M25 CONSORTIUM OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Annual Report

2020-21

Contents

Back cover: list of M25 Consortium members 2020-21.

Front cover: Image by Eloise Carpenter, LSHTM
Contents page top to bottom: Birkbeck, University of London;
Pixabay; St George's, University of London; Kingston University.

Chair's Report

Matthew Lawson
Director of Library and Student Support, Middlesex University
M25 Consortium Chair

The pandemic has continued to have a significant impact on libraries across the sector as well the activities of the M25 Consortium. Increased amounts of home working and attendance at virtual events have become the "new normal"; bringing with them both benefits and challenges. M25 activities have adapted with a successful virtual conference in March 2021 and a range of online cpd25 sessions. We have received a range of feedback about our online activities and are considering how suggestions can feed into future provision. In November 2020 we started a monthly newsletter to help maintain strong communication with M25 libraries. We've received positive feedback from members and plan to continue to publish regular newsletters in the future.

There were four regular online meetings of the Steering Group this year: in June, September and December 2020 and in March 2021. In addition a planning day was held in January 2021 where we reviewed progress with the new strategy initiatives and planned for the coming year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Steering Group members for their attendance and contributions over the last year and for taking on responsibility for specific aspects of the Consortium's business.

The cpd25 planning session was held in March and it was great to be able to meet the members of the four task groups virtually and enjoy the enthusiasm and expertise. cpd25 has had another successful year and continues to be an essential component of the M25 Consortium; offering a range of training and development events for library staff at all stages of their careers. The four task groups, provide significant development opportunities for the task group members. This year the groups have demonstrated responsiveness and agility by moving existing events online and adding a range of new activities to support members during the pandemic.

David Archer (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine) reached the end of his term of office as cpd25 Chair in summer 2021 and Sara Burnett, (Kingston University), was appointed as his successor. On behalf of all Consortium members, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank David for his successful guiding of cpd25 and welcome Sara to the role.

Following the 2021 AGM elections Stuart Hunt, (University of Reading); Andrew Preater, (University of West London); and Vicky Worsfold, (National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum) were re-elected for a second term. We also welcomed three new representatives as new members of the Steering Group: David Archer, (LSHTM); Christopher Cipkin, (Royal Holloway, University of London); and Anna Semmens, (Royal College of Nursing). One vacancy remains unfilled.

This year we said goodbye to Pat Christie (University of the Arts London) who stepped down in October 2020. Regina Everitt (University of East London) and Robert Atkinson (Birkbeck, University of London) reached the end of their terms on the Steering Group. I would like to thank them all for the valuable contribution they have made to the Consortium over the years.

The AGM discussed a proposal for the Consortium to join with SCONUL which would provide greater financial stability as well as opportunities for enhanced collaboration and networking for members. This was approved and work is ongoing to take this forward.

The Trustees (Cathy Phillpotts, Treasurer; Michelle Wake, Secretary; David Archer, cpd25 Chair and Sara Burnett and I) and the Executive Manager (Rachel Telfer) have continued to meet to progress business matters and to consider proposals in between Steering Group meetings.

Finally, I would like to extend thanks to the M25 Support Team, to M25 and cpd25 Steering Group members, and to colleagues in member libraries for your time, efforts and support for the work and services of the Consortium. The M25 is only what it is because of your support and contributions.

Treasurer's Report

Catherine Phillpotts
University Librarian, London Metropolitan University
Treasurer

As a charitable company the Consortium undergoes independent examination of its financial accounts each year. Once again, we have appointed Moore Kingston Smith for this scrutiny and their report will be made available to members at our next AGM.

Note – all figures are subject to confirmation by Moore Kingston Smith when they conduct their independent examination at the end of the calendar year.

For the 2020/21 financial year income from subscriptions was £116,727 (plus £12,334 paid for by prepaid vouchers and therefore the funds were already in our bank account). Our total income was £142,724.

The global pandemic and subsequent lockdown(s) have impacted our planned programme of activities and income from M25 and cpd25 events, however we have transitioned to online events and this has brought in a steady income.

We have continued to monitor all expenditure closely in order to ensure the sustainability of the Consortium during this very difficult period.

cpd25 activities brought in £6,921 and £2,510 of prepaid vouchers were also used to pay for events. At the time of writing £440 was still owed for events near the end of the financial year.

Expenditure for the Consortium included:
♦ Support team staffing costs
♦ Website and IT support for the Admin Team
♦ HR Support
♦ Search25 costs
♦ Costs for Zoom Licences to enable events to carry on online
♦ Financial advice from Moore Kingston Smith

Total expenditure: £148,439.25.

The M25 Staff Awards Scheme did not make any awards to cover attendance at (external) conferences during the 2020-21 year, although awards were made to selected Consortium events. Due to the pandemic, the payment of some 2019/20 awards was held over into the 2020/21 financial year. Take-up for the scheme was low in the 2020/21 financial year and this is presumed to be due to the cancellation of many face-to-face events which would have afforded networking opportunities.

For the 2020/21 year, reserves of £51,104 were calculated as required in order to cover any potential risks to the Consortium.

Once again, I would like to thank Moore Kingston Smith formally for their invaluable assistance and advice in relation to financial matters.

I would also like to thank the M25 Consortium's Admin Team for their invaluable help and attention to detail in relation to the Consortium's finances. It has been another challenging year and our colleagues in the Admin Team have really risen to the challenges.

cpd25 Chair's Report

David Archer
Director of Library, Archive & Open Research Services
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
cpd25 Chair

The pandemic has obviously continued to impact on the cpd25 programme this year, but nevertheless the Task Groups have succeeded in planning and delivering some great events. Between August 2020 and July 2021, the cpd25 programme delivered 27 online events, including 6 free events for M25 Consortium members. "Library inductions" and "So you want to be a subject librarian?" were amongst the charged events attracting the highest number of attendees during this period. The series of "Exchange of experience: supporting each other during Covid-19" events, free to M25 members, were very well received. Topics covered in the series were career development during lockdown, managing the student experience during lockdown, managing hybrid (physical and virtual) library services, supporting each other and reflection and learning. This opportunity to come together in a safe setting to discuss shared concerns and to share ideas reinforced the value of the M25 Consortium as a network for staff working at all levels across a variety of different libraries. An additional free resilience booster session was also organised for members, which was also well attended. In all, 466 delegates attended cpd25 events over the course of the year, with 89% of attendees giving evaluation feedback during 2020/21 rating our events as either very good or excellent.

