

**Leitrim County Council**

**Policy on the use of Public Library Spaces**

Public Libraries are open, inclusive and neutral community spaces that are used and enjoyed by a wide range of people. Due to restrictions of size, capacity and timetabling, library activity spaces are used primarily for programming and events organized by the staff of Leitrim County Council’s Library Service. Leitrim County Council’s Library Service may make spaces available to community groups and agencies according to the criteria set out in this document when not required for library purposes.

Library spaces include separate meeting/activity rooms and other spaces across the branch library network. The following elements come under the scope of this policy:

* Launches/Readings/Recitals/Performances
* Classes/Lectures/Talks/Presentations/Workshops
* Exhibitions
* Meetings
* Other events
* Library Notice Boards

**Criteria**

1. Permission to use library spaces may be granted to community, non‐profit, cultural, charitable and educational groups and organisations when the space is not being used for library events.
2. For the purposes of this policy, Exhibitions/Displays, Book Launches/Readings, Classes/Presentations/Talks organised in partnership with external agencies are deemed to be library events
3. Meetings and gatherings of library‐affiliated reading/writing circles other affiliated library groups are deemed to be library events for the purposes of this policy.
4. Space(s) will be made available to Leitrim County Council departments, other public bodies and state agencies, when not required for library purposes.

When an application to use library spaces is received, priority will be given to groups that best fit Leitrim County Council‘s Library Service core purpose:

* Reading Development/Literary/Cultural Events
* Learning in all its forms
* History/Heritage Events
* Community & Local Authority Information
* Support for Enterprise and Employment

Space(s) will not be made available to any organisation for commercial purpose, or to sell any materials, goods or services without the express approval of the County Librarian.

Space cannot be made available for an exhibition or event organized by a political party or movement, an organized religion or for any polemical or party‐political event.

Space cannot be made available for an exhibition or event that is obscene, racist, defamatory, illegal or is breach of any of the nine grounds under the Equal Status Acts.

All exhibitions and events will be deemed to be open to members of the public and free of any charge.

Space(s) will generally be made available during advertised hours of the library involved.

All exhibitions and events must be compatible with general library use and must not impinge on the enjoyment of the library by other members of the public or on the health and safety of the public and staff.

Many library event spaces are open to adults and children and content of talks and exhibitions in open spaces must be suitable for the wide audience that libraries cater for.

**Conditions Regarding Use of Library Space**

1. Permission to use the space cannot be construed as endorsement of the group or its aims, policies or activities. Any promotional material for the event must be approved by Leitrim County Library Service in advance of being disseminated. Permission may be withdrawn if Library management deems publicity for the event to be incompatible with the purposes of the library service.
2. No petitions or requests for funding may be made in connection with any group or organisation using library space(s).
3. Leitrim County Council Public Library Service reserves the right to recoup any special costs that may arise in the use of library space(s) by other agencies, or the costs of repair or making good should they be entailed.
4. All groups and organisations shall indemnify Leitrim County Council Library Service and its employees in respect of any claims or actions of any kind arising from any negligent act, omission or error of such groups and organisations.
5. Leitrim Library Service reserves the right to cancel or postpone an exhibition or event, should the larger interest of the service so demand.
6. Permission to use library space is revocable and does not constitute a lease. As there is considerable demand for use of library spaces, there is no guarantee of continuous indefinite use of a library space. A review of use of all library spaces is carried out on a quarterly basis.
7. Denial of an application may be appealed by any person adversely affected to the County Librarian. The County Librarian may overrule or amend a grant or denial or permission to use space(s), should the larger interest of the service so demand. The decision of the County Librarian on granting or denial of permission to use library space is final.

**Application Procedure/Specific Conditions**

1. Community groups or organisations must apply in writing to the librarian in charge. The application must include a written outline of the event, its content and any accompanying handouts.
2. Application should generally be made **at least** two months before the scheduled date, and no event can go ahead until receipt of confirmation from the staff member responsible.
3. Permission may be granted to groups or organisations for multiple events over a period. Renewal applications, if required, must be submitted at the beginning of September each year. Prior use of a library space shall not entitle applicants to future use.
4. Leitrim County Council’s Library Service staff reserve the right to attend and monitor any meeting, class or other event.
5. Organizers of events shall comply with Leitrim County Council Public Library Service’s obligations under the Disability Act, 2005.

**Responsibility**

1. It shall be the responsibility of groups and organisations to ensure that the event and its attendees will not interfere with other library users and/or staff. Leitrim County Council’s Library Service may impose reasonable conditions on any event, in the interests of the library users in general. Failure to comply with such conditions will result in cancellation of permission to use library space(s) by such groups or organisation.
2. In relation to exhibitions, exhibitors must supply evidence of having their own insurance cover. Exhibitors are also expected to ‘hang’ their own works according to the needs of the library. Library staff do not get involved except for providing the space and in taking bookings if necessary.
3. It shall be the responsibility of groups and organisations to ensure that the number of attendees at the event complies with health & safety regulations.
4. Light refreshments may be served at events with the permission of the Senior/Executive Librarian.
5. Library spaces shall be left in good clean order following events.
6. Leitrim Library Service reserves the right to offer alternative space from the one originally agreed, when circumstances require.
7. The decision of the County Librarian on granting or denial of permission to use library space for events is final.
8. The event organisers should consult the librarian in charge regarding the protocol for launches held in libraries.

**Library Notice Boards**

1. Local community groups/organisations or individuals must apply to the librarian in charge for permission to place a poster or notice on the board/display area of the library involved.
2. In all cases a copy of the poster or notice must be submitted with the request.
3. The librarian in charge will decide on whether or not the poster or notice can be placed on the notice board in line with this policy, taking into consideration the appropriateness of the material and the availability of space. Due to constraints of space it is not always possible to place the poster or notice immediately.
4. Priority will be given to local Authority, Library and Community Information. Notices of a commercial nature cannot be facilitated.
5. All notices will be dated and removed after a 30 day period or sooner if the information has expired.

**Dated: November 1st 2024**