avoidance of an unfavourable one.

5.2.3 Scenario Three: Budget Shortfall

In this scenario, the library had a £65 surplus we decided to use for doing a small buy-in from queer bookseller the Bookish Type. This was sufficient to buy five books they stock (arbitrarily chosen from our wish list), according to the prices listed on January 4th 2021 (“The Bookish Type - Independent Queer Bookshop in Leeds,” n.d.). However, an unexpected cost elsewhere of £20 means that we now have only £45 surplus, so cannot buy the books as planned. Looking at the selection and acquisition
sections of our policy, we are guided to either look to other vendors that might be able
to supply the item for less (with the downside that we will be contributing less money
directly to independent LGBTIQ+ booksellers and authors), or prioritise a few of the
items according to our evaluative criteria, taking their ‘score’ into account as a factor.
The data relevant to these options are listed in the table below, correct as of January
4th 2021. The website AbeBooks was chosen to represent a popular second-hand
marketplace (“AbeBooks” n.d.).

Table 6: Data on possible items for acquisition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
<th>Price (Bookish Type)</th>
<th>Price (AbeBooks)</th>
<th>Evaluative Criteria Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meal</td>
<td>Blue DelliQuanti, Soleil Ho</td>
<td>9781945820304</td>
<td>£11.55</td>
<td>£9.48</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tiny Pieces of Skull: or, a Lesson in Manners</em></td>
<td>Roz Kaveney</td>
<td>9780956971975</td>
<td>£9.99</td>
<td>£10.38</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantomime</td>
<td>Laura Lam</td>
<td>9781509807772</td>
<td>£9.99</td>
<td>£3.25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gender Queer: A Memoir</em></td>
<td>Maia Kobabe</td>
<td>9781549304002</td>
<td>£15.99</td>
<td>£10.77</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Drawing on Walls: A Story of Keith Haring</em></td>
<td>Matthew Burgess</td>
<td>9781592702671</td>
<td>£13.99</td>
<td>£11.72</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£61.51</strong></td>
<td><strong>£45.60</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at this data through the lens of the collection policy gives several
insights. Using second-hand suppliers for all but *Tiny Pieces of Skull* (Kaveney, 2015)
would enable us to buy all five books as intended, but with significantly less support
of a queer bookseller. If we were to look at the approximate scores each item has been
given relative to the criteria, we can see there is quite a range: *Tiny Pieces of Skull* has
been flagged as likely a high priority item; *Gender Queer* (Kobabe, 2019), *Drawing on Walls* (Burgess, 2020) and *Meal* (DelliQuanti and Ho, 2018) receive similar scores;
but *Pantomime* (Lam, 2016) may meet fewer than half the criteria of Kaveney’s work. On balance, it would be a good outcome to purchase our highest three priority books (*Tiny Pieces, Gender Queer, Drawing on Walls*) from the Bookish type, which would come to £35.53, and use the final £9.47 to purchase a second-hand copy of *Pantomime*. This strikes a balance between highest priority books, highest number of resources for our investment, and supporting an LGBTIQ+ bookseller.

The policy does not give us an absolute answer. For example, when viewing priority scores, one of the points in favour of *Pantomime* is that it features an intersex protagonist, a group that we have few works about in our collection. Although it lacks in other areas – for example, being American, not being an #OwnVoices book – this one point in its favour is quite significant. Evaluating some of the criteria was difficult, such as whether materials have happy endings or positive themes. However, all collection development decisions are ultimately subjective, and there are many resources that can help assess themes, such as Queer Comics Database (Kwan and Button, n.d.), which lists ‘tone’ of comics and graphic novels. Not all collection decisions require such an in-depth assessment. The policy was still helpful in this prioritising scenario as it provided a methodical approach, with the knowledge that it takes into account the goals and values of the collection alongside different information needs.