A number of new Task Group members were appointed across the four Task Groups during the past year. The enthusiasm and ideas generated by all of our Task Group members has been fantastic, and vital to our ability to drive the programme forward during such challenging times. The four Task Groups and the Working Group have met online regularly over the course of the year, and the cpd25 Planning Day took place via Zoom in March. Evaluation reports from 2019/20 and the results of the cpd25 survey run in February of this year were reviewed at the start of the day, before discussing how cpd25 might deliver a hybrid programme of events in the future and collaborate with peer organisations to expand the reach of our offer. In the afternoon the Task Groups convened for programme planning for the year ahead, and the day ended with a brief session on resilience and the chance to network over virtual drinks.

As I step down at the end of my term of office as cpd25 Chair I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Task Group Chairs, the Task Group Members, and the M25 Support Team for all their contributions to the delivery and ongoing development of the cpd25 programme over the past four years. I truly believe that the cpd25 programme and the M25 Consortium offer something incredibly unique and valuable to our members and to the wider profession, and it has been an enormous pleasure to have worked with so many great people in the development and delivery of the programme. I am delighted that Sara Burnett has been appointed as my successor, and look forward to seeing her lead cpd25 to even greater things in the future.

27

cpd25 events held in 2020-21

466

delegates attended cpd25 events in 2020-21

cpd25 Events Feedback

September 2020
Difficult Managerial Issues series
"Picked up a couple of good tips on strategy. Learnt to treat all staff the same regardless of their performance. To give them as much time as I would the best worker."

"The session leader was very good at adapting the workshop to our individual examples and queries. It was very interesting and I learned a lot! Many thanks!"

October 2020
Resilience Booster
"The format was great, 10 tips so easy to follow and nice simple things that didn't make you panic. I liked the interactive bits, good to keep you engaged."

"This session convinced me to look after myself a bit more! Thierry was delightful and very engaging. I liked the practical elements to the session."

November 2020
Managing Student Behaviour
"I enjoy the activities/discussions Ash puts together as it helps to hear from the group the different approaches used in other Libraries. The group work also helps the learning to stick – for example when discussing realistic scenarios this personally helps me visualise and make sense of situation."

"All of the course was interesting and relevant. It is useful to hear other people's experience."

Presentation Skills
"It was a pleasure to attend Ned's webinar today. I found the session easy to follow and understand."

"All good, very useful and I'll certainly be changing the way I present."

December 2020
Applying to study Library and Information Science
"All of the questions I had were answered, the Q&A was especially helpful. I found it useful to have a variety of speakers from various backgrounds on how they progressed their career and the role of the qualification in their career progression."

"Hearing about each personal experience. Really useful and motivational! Thanks so much!"

January 2021
Delivering Library Services Remotely
"Hearing others' experiences and also learning about technology which I did not know of being used by other libraries."

"The fact that it was a workshop/forum, rather than a few people sharing their experiences, which are not always similar to yours. It was really good to have a supportive, friendly environment."

The GLAM Sector
"Using multimedia and slides and experiences gave a rounded well documented experience."

"To me, each speaker offered something of interest. I was particularly interested by discussion surrounding library and information service practice, as that is my own background, but also appreciated the variety of topics covered by the speakers."

February 2021
New to Management
"The honest exchange of ideas and concerns and Ash's sincere approach to issues that managers face and staff equally. It was an excellent training."

"Loved everything especially covering all concerns great pace - delivered with humour."

Data Driven Library Services
"Both presentations were easy to follow and had some really good tips concerning why they collect data, what they use it for and the different methods available of collecting data."

"Examples of projects where data was used. Breakout rooms and having the opportunity to talk to other attendees."

cpd25 Events Feedback

Mental Health & Wellbeing
"Thank you for your time and all presentations were well presented, got a lot of information and good ideas from the session."
"Excellent facilitator and speakers."

March 2021
Online Recruitment
"Just thank you to everyone for organising this brilliant session, I'm truly glad I attended!"
"Some useful tips from speakers and attendees."

April 2021
Library Marketing
"Thank you for hosting this great session. It was really useful to get an insight into how other academic libraries conduct themselves in the online space."

Deaf Awareness Training
"It was incredibly helpful training that provided a lot of digestible information in a short period of time."
"This was an interesting and informative training session which provided awareness of the Deaf community. Learning how to fingerspell and use basic sign language was really enjoyable and I hope to use this in the future."

May 2021
Accessibility for Students
"An excellent session, Lizi was very professional and gave a brilliant introduction to the apps and features. I will certainly be sharing this useful information with my team."
"It was brilliant to be shown all the Apps that can be accessed and to support those that do not get help through DSA because they may not meet the criteria."

So you want to be a Subject Librarian?
"Thank you all for a really positive, interesting and informative event, I learned a great deal."
"Really excellent event - incredibly helpful. As someone who will be looking for a new job soon, this was a really useful session with some great practical advice."

June 2021
Library Inductions
"Session was really well-run, easy to login, ask questions, follow the agenda. It was great to attend a conference - this hasn't been possible during the pandemic, so it was a welcome change. Thanks for running this session."
"Thank you for organising this course. The content was very rich and the speakers were professional and engaging."

Directors' Cut
"Interesting to hear the speaker's experience of career path and challenges, and having overall responsibility for areas outside his expertise."
"I liked the narrative element as well as the range and applicability of the information spoken and provided by the slides. Christopher's delivery, and engagement with delegates was top-notch."

July 2021
Effective Communication
"Thanks, it was a really useful and enjoyable session."
"A good, interesting session, which has certainly got me thinking more about how I present myself during meetings."

cpd25 Support During Covid-19

Free member events were set up in autumn 2020 as a response to the pandemic and aimed to provide support and networking opportunities for staff in M25 member libraries. 67 people attended the events during 2020-21.

Thank you to the cpd25 task groups and everyone who participated.

November
Sharing and Caring
With thanks to the moderators:
Sara Burnett, Kingston University
Sally Brock, Kings College London
Monna Rizvi, Middlesex University

January
Managing the student experience during lockdown
With thanks to the moderators:
Vicky Robertson, UCL School of Pharmacy
Maria Smith, University of Sussex
Lee Taylor, The British Library

February
Career development during lockdown
With thanks to the moderators:
Ros Francis, Anglia Ruskin University
Paul Terry, The British Library
Darlene Maxwell, Royal College of Art

Feedback from members

"Really nice to network with others and I thought the conversation flowed well as the group was a good size for a zoom call."

"Shared experiences during the lockdown and ways of taking advantage of them towards the future"

"Hearing the experiences of other libraries, and refreshing that they are so similar"

"It was very nice to hear from other people about their jobs, workplace and code of practice."

April
Managing hybrid (physical and virtual) library services
With thanks to the moderators:
Katherine Marshall, University of Westminster
Alan Doherty, London South Bank University
Simon Collins, Kingston University

June
Reflection and learning
With thanks to the moderators:
Elizabeth Williams, Goldsmiths, University of London
Eloise Carpenter, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
Lina Nemanyte, The British Library

Annual Conference: The Future of Libraries

Vicky Worsfold

Head of Onsite Services

National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum

The 2020 Conference on the Future of Libraries was unfortunately cancelled, albeit with an excellent poster session swiftly assembled in its place. At that point it was very hard to predict even the short-term future for libraries, but by the time of the 2021 Conference, libraries had been able to reflect on the previous year and to consider their responses to the pandemic.

Matthew Lawson's opening remarks to the Conference about how libraries have a 'totemic presence', being kept open in Universities when everything else was shut around them, set the tone for how important libraries have been in keeping remote learning going and in being at the forefront of any physical re-opening.

The keynote address was given by Professor Shân Wareing (University of Northampton). I was delighted to see that the title was 'The Future of Libraries: what can we learn from Star Wars?'. Sadly, the answer was not 'Jedi mind tricks', but rather she used Star Wars as a framework for a thoughtful analysis of education and quests, of the library's role in social mobility and fighting prejudice and the possibilities and limitations of technology. Her closing observations were quite radical: that students will sign up to courses all over the world, but use their local academic library as their base: stay local but study globally. She argued that just as in Star Wars, libraries will continue to work collectively, not be frightened of change, have equality at their heart and continue to have big dreams.

Elizabeth Malone and Sara Burnett (Kingston University) picked up these themes in their presentation on their new library space which opened in January 2020. It was a library that was never meant to close, with porous spaces, approachable desks and lots of touch points. Their future was still looking positive as they had found that students do still think of a library as a physical space and that, as it was built to be flexible and adaptable, it is in a good position to evolve.

Adam Matthew Digital and Quartex had given a pre-Conference presentation on the importance of access to primary sources, and how they could help facilitate that, and this topic was built on by both Elizabeth Thurlow (University of the Arts London) and Karen Rowlett (University of Reading). UAL had developed their digital collections, practices and spaces in parallel with colonising their collections. Elizabeth argued that digital preservation needs active management and raised the point that it can serve to help to address existing biases that are present in what is preserved. Technology is not neutral and nor is our application of it and we need to critically examine how we prioritise what we digitise, who's involved in that selection and whether it will support gender and racial equality. At the University of Reading, Karen descried how their Open Research Initiative had tackled low adoption of OA publication routes and established an open research culture in the University. Through conferences, awards, research programming and support, culminating in an Open Access Research Plan they had put the library at the centre of a programme that was now one of the UK's most prolific Open Access content producers.

Sarah Chaney and Teresa Doherty (Royal College of Nursing) closed the Conference with a discussion on funding for exhibitions and events – money being now more than ever a question for our futures. They argued you must always start with your audience, thinking about who they are and then matching them with your potential funder. They also profiled some one-off projects that had attracted specific funding, but stressed that strategically it's best not to do too many of these. Most important is to develop longer term external and internal partnerships that will deliver on your goals for your core audience.

The Conference was also a chance for the M25 'Task and Finish' groups to give presentations on the progress that had been made over the

Annual Conference: The Future of Libraries

Vicky Worsfold

Head of Onsite Services

National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum

previous two years. The 'Wellbeing' Group had looked at services and spaces, collections and library staff wellbeing and had created a resources section on the M25 website. The 'Diversity' Group were concentrating initially on racial equality. They had to go into hiatus in June 2020 but were now looking at active allying and amplifying voices on social media and on diversity training. There will also be a survey. They were interested in a wide range of perspectives and if anyone was interested in joining the group they should contact the Group chair.

Overall the Conference was a welcome chance to reflect on how much has been learned over the last year, and at the ways libraries had already been building flexibility into their practices and spaces which enabled them to respond quickly when everything had to change so suddenly. Libraries have always placed digital collections and remote access to the fore, which again enabled our users to continue their research during a period of enforced distance. The recognition of the importance of these resources and services can only be a good thing as we go forward.

12

Staff members from M25 Consortium libraries presented at the conference

108

delegates attended the conference

12

Conference poster presentations published on the website

Feedback from delegates

What did you find most useful about the conference?