### 5.2 Reflection-on-Action

Biggam gives nine prompts to reflect upon the effectiveness of the action in creating the artefact (2017, p. 222). Below, I have worked through these in the log adapted from Biggam in 2.4.
Table 7: Reflection-on-Action Log: Completed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book 28 Library Collections Development Policy</th>
<th>Reflection-on-Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What were you trying to achieve?</strong></td>
<td>When I set out to make this artefact, I was trying to create an effective collection development policy for Book 28. I defined an effective policy as one that could help the library team manage the collection, including making difficult decisions and offering clarity in the direction, purpose and scope of the collection. I also felt it needed to draw on evidence to create policies that would best meet the information needs of its userbase. Finally, I wanted a collection development policy that could be referenced by the userbase themselves to better understand the library collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Did you achieve that?</strong></td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What are your views on what you achieved?</strong></td>
<td>I feel that I achieved my overall goal of creating an effective policy that drew on what literature there is to best meet information needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How does it relate to the literature?</strong></td>
<td>The policy outcomes were clearly guided by reference to the literature, tempered by acknowledgement of its limitations. I kept in mind our best knowledge about LGBTIQ+ information needs throughout the process, whilst also considering the literature about collection development and best practice in writing policies. I believe I was able to enrich this with insight from my own experience as a librarian and member of the queer community, still being aware of my own biases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do others think?</strong></td>
<td>Other people seem positive about the policy. It has been shared in draft form with all the Book 28 volunteers, who were able to understand it from a lay perspective as well as find it useful in clarifying how we might run the library and resolve issues with the collection. The team seems to think that it harmonises well with the library goals and values. However, I have not formally surveyed people, or shared it with people who have little to no experience with libraries. I believe it would be useful to hear views from a wider swath of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is there a similarity / difference of opinion?</strong></td>
<td>People seemed to generally agree with the policies I had put in, but there was a difference of opinion on how we should address positive representation as distinct from positive outcomes, e.g. material with a happy ending. There was a feeling that the policy needed to better highlight the difference between these two things, as a work could be a positive portrayal of an LGBTIQ+ character (nuanced, rejecting stereotypes), but still show an unhappy ending or deal with dark themes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, I felt that happy endings were specifically important because of evidence from Vincent that it was material that showed good outcomes that people were nervous would contravene Section 28, as it might tacitly endorse the ‘homosexual lifestyle’; thus, changing an ending to one where characters ended up alone and unhappy might be one way of having material more easily distributed. Goldthorpe’s study of Scottish lesbian readers saw them specifically complaining about miserable reading, and the books that her subjects cited repeatedly – *Rubyfruit Jungle* and *The Well of Loneliness* – are both nuanced portrayals of queer characters written by queer authors, but dark in tone and content; readers appreciated the books but specifically wished there was more upbeat reading available.

One solution would be to separate positive portrayals from happy ending / positive themes in the criteria. Another might be to leave the criteria the same, but explain better the role of Section 28 in specifically suppressing literature with positive outcomes, and the use of the criterion to try and redress the balance in the collection. Either way, this difference of opinion suggests that this area could be developed further in the artefact.

### What key factors influenced the process?

My reactions to the insights of the literature were definitely a key part of the process. It was very useful to see how others had addressed these problems before. Queer Zine Library’s materials were particularly useful, as they have a very different approach to many issues than mainstream libraries. Looking back, I can see the conversations I had with volunteers, community members, family and friends while I was writing informed and influenced my process, although it was not always obvious at the time. Continuing to actively run the library and expand the collection throughout the research was influential, as I came across many practical problems that the artefact might help resolve. There was a negative influence on the process from the COVID-19 pandemic, as this disrupted my academic timetable, consistent access to material and the Book 28 collection, and had a strong impact on my mental health. However, I also think it provided an opportunity to think about developing the collection and prepare the policy ‘in advance’, so that we will have a better baseline collection when we can physically reopen to the public again.