'Variety of talks'

'Real experiences and case studies'

'Tips and advice'

'The diversity of members and their activities'

"Hearing from people from across the sector'
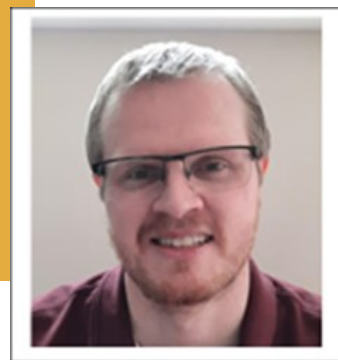
'Practice sharing is excellent'

Annual Conference: The Future of Libraries

M25 Conference attendance award

Michael Stringer
Head of Library Resources and E-Strategy
London Metropolitan University

Librarians are used to looking forward to identifying new challenges and this year's conference offered a range of thought-provoking content with which to plan for the future.

In his opening remarks, Matthew Lawson (M25 Consortium Chair) recognised the uncertainty of the times we are currently operating in, but was optimistic that the conference would pose interesting questions for attendees and he saw value in the commitment of librarians to sharing in order to overcome uncertainty.

The keynote address was delivered by Professor Shân Wareing who pleased science fiction fans as she sought to draw parallels between the future of libraries and the Star Wars films. The presentation referenced the need for librarians to remain grounded in reality alongside the hi tech – just as with the scene where the key protagonists must escape from the rusty waste compactor when taken on board the highly advanced Death Star.

Shân looked to technologies of the future to consider what might be transformative, and technologies that augment the user experience and tech to tech communications were seen to be on the horizon. Asynchronous communication was another strong feature and Princess Leia's hologram message, as delivered by R2D2, was referenced. It was so positive to begin the day with the phrase: "Library staff have, and continue to have, big dreams."

In the next presentation, Libraries: the most truly democratic space? Elizabeth Malone and Sara Burnett from Kingston University described the new Townhouse library, which opened in January 2020 and replaced six library buildings. Prior to the Townhouse the library lacked a visible presence on campus. Now, there is a community ethos with artwork, dance and a café attracting students and local residents to the space – the latter even get borrowing rights!

The internal spaces were intended to be porous with lots of entries and exits, and to be encouraging of social

encounters. With the building soon packed out, before and after perception sheets were handed out to visitors and observations made on usage behaviours. "Welcoming" was the most frequent comment. Not long after the opening the impact of the pandemic was felt, and this has seen a subtle adjustment in how the space is used. It is now much more of a blended learning space with Zoom zones and the project floor has been repurposed to learning zones rather than study spaces. There was obvious regret that that the public did not get sufficient time prior to lockdown to fully appreciate how the space is to be used, but it is a sufficiently good enough space for all concerned to be able to adapt to the conditions of the time.

In her presentation Developing digital collections, practices and spaces at UAL, Elizabeth Thurlow stressed the strong influence of decolonisation as she described their implementation of the Preservica platform. The word that encapsulated Elizabeth's talk was "bias" and how to address this when managing collections, recognising under-representation in society in collection content, awareness of structural biases when designing interfaces and enhancing cataloguing vocabulary with the use of tagging. Elizabeth has learned from the implementation that such a project is about the people not just the systems.

Pete Williams from Birkbeck and Paula Funnell from Queen Mary updated attendees on the Wellbeing Task and Finish Group, highlighting how the M25 website now has a dedicated area for library staff which is broken into three sections: Collections, Services and Spaces and Staff Wellbeing. Items covered include bibliotherapy, object-led wellbeing, 24 hour opening to improve student wellbeing and case studies to aid staff wellbeing from before and during the lockdown. Alea Baker described how the Diversity Task and Finish Group used a SCONUL 2019 report on BAME employee experiences to focus on active allying, positive action, diversity training and starting conversations - with consideration given to adapting

Michael Stringer
Head of Library Resources and E-Strategy
London Metropolitan University

language and respectful practice. They have been busy collecting case studies.

The Conference then turned to the culture of research as Karen Rowlett from Reading University described the 'Road to Open Research: promoting and fostering a sharing culture'. A full day conference in 2017 called Open in Practice sparked a series of changes for the better. Prior to this research support was not integrated but new posts were introduced recognition of scholarly communications to develop the culture so that OA became recognised as a normal practice. An OA monographs fund was established in 2017 and in subsequent years steps have been made to enhance this support such as establishing the Library Research Engagement Team in 2019, joining the UK Reproducibility Network in 2020 and the creation of a Digital Humanities Research Hub in 2021 and recruiting Open Research Champions. This ground up cultivation of an open research culture was inspiring.

Eleri Kyffin and Sara Hafeez described how at the University of Westminster they are helping future students with Extended Project Qualifications in recognition of the often difficult transition to university. Utilising OA resources, they work with school and FE librarians to focus on skills in a fun way often using learning recipe cards.

Finally, we had a contribution from outside of HE as the Royal College of Nursing was represented by Sarah Chaney and Teresa Doherty to highlight Funding our Future! Public Engagement and Grant Incomes for Libraries. They told how co-production of exhibitions and events had been working well and shared tips on their success. They advised to start small and upscale, think about the audience first and not the funder, match the audience with the funder, tailor any plans to the audience and to carefully evaluate the project afterwards. These tips would offer an excellent basis for anyone new to planning such events.
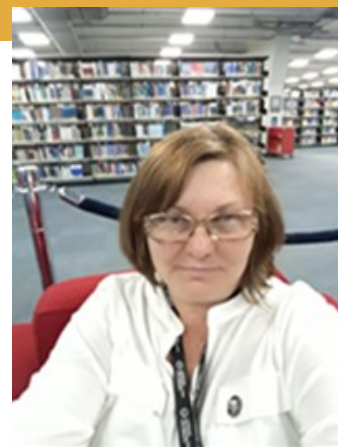
All in all, the 2021 Conference took us through a plethora of interesting topics, offering useful learning points and a healthy dose of positivity in these difficult times.

M25 Conference attendance award

Olga O'Connell
Duty Librarian
London Metropolitan University

I was granted to attend the Conference as a delegate for free and I was proud to take part in it. The topic was truly relevant, "The Future of Libraries" with speakers reflecting on diverse aspects of library issues.

Personally, the Kingston University presentation made the greatest impression, as it was most relevant to my role as Duty Librarian in the London Metropolitan University library service.

The presentation described how student requests and needs have changed and how the situation has transformed during the pandemic, being entitled "Libraries: the most truly democratic space?" and was presented by Sara Burnett and Elizabeth Malone.
Kingston University has worked hard to ensure they are providing a high-quality library service in their new library building. It has become a major element of the University and sits on the main campus alongside performance space, exhibition and event spaces, archives, special collections and cafés.
The new library has:

• improved statistical information regarding its use;

• improved help for students regarding location of topic areas and social distancing rules;

• whiteboards to communicate recent important updates;

• a visitor book;

- provided approachable desks, resulting in improved accessibility for disabled students;
- provided various improvements in their IT sector and;
- produced a measurably increased volume of visitors due to longer opening hours.

Due to the implementation of various information-gathering techniques, the presenters noted that:

- The "quiet" floor is most popular on weekdays, whereas the "social learning" area is the more popular area at weekends;
- The "silent" floor is the least popular area since reopening the library;
- Group study rooms converted for individual use are in demand;
- "Silent pods" are not particularly popular when directly compared to the previous building;
- PC spaces are particularly popular, especially where work can be laid out and;
- Workbenches have proved to be the most successful choice of furniture.

What has become noticeably clear over the past year is that a library is clearly valued as a part of the wider student experience. I have noticed several trends from the M25 Conference within Academic library practice:

1. Inclusivity

In response to the recent wave of social justice movements as well as a large interest in books on diversity and anti-racism, libraries are increasingly looking to promote inclusivity. As we look forward to 2022, many libraries including the London Met are encouraging diversification of collections to achieve this end. Academic librarians recognise that diversifying collections is an important way to inform students of fields of racism, sexism and homophobia. Librarians at the Universities have also started to establish a 'de-colonisation section' into their collections to illuminate students in world history.

2. Open Access

Amidst the recent push to equalise academia and research to ensure information is easily discoverable and accessible, Open Access content has gained

significant traction. However, this has not rid authors of wariness when it comes to publishing Open Access books. In general, this is due to lack of awareness. The University of Reading presentation shows us that this move towards more open and accessible content will only accelerate in the future.

3. The Diversification of Education approach

With the unprecedented move to online learning, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, digital resources have become more essential in 2021. However, this shift has also presented many challenges for libraries. University of the Arts London's presentation showed us their efforts to provide more digital information and support for educators as they adjusted to the virtual or hybrid classroom and this will certainly continue next year. London Metropolitan University also has increased its experience using a reading list solution that was integrated into the library's collections to allow for a more seamless digital transition.

4. Data literacy and virtual media

In keeping with the digital migration this year, I have found that academic library book purchasing has shifted dramatically towards eBooks considering both their accessibility and affordability.

In conclusion I believe that UK academic libraries seem to be passing through the COVID-19 pandemic by providing inclusive and welcoming environments that support exploration and discovery, enable individual and collaborative learning, reward curiosity and creativity and promote student engagement. Academic libraries create healthy spaces that represent traditional and emerging library values, in which services, resources, environments, and activities support and inspire the multidisciplinary research and learning needs of students and staff.

I would like to thank very much indeed the organisers of this Conference, who allow the community to develop and share academic library experiences and develop a knowledge of the wider professional context.

Wellbeing Task and Finish Group

Pete Williams

Assistant Director (Academic Liaison and User Support)

Birkbeck, University of London

The M25 Wellbeing Task & Finish Group, which was set up to investigate the ways that academic libraries can support and promote the wellbeing of their students and staff, completed its work in summer 2021.

During the past eighteen months, the M25 Wellbeing Task & Finish Group, which is made up of volunteers from member libraries, has gathered together a range of materials which, we hope, form a good starting point for library staff interested in the subject. These are published on the M25 website and the group's blog.

The resources include:

Case studies:

- Object-led wellbeing workshops at Central Saint Martins.
- Efforts to promote library staff wellbeing at Queen Mary University Library during the pandemic.
- How the library at London South Bank University works with its university's wellbeing services.
- Promoting a sense of 'belonging' in the library space at the University of Kent.
- Research into the impact of 24-hour opening on student wellbeing at Birkbeck.

Guides:

- Starting your own wellbeing collection.
- Tips for managers on ensuring the wellbeing of their staff.
- An overview of bibliotherapy.

The website includes links to key reports about student wellbeing in higher education and other relevant websites. Members of the group also conducted a wide-ranging interview with Dr Liz Brewster from Lancaster University, an expert in both bibliotherapy and wellbeing, which is published on the website and serves as a thought-provoking overview of the topic.

The group finally finished its work in the summer of 2021, having originally convened in November 2019. The work took longer than originally envisaged due to the pandemic, which interrupted some of our plans and made other projects (such as an investigation of what public libraries are doing in this area) difficult to take forward. However, the group was able to resume in the summer of 2020 and go on to complete most of the tasks that had been planned. The delay also enabled the group to touch upon some of the wellbeing issues raised by the pandemic itself.

What did we learn? A few themes have emerged. One is that academic libraries are often not considered in sector reports and strategies (they are barely mentioned in any of the reports we have selected), so clearly work needs to be done in promoting what libraries do both at institutional and sector level. Related to this, we believe that libraries should endeavour to measure the impact of all the wellbeing activities they undertake, both to justify the time and resources they spend on them and to provide evidence of the role libraries can play within universities.