### What lessons have you learned?

I have learnt a lot about LGBTIQ+ information needs, collection development processes and how such fields are researched. I have also learnt about how personal an issue this is to many people, and that a lot of people have strong views about it, even if they had not heard of it before. I also learned
the value of creating a well-informed artefact after a process of proper reflecting, as so many of the issues are nuanced and require deep thought. I have learnt how much ethical decisions must always be tempered with practicality, and how to better identify my own boundaries about what I am or am not willing to compromise. Finally, I have learnt the value of practical experience in informing theoretical research and decision making.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would you do differently?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One thing I would do differently is better build into the policy itself a clear mechanism of how it could be addressed and updated by the community. This was is one objective I do not believe I have fully met. I have some mechanisms for community feedback in the policy, e.g. suggesting books, and signal throughout that our decisions are subjective and open to criticism. I also dated it in the hope of making it clear that it is time-bound and should be updated. However, I believe if I was creating this artefact again with the insight I have now, I would dedicate an extra section in the introduction to specify how the policy could be critiqued and expanded.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I believe that I did not do this at the time because I ultimately drew my areas to address in the policy from the professional and academic literature, which does not conventionally take a section on rewriting the policy as an essential component. Also, when I began this research, I was running the library alone, so was expecting to rely on active outreach from me to engage the community. By the time I finished, however, I found myself running the library with a team of five volunteers who would offer constant insight into everyday collection decisions and who could read and discuss the policy. In this way, having formal written mechanisms for critiquing the policy may be less important than an emphasis that any community member can also volunteer and inform library decision making.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the next step?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The next steps are continuing discussion of the artefact with the volunteer team and making any necessary changes to ensure that everyone understands and agrees with it. I will then be prioritising sharing it with the Outside Project and the wider community, by publishing it on our website. We might also undertake active feedback sessions, e.g. an open meeting in which we go through and discuss the policy. I would like to create an easy-read version of the policy for accessibility. My final step will be to re-format and publish this piece of research as a public-facing report, available for interested members of the public to read about the research and process that informed the policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Synthesis
My research has been mostly successful in achieving my original aims and objectives. In terms of the existing research literature, I believe this research contributes both to the work on LGBTIQ+ information needs (by providing a contextual literature review and a practical example of how research findings might be applied in policy); and to the literature on collection development (by giving an insightful account of creating a policy for a specialist userbase and library collection).

I believe this research is limited as it has the narrow scope of only applying to Book 28’s collection, and there are practical limitations to which considerations could be taken into account during policy creation. An ideal piece of policy creation would have used a more specific understanding of community needs by surveying the userbase, and a better understanding of the current collection through evaluating it. The inability to access the physical collection throughout most of the research period was particularly limiting. However, as I have been candid about these limitations throughout, I believe that the research is still a useful contribution within these parameters.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Revisiting Aims and Objectives
As is clear from my reflection-on-action, I have achieved my aim in this research project of creating a collection development policy that both helps me as a librarian make collection decisions, and one that can help develop the collection to better meet LGBTIQ+ information needs. In doing so, I have provided one answer to the research question of how a knowledge of information needs and collection development literature might effectively inform the process of creating a policy. I have completely
met most of the objectives outlined in 1.4: addressing areas of controversy and ambiguity known at the start of the project; addressing other areas that emerged as necessary through the research; and testing the policy by applying it to hypothetical scenarios. One weakness in doing so is the lack of a single, clear section dealing with how the policy might be updated and critiqued by the community.

6.2 Summary of findings
Through this research, we have found the following:

- The literature on LGBTIQ+ information needs is still sparse, with the situation in the UK particularly neglected, but has been growing and maturing in recent years.
- The literature is not of a sufficient robustness to draw strong generalisations and conclusions about LGBTIQ+ information needs.
- We can, however, deduce possible information needs from their frequent recurrence in the literature.
- These recurrences can be grouped into eleven broad needs that represent areas that should be considered in LGBTIQ+ collection development, complemented by informed predictions about the gaps in the literature, and professional experience.
- The collection development literature is more robust, with many research methods used and different types of sources available. It comprises both academic research and professional recommendations.
This literature is particularly useful in providing a framework for creating collection development policies; but it is limited in some areas, such as guidance on how the community might contribute to the policy itself.

Both of these literatures can be used to inform the process of creating a useful collection development policy for an LGBTIQ+ library.

This creation process can be enhanced with reference to the literature on specific issues, e.g., using content warnings, and is successful when implemented in a reflexive way that considers bias.

PaR was a valid method for answering my research questions in this area, and was able to yield useful findings.

6.3 Contribution to knowledge
I believe this research makes a unique contribution to the literature as I know of no other research that uses PaR to show the process of writing a collection development policy and how it can be informed by information needs. Although PaR is usually used by artists, I believe this method successfully built on the literature about LGBTIQ+ information needs by showing their practical application in informing library policy, and on the literature in collection development by feeding into current trends of examining collection development for special groups. Finally, I believe this makes a useful contribution towards the small body of literature on UK LGBTIQ+ library services.