Dr Liz Brewster

Pete Williams

Assistant Director (Academic Liaison and User Support)

Birkbeck, University of London

Conversely, we found plenty of evidence that, in fact, libraries are already doing a lot to support wellbeing, as is shown by the varied case studies we have collected. The group also felt strongly that library managers should give attention to the wellbeing of their own staff and continue to do so even after the current crisis is over.

We also learned that it is possible to keep projects like this going through a pandemic. Thanks must go to all the group members, who each managed to contribute material, but I would especially like to highlight the contributions of Emma Fitzpatrick (Senate House Library) and Paula Funnell (QMUL) who took a lead in a number of areas and without whose commitment and enthusiasm the group would not have been able to complete its work.

There is more information about the Task and Finish Group at www.m25lib.ac.uk and the blog, which we hope to maintain after the lifetime of the group, can be viewed at https://m25wellbeing.blog.

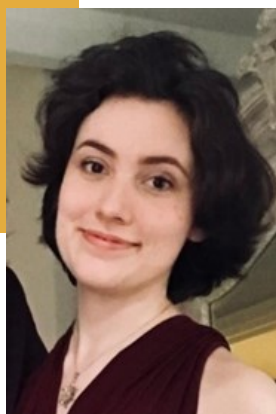Image: Birkbeck's Reading for Pleasure collection

Diversity Task and Finish Group

Katie Winter
Learning Development Librarian
University of Surrey

Having chosen to focus specifically on the lack of ethnic diversity within our workforce, the Diversity Task and Finish Group have continued this year to gather case studies and examples to help address this issue.

The M25 Diversity Task and Finish Group is made up of volunteers from member institutions who are all passionate about creating a more diverse, equal, and inclusive workforce. The members are:
Katie Winter, Learning Development Librarian, University of Surrey (Chair)
Paulina Czyz, Library Customer Services Adviser, University of Surrey
Eva Dann, Information Consultant, Royal Holloway University, University of London
Daniella Fearon, Library Assistant, University of the Arts London
Krishna Roy-Chowdhury, Head, Content and Digital Environments, University of East London
Cliff Van Dort, Head of Library, The National Archives
Alea Baker, Library Customer Services Officer – Special Collections, University of London

Our work so far

With the pandemic creating new and changing pressures on our time, it has been hard to continue the work we had started over the last year. The group was on hiatus last summer and autumn, with some members unfortunately unable to continue participating. However, we are all passionate about working to improve diversity in our workforce and with new members joining, we reconvened in March this year. We have since continued to work on the four key strands identified in relation to the lack of ethnic diversity in our workforce: active allying, positive action, diversity training and starting conversations.

Active allying

In this strand, we've been considering the prevalence of allies' networks and how these help to support BAME staff and allies alike. Social media is also a key element of this strand as we consider how to amplify BAME voices and represent our users effectively. By understanding how organisations approach allyship and gathering examples of current practice, we aim

to encourage active allyship within institutions.

Positive action

This strand looks to bring together recommended diversity statements, action plans and HR practices within our institutions. We are also particularly interested in looking at mentoring opportunities for BAME staff and how these can be created or developed moving forwards, to ensure we are attracting, developing, promoting and retaining BAME employees.

Diversity training

Thinking initially about our own experiences, we've been considering whether training offered at different institutions is robust and effective, and whether it is university-wide or specific to libraries. We aim to understand how training is delivered (i.e. online, in person, with opportunities for discussion), whether it is part of an ongoing process and how this impacts the effectiveness. Diversity training is so often a generic 'tick-box' exercise and we want to gather examples of excellent training that could be adopted more broadly.

Starting conversations

We have started to have conversations regarding the importance of using appropriate language in both policy documentation, social media and day to day conversations. We are aiming to ascertain whether institutions offer guidance about terminology and how we can implement more respectful and inclusive language going forwards in light of the public review of terms such as BAME.

Gathering examples

We have started to collect case studies to illustrate good practice taking place within member institutions. Two examples, from the University of Surrey and the University of East London, can be found on the M25 website. We are keen to carry on adding to this collection, so if you are happy to share any case studies or best practice examples from

your workplace, however big or small, do get in touch by emailing the chair k.winter@surrey.ac.uk.

We also want to get a broader view of current practice related to the four strands we're investigating across member institutions and will shortly be releasing a survey for this purpose. The survey will be open to all staff, working at all levels, within M25 libraries. We plan to disseminate the results of this survey in a report, and to share any examples of best practice identified through the survey.

We're aware that, as a small group, we can't fully represent our member institutions and colleagues so we are always interested in hearing other perspectives. If you'd like to join the group, get involved in anything we're currently working on or share any initiatives you've been working on in a group meeting, please get in touch!

17

wellbeing resources published on the blog and website

19

Staff members from M25 libraries taking part in Task and Finish Groups in 2020-21

Search25 Task and Finish Group

Stuart Hunt
Director of University Library & Collections Services and University Librarian
University of Reading

The retirement of the Search25 service offers new benefits to M25 members.

Discovering collections and items in the collections at M25 member libraries is important for our libraries and our users. Search25 has provided this service for a number of years. However, it has become apparent over time that the discovery of M25 collections could be improved.

By Autumn 2020 the M25 Steering Group announced the intention to close the Search25 service. It was the right time for the service to be retired. Since its creation Search25 has provided a unified search across the catalogue of most M25 member libraries. Since that time many libraries have migrated their Library management system and also become participants in the Jisc Library Hub services.

A Task and Finish Group was established in autumn 2020 to lead on the closure of Search25 and help member libraries who had not already done so to migrate to Jisc Library Hub. The Task & Finish Group comprised representatives from both academic and scholarly libraries. The members are: Stuart Hunt, University or Reading; Jonathan Lucas, University of the Creative Arts; Tamsin Rothery, Oxford Brookes University; Jane Rosen, Imperial War Museum; Christiane Swinbank, German Historical Institute, and; Rachel Taylor, M25 Executive Manager.