6.4 Recommendations
My recommendations from this research are that the area of LGBTIQ+ information needs and collection development to meet them be expanded, particularly with
attention to the situation in the UK. I also recommend that other research in collection
development is undertaken using PaR or a similar model, as this can bridge the gap
between the abstract academic literature and its practical application.
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Appendix A: Final Collections Development Policy

Book 28 Collection Development Policy: 2021

Introduction

I. Mission, Goals and Objectives of the Library and its Collection

The purpose of this policy is to outline how our collection aims to help us achieve our goals, and to make clear to everyone the thought process of what we choose to have in our collection and why. Book 28’s mission is to provide LGBTIQ+ readers with LGBTIQ+ books, while drawing attention to the gaps in public library service for LGBTIQ+ people in the UK and working towards making things better. Our current goal is to expand our collection overall, and in doing so build a collection that is comprehensive, inclusive, and caters to the varied needs and desires in our community. We also hope to promote LGBTIQ+ creators while bringing the benefits of reading to more queer people.

Our current objectives for our collection are to:

1. fill the space we have at the Outside Project, who house the collection, while expanding our representation of …  
   - ‘genre’ fictions such as sci-fi and fantasy  
   - formats to include audio CDs as well as more graphic novels and zines  
   - material centring particular groups, such as asexual and intersex people

2. implement a loaning system so that the collection can be accessed off-site

II. Background

Book 28 Library was founded as a voluntary project in late 2019 by Isadore Auerbach George, after his initial research into the poor state of public library provision for LGBTIQ+ people in the UK. It has so far been a collaborative project with The Outside Project, the UK’s first LGBTIQ+ Homeless Shelter and Community Centre, who had a small donated book collection that they needed sorted and managed. The centre now houses the collection, where it is accessible for onsite browsing by members of the public visiting the
community centre and shelter guests. The collection aims to provide LGBTIQ+ material to LGBTIQ+ readers, and has grown through book donations in its first year of operation. However, the site was inaccessible for most of 2020 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The library’s activities mostly focused on virtual, social programming and signposting to online information resources in its first year. The library is now run by a small team of volunteers and collaborates with other groups who work in the LGBTIQ+ literary world, such as the UK’s specialist LGBTIQ+ booksellers, public libraries wanting to improve service, queer archives, and collectives such as the Queer Zine Library.

III. Target Users of the Library

Our primary audience as a library are those who use the Outside Project Centre, either to visit or as shelter guests, and others in the UK LGBTIQ+ community. We understand ‘LGBTIQ+’ to stand for ‘Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans[gender], Intersex, Queer / Questioning and Other’. We do not police people’s identities and use a broad definition of queerness that recognises anyone whose needs might be underserved by public libraries because of their minority or marginalised gender identity and expression, or sexual orientation and practice. A secondary audience is those who do not identify with any part of LGBTIQ+ but who would still like to engage with LGBTIQ+ material, e.g. as ‘allies’; however, their needs are not centred in our collection. We primarily cater to adults, although we provide some resources aimed at children (which we recognise many adults enjoy or may want to share with children in their life). We recognise that our work with the Outside Project means we will serve many people experiencing homelessness, and we seek to prioritise their needs within our collection.

IV. Statement of Relationships and Responsibility

Book 28 is housed by the Outside Project, but is responsible for collection decisions made in the library within the centre (albeit with prioritised input from Outside Project staff, volunteers, users and guests). Within the library team, the director is ultimately responsible for collection decisions, although these may be delegated to any and all volunteers to carry out, in line with this policy. As document is redrafted and reshaped by the community, and our team grows in skills, experience and confidence, we hope to move towards a collective model of consensus-based decision making about our collections...
Selection

I. Evaluative Criteria

In the Book 28 collection, we only include books that are clearly about LGBTQ+ issues, people or themes, where these characters and subjects are central to the work. This is because research suggests that many LGBTQ+ people want to read works where people like them are the main characters, and not side characters to referred to in passing. Compared to incidental representation, this seems to be an area that public libraries in the UK often fail to keep diverse, plentiful and up-to-date in their collections. Common complaints include that collections represent only a small part of the LGBTQ+ community, are outdated, full of negative stereotypes and dominated by literature from the US. Beyond this, there are lots of factors to consider when we are deciding what materials we should have in the library, such as whether they were also written by people who are openly LGBTQ+. Because we have limited resources and space, we cannot choose to have every book in the library, and will sometimes need to pick one book over the other.