The Group had three tasks; decommission the Search25 service, encourage consortium members to migrate to Jisc Library Hub, and communicate with the wider membership on the changes.

Stuart Hunt
Director of University Library & Collections Services and University Librarian
University of Reading

The 31st July 2021 was set for the closure of the Search25 platform. Meanwhile M25 member libraries not already participating in the Jisc Library Hub have been encouraged to join this service. All M25 members can contribute their bibliographic metadata to Library Hub thus ensuring that they are included in the National Bibliographic Knowledgebase (NBK). Library Hub offers many advantages to M25 members. As a national service comprised of Discover, Compare and Cataloguing, members libraries can take advantage of additional features not available through Search25.

In order to help member libraries not already participating in Library Hub, the Task & Finish Group ran a seminar on migrating to Jisc Library Hub in March 2021. Speakers at the seminar included Bethan Ruddock of the Library Hub team at Jisc who outlined the benefits and ease of participation for M25 members. The Task & Finish Group also introduced a buddying scheme, the purpose of which is to connect existing M25 members of Library Hub with non-members based upon a common library management system. In this way, the experience of one member can be shared with another on the nuts and bolts of how to manage contribution to Library Hub and the NBK.

At the end of July 2021 Search25 retired as a service after many years of supporting M25 members. M25 members not yet part of Jisc Library Hub are encouraged to contribute to this national service. The benefits delivered to M25 members individually and collectively for resource discovery, collection analysis and comparison and for cataloguing represent a step-change from Search25 and a real bonus to member libraries.

63%

of M25 Consortium libraries are already participating in, or are in the process of joining, Jisc Library Hub.

69

members of staff from M25 libraries participated in M25 groups in 2020-21

42

delegates registered for the Directors' Briefings

M25 Health Libraries in Covid-19

How have medical libraries supported their institutions during Covid-19?

Image: University of Bedfordshire, Aylesbury Campus

University of Bedfordshire: Aylesbury Campus Library
Joe Eftihiou, Cathryn Tyas, Kathryn Gray & Sarah Arkle

The University of Bedfordshire has four main campuses: Aylesbury, Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes. The main nursing campus is at Aylesbury. All the libraries were closed during the first lockdown. Aylesbury campus library has been open for students since September 2020.

The Aylesbury campus library, located on the Stoke Mandeville Hospital site, has supported students and staff throughout Covid-19 in a number of ways. From an academic standpoint, the greatly increased stock of e-resources granted students access to materials wherever they had access to the internet. This was particularly useful during lockdowns and placements. Access to digital resources was a boost to studying, giving broader access to materials than print. Library staff were designated key workers so reduced opening hours and minimal staffing opened campus libraries from September 2020. As nursing was identified as a priority course by the government nursing cohorts were allowed back on campus in the autumn and used the services on offer appreciating the opportunity for face to face interactions (even with face coverings!)

Borrowing limits were extended to 40 items and the number of automatic renewals was increased to cover the whole period. This enabled students to stock up and avoid additional trips to the library. Fines were also written off for books that were due back during lockdown. Laptops loans were made available for home use. They were requested by any students that needed them to avoid as much disruption to their studies and possible. All student enquiries could be made online, by email or by phone via the University's well established SiD online (SiD = Student Information Desk). In addition, the University's Study Hub (part of the library team) were able to offer online support via Teams for academic, resourcing and general IT assistance to help nursing students with their assignments.

From a safety standpoint, the library acted as a PCR test collection point to students and staff. Social distancing, screens, a one-way system and other safety measures were also put in place.

The library provided face to face support to students with library services, general University enquiries and advice on applying for the Covid hardship fund. Students expressed their gratitude towards the library for being a reliable point of contact during this time.

It will be great to see increasing numbers of students back on campus in the coming weeks and we look forward to helping them in person.

University of Westminster
Julia Hendricks
Support for Biosciences during Covid-19

Resources
Work was carried out to ensure that all modules had current reading lists and to identify critical text book content and provide online access to this, wherever possible. E-textbooks were purchased on the basis of unlimited continuous access for each individual student within the cohort of a module.
Examples included:

- We subscribed to 11 titles within the OUP Fundamentals of Biosciences e-textbook collection (cost £31,280.00).
- 45 titles were made available via a subscription to Kortext, following work to match essential titles on reading lists.

Teaching
We immediately flipped our embedded teaching sessions and offered regular Library and Academic Skills one-to-one signups and workshops through Blackboard collaborate. This has continued to date.
Sessions for Life Sciences :

- 8 Embedded Library skills sessions
- 7 embedded academic skills sessions
- 27 one to one Library skills appointments taken up

Image: Library of the Royal College of Surgeons of England

Royal College of Surgeons of England
Sue Isaac
The Library of the Royal College of Surgeons of England was in an unusual situation prior to Covid-19 in that we were already without an actual library space due to redevelopment work. Thankfully this meant that we were already delivering a lot of our services online and had become somewhat used to remote working. During the pandemic the staff of the library showed their ability to adapt by taking on different responsibilities while other team members were furloughed. Staff creating a Covid-19 version of our popular Updates service (seven issues in total) to keep surgeons informed about the latest research and we began a new project with our Research Team to create an accessible repository of Covid-19 research from the RCS Covid Research Group. We opened our literature search service to all medical professionals, worked with suppliers to ensure access to important content was as open as possible and waived fees on document delivery to ensure that our members had the information they needed to do their jobs in a very difficult time. The resources provided by the College can be viewed at https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-resources/.

Alongside that, we have been preparing for the return to our newly redeveloped home in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Our collections staff have worked tirelessly to re-imagine their entire plans for re-stocking our spaces in order to ensure the safety of the teams working on the move. This has been a very difficult but important piece of work to ensure that collections can be moved back into the building in time for re-opening, while overcoming the logistical difficulties that arise from having to ensure teams work in a Covid-safe and socially distanced way.