Our goal is to create a collection that meets the needs of LGBTQ+ people that often go unmet in public libraries. Below is a set of criteria that can be used to evaluate possible items and give them a score, based on how many factors they meet: a higher score suggests a book may be of higher priority for our collection. The person making the selection decision can then take this into account with any other factors they consider relevant. No one factor will generally rule a book in or out completely, and the score is not meant to represent an objective assessment of how valuable that book is in general. It is merely meant as a guide when making difficult decisions about which books to get for our collection; decisions are still ultimately subjective, and always open to appeal. Neither will it always be appropriate to use this tool, depending on what area of the collection are being developed. Such decisions should always be considered in conjunction with any temporary collection objectives and priorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Is the creator of this work openly LGBTQ+?</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Would this material likely have been suppressed under Section 28 (seen to be “promoting” homosexuality, presenting it as a “pretended” family relationship?)</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Does this material have a happy ending or otherwise positive themes?</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Does this material centre an LGBTQ+ group (e.g. asexuals, bisexuals) that are currently not as well represented in the collection as others?</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Does this material represent a genre (e.g. horror, poetry, nonfiction) that is currently not as well represented in the collection as others?</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Is this material in a format (e.g. zine, audio CD, graphic novel) that is not currently as well represented in the collection as others?</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Statement on LGBTIQ+ Works and Creators

The primary scope of the Book 28 Library collection is LGBTIQ+ works. We use the same interpretation of LGBTIQ+ here as when defining the user community. Our focus is on material where the LGBTIQ+ themes, characters and issues are the main and central to the work, although we recognise that judging whether this is the case is ultimately subjective. Similarly, we prioritise collecting work by creators who we know identify as LGBTIQ+, but due to the various difficulties of knowing how all creators identify, we do not limit our work solely to people who are openly queer. As with all our collection decisions, we are open to appeal and suggestions.

III. Formats, Accessibility and Language

Book 28 Library attempts to collect book in a wide range of formats, to be as accessible as possible, to as many people as possible. This includes considering audio CDs, large print, and easy-read versions of information resources. We also try to provide a range of lengths and types of reading material, including zines, graphic novels and illustrated books alongside longer chapter books.

We are limited in this by a few factors. Firstly, not all books are available in alternative formats, and LGBTIQ+ material is often published by small,
independent publishers who are less likely to be able to pay for more expensive formats, such as the professional readings necessary for audio CDs. Secondly, even where material is available, Book 28 Library will not always have the resources to acquire, store and license it. For example, we do not currently have the resources to license our own digital library with eBooks, although we do signpost to free external resources on our website. However, despite these limitations, we are committed to trying to provide as many formats as possible, including by purchasing multiple copies of the same work in different formats, and advocating for the publication of LGBTIQ+ materials in formats that are accessible to all.

As for language, we try to collect as much easy-read material as possible, in order to be more accessible both to those with learning difficulties and those who are not fluent in English. Beyond this, our collection focuses on English language materials. We are enthusiastic about creating collections of LGBTIQ+ materials in more languages in the future, but would like to first research which languages other than English are spoken most often by our userbase.

IV. Suggestions

We want Book 28 Library to house a collection that is by and for the LGBTIQ+ community, so suggestions from users for new titles are very important to us. We want to acquire as many suggested titles as possible. Unfortunately, we are not able to add every title as we have limited space and resources, so suggested titles will be through the same process as any other work. We aim for total transparency in our decision-making process, and can keep you up to date and informed about our decisions on your suggestion(s), as well as offering a route to appeal if we decide not to purchase your requested title at this time. Currently, the best way of suggesting a title for the library is to use the digital form found by following the link below.

Suggestions form: [u.nu/q5atm](http://u.nu/q5atm)

We hope to offer paper forms and a suggestion box when the library reopens. Alternatively, feel free to chat to us in person about what you would like to see in the library.

V. Censorship and Political Neutrality

Book 28 Library is not a politically neutral organisation. Rather, we advocate for the rights of LGBTIQ+ people, and believe some specific political policies of the UK’s government, such as Section 28 and Austerity, have been harmful to our community. We also recognise that some groups at certain intersections
face further marginalisation with the LGBTIQ+ community, such as people who experience racism, and we aim to combat this.

We therefore take responsibility for listening to marginalized groups and providing material with diverse, positive representations, as well as #OwnVoices literature. However, we do not wish to censor our collection or suggest that we condone all views put forth in all the titles we stock. We want to be honest about the failings and complexities of LGBTIQ+ creators, and allow everyone the opportunity to confront, discuss and interpret key works even where they are problematic. As such, we will not automatically remove works from the collection even if they contain offensive material. Rather, this will be considered a mark against their favour in selection, which will be weighed against other factors such as historical significance (see Evaluative Criteria). We also hope the use of community content warnings will allow readers to signpost to each other such potentially upsetting material, so that it can more easily be avoided if desire.

**Acquisition**

I. Suppliers

Our preferred way to acquire our material is to purchase it from one of the UK’s specialist LGBTIQ+ bookstores. In doing so, we can draw on their expertise, find suitable material and support a queer space and business. We also acquire some material in other ways, such as buying zines direct from their creators or finding publishers for our Fast Facts resources. To supply a comprehensive range of material in our library, we sometimes need to prioritise saving costs and resources. This means we will consider other ways of acquiring material if there is a significant saving to be made, such as buying a work second-hand.

II. DIY Publishing

At Book 28 Library, we want to support LGBTIQ+ works and queer creators. We consider it part of our responsibility as a library to host workshops, support groups and advice sessions that help queer people get their creations into the world. Sometimes, material might make its way into our collection after being created as part of one of these programmes. For example, we might offer to add zines created at a workshop to our collection. All such donations are a totally optional part of our work to support queer writers.

III. Donations
At Book 28, we have built most of our collection from donations and appreciate the generosity behind all offers to give us books. However, we cannot accept all them all. This is because there is a significant time and cost involved in adding books to our collection after we receive them, and we want to make sure all items support a balanced, comprehensive library. We prefer that people donate titles that are on our general wish list, or purchase them through our collaboration with Queer Lit, who offer a discount on purchases for the library. If you have other resources you would like to donate, please email us at book28.library@gmail.com with as much detail as possible so we can make a decision. We accept donations only on the basis that they are given freely by the donor, with no further obligations expected from the library, and that they belong entirely to the library collection after donation for us to do with as we wish.

Queer Lit page: u.nu/d0xdi
General wish list: u.nu/hhe2b

IV. Multiples

We try to get enough copies of a book so that everyone can have a reasonable chance to borrow it without waiting for too long for it to be free. As a small library, we normally only acquire one copy of a book at first, unless we anticipate it being very popular. More copies can be acquired as needed and as resources allow.

Organisation

I. Categories

Items in our collection are usually put into our ‘Proud Categories’, inspired by the meanings behind the colours of the original pride flag (see below). The only exception to this is material for our ‘Fast Facts’ collection, which contains up-to-date, reliable information on ‘Legal Issues’, ‘Healthcare’ and ‘Community Support’. We decide which categories works should go into by reading blurbs, reviews or the books themselves, or asking our community to help us decide. As well as giving works a Proud Category, we also highlight #OwnVoices literature from trans and QTIPoC writers with a spine label. These categories are subjective, and are meant as an interesting, playful tool to help you browse books without worrying exactly where to put them on the shelf. All decisions on categorisation are open to discussion, review and appeal.
II. Preparing Material

Our primary intention is for people to read our books, not for them to last forever. However, we do take some protective measures before putting materials on the shelf, so the maximum number of people get a chance to read them. Books should be given a plastic jacket, information sheets laminated, and other material, like zines, can be put in plastic pouches so they do not get crushed on the shelf. All material should be given a label with the Book 28 logo, a paper slip in the back to write content warnings on, and a sticker to remind users that it belongs to the library and should be returned so that the whole community can share it. Fast Facts material should be given a Fast Facts label, and books in the Proud Categories should be given a coloured spine label that corresponds to their category. We also place 3D, shaped stickers under these coloured labels that are unique to each category, to help distinguish them for people who are colour blind or otherwise visually impaired.
III. Evaluation

At Book 28 Library, we try to practice reflective, critical librarianship in which we are always evaluating our collection as part of everyday work. We plan to balance this with specific, regular projects to assess the collection, such as surveying our users, looking at collection statistics and comparing our titles to recommended lists. Important considerations in these evaluations include whether our collection materials are findable and accessible to our users, whether they meet their information needs, and whether they reflect our value of intersectionality.

IV. Cataloguing

Book 28 Library does not currently have a catalogue. Using cataloguing software offers lots of benefits, such as better being able to organise and evaluate our collection. We are looking for a cataloguing system that will allow readers to view and search our collection to discover what they want to read, and to help us set up a loaning system. When we have a cataloguing system, items will be added to the catalogue as part of preparing materials.

V. Content Warnings

At Book 28 Library, we want everyone to be able to enjoy our collection. We recognise that content warnings can be a useful for people with trauma to avoid or prepare themselves for distressing material. However, as a small volunteer team we are not able to read all works in the library, judge the threshold at which references to become significant enough to merit a warning, or anticipate what might be upsetting to different readers. We also do not want to implicitly stigmatise works through labelling them, or give ‘spoilers’ to people who want to avoid them. As a solution, we use ‘community content warnings’: books have a paper insert in the back on which we encourage readers to write content warnings for each other, and on which volunteers can add warnings as and when they are aware of upsetting content.

Access

The collection can be accessed by visiting the Outside Project community centre whenever it is open. We are planning to set up a loaning system, so that users can borrow material and read them in private, however suits them. In the future we will also look at opportunities to create collections of LGBTIQ+ books the Outside Project.

Disposals
I. Weeding

‘Weeding’ means removing items permanently from the collection. Weeding is an important part of keeping the collection well-balanced, up-to-date, and using the limited space we have to create the most useful collection possible. We are constantly evaluating our collection and the items in it, which means some items might be weeded as part of normal library operations. At other times, we may need to undertake a particular weeding project, such as if there is a space shortage. We think carefully whether to remove material, using the following criteria:

1. Does it still meet our criteria for selection? If not, then it should be discarded.

2. Is it in disrepair beyond fixing? If so, it should be discarded, or replaced if the title still meets our evaluative criteria.

3. If this a material that claims to be factual, but is misleading, out of date or incorrect? If so, it should be discarded. This is an important consideration for our Fast Facts collection.

4. Has this been replaced by a new edition, or a more up-to-date work covering the same area? If so, it should be replaced by the new item where economically feasible, and discarded anyway if it is considered too out-of-date.

5. Has this item seen little to no circulation? If so, it should be considered for discarding. However, take into account whether it might have been used without being borrowed, whether it forms part of a series, or if it is given high priority by our selection criteria.

6. Is this item one of many copies? If so, it should be weeded if there are more copies than are likely to be currently needed.

Users are welcome to nominate a book that they think should be removed or replaced. To do so, please speak to a member of the Book 28 team, or fill out the form below, outlining why you think this book should be discarded in terms of our weeding criteria.

Form for weeding suggestions: u.nu/sdnjh

II. Repair

During normal running of the library, we might find items that are in poor physical condition. In this case, the Book 28 team will assess whether it will more economical and feasible to repair the item ourselves or replace it with a different copy.
III. Disposing of Material

When we know we no longer want a resource, what we decide to do next will depend on the reason for weeding. Items removed from the collection because they are in poor repair or factually misleading or inaccurate should be stripped of their Book 28 logos and destroyed through pulping or normal waste collection. If an item was removed for another reason, it can be kept at the centre for visitors to take for free, as long as space and resources allow. Books can be given to local charity shops or even donated to other groups, if volunteers are available for the task and items are wanted elsewhere. Unfortunately, if we are unable to give away or donate some materials, these may also need to be destroyed through pulping or waste collection.
Appendix B: General Reflection

In undertaking this dissertation, I have learnt a great deal; not just about the topics studied but also about myself, my research skills and my professional practice. I am confident that I now have a high level of insight into my research field. I also believe that my research makes a useful contribution to the literature. I appreciate that I was able to use my research to create something that will have immediate practical use, and believe that it will genuinely aid in meeting information needs, if only in a small way.

If I were to do this research again, I would spend less time reviewing the literature and more time immersed in practical decision-making, as this turned out to be the most useful part of the process. I would also try to address some of the limitations outlined in sections 5 and 6. My advice to anyone else undertaking a similar research project would be to engage in the action as soon as they feel they have a sufficient literature understanding to make a start, as the literature can and should be continually reviewed throughout the action process.