Throughout the pandemic, the Library team have continued as best they can to provide business-as-usual support as well as progressing aspects of our strategy such as implementing our new discovery system that was launched in May. Despite very challenging circumstances huge progress has been made in the last year and we now look forward to re-opening in our new library spaces later this year, while continuing to develop and deliver high quality online services and support.

Kent and Medway Medical School
Manfred Gschwandtner

Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) is a new joint medical school, set up between Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Kent, and welcomed its first cohort of 107 students in September 2021.

The setup of the KMMS library started way before the pandemic in 2018 and from the beginning it was clear that the library will follow KMMS' overall "digital first" strategy - the library only provides students with digital learning resources that are available online. Print is still bought, but is not considered the preferred way of accessing resources. Following a "digital first" strategy has meant that the pandemic itself, and the need to study online, did not have a major impact on this element of library services.

In order to improve our online learning resources, we also started to look at specific medical learning resources in addition to textbooks, journals and databases. We were able to offer the students a new interactive anatomy app (Complete Anatomy) and two platforms that provided them with the core content of the medical curriculum either in bit sized interactive learning modules (RX Bricks) or in short, animated videos (Osmosis). Both of these tailored resources for medical students had a very high usage and will be offered permanently now.

With regards to information and digital literacy teaching, the pandemic forced a move to online only teaching. Trying to provide interactive IL and DL session online was probably the greatest challenge, as the systems we used (TEAMS, Blackboard Collaborate) do not allow staff to see all students' screen. Running interactive workshops in an IT room allows the teacher to better control activities and to make sure that students have mastered them. This was much harder to do online and therefore progress tracking became difficult.

The library was also involved in supporting students to get access to various online learning resources they need for their mandatory training as medical students such as E-Learning for Healthcare.
There are many lessons that both universities can learn from the development of the digital curriculum, online access to learning resources and students' access to information and digital literacy resources for the academic year 2021/22.

Queen Mary University of London
Paula Funnell and Gemma Bayliss

Queen Mary, University of London Library Services continued to provide many of our core services during the pandemic, albeit in a very different way, and whilst staff were getting to grips with new working practices and technologies. Services were vital for staff and students in our School of Medicine and Dentistry, many of whom were supporting the fight against COVID-19.

The Resources and Collections Team adapted acquisitions procedures to ensure access to urgently needed titles. Requests were made by students and staff and where possible an e-text was purchased. During the first lockdown, when the physical libraries were closed, the team purchased books from Amazon, sent directly to students' homes. A webpage was also created to collate resources made freely available by publishers during the pandemic for medical students and practitioners.

The Teaching and Learning Support Team's Information literacy teaching (IL) and academic skills enhancement (ASE) were swiftly moved into online formats. We used a variety of tools and learning technologies to provide active teaching and learning experiences in live online sessions and asynchronous formats. Over the last year we have provided to our medical and dental students:
- 109 group IL sessions
- 34 ASE workshops
- 126 ASE tutorials
- 146 attending IL drop-ins or 1to1s
- 352 medical and dental students attending generic workshops

With positive attendance and feedback, we are looking to retain much of this going forward.

Queen Mary University of London continued

Research publishing increased dramatically during 2020. Elsevier, the world's largest academic publisher, saw an increase in articles submitted for publication of 92% in health-related subjects (1), which had a knock-on effect for the Repository and Research Information Team. Within Medicine the team dealt with a 35% increase on 2019 in the number of deposited research items needing processing, and a 33% increase in the number of claims made to support funding of research articles.

It was important for us to provide access to COVID-secure study spaces quickly after the first lockdown. Frontline Services opened the libraries, albeit with reduced capacity, implementing a booking system to manage usage. Browsing and borrowing services were made available and a freepost book returns system was implemented for students unable to return to campus. We rapidly moved to a remote, then later blended, enquiry service model. A web chat service and FAQ bank were introduced to provide a wider range of support, and staff were up-skilled to deal with an increase in e-resource queries.

1. Else H. How a torrent of COVID science changed research publishing — in seven charts. Nature [Internet]. 2020 Dec 16; 588(7839):553. Available from: https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-03564-y.

University of Greenwich
Debbie North

During the first lockdown in Spring 2020, when our physical spaces were closed, our Academic Skills Team and IT Helpdesk supported our students on-line. As soon as government recommendations allowed, the libraries at the University of Greenwich re-opened in July 2020. We could not offer study spaces, but we did offer book reservations from our own stock and articles requested from the British Library. Students could collect requested items and return books and the Academic Skills Team continued to support students on-line.

During this period, we closed one of our libraries and moved to a new library with only two days closure before the start of term which was an incredible achievement. Once term commenced we offered safe, secure study spaces and direct access to the stock. We opened our Help Desk, continued with reservations, obtained articles and books from the British Library and began a scanning service providing chapters from books held in stock. This helped to support students who did not come onto campus. The library was open seven days a week with extended opening hours to allow for greater flexibility to study. Our spaces were set up with social distancing, regularly cleaned and the university policy was for every user to wear a face covering (unless exempt) whilst on university premises.

Our Academic Skills Team continued to support students remotely during the 2020-21 academic year beginning with GREFest our on-line induction programme. We offered on-line 1-2-1s and training on the use of e-resources mainly via MS Teams, but face to face if requested by our students. We also increased the range of e-books available.

Via Moodle (VLE) and YouTube we provided digital information on accessing and using material effectively. We also developed resources to assist with on-line learning to increase digital skills, e.g. doing group work on-line and delivering on-line presentations. We offered training on how to judge the reliability of information in relation to Covid-19 that was encountered via social media at the request of the students.

We remained flexible and always worked within the government's guidelines during subsequent lockdowns. Our libraries were one of the few services to remain open on campus throughout the academic year and our students were very appreciative of the support they received during this very difficult time.

University College London - Library Services
UCL Library team

Numerous new services were rapidly developed, or existing services adapted, to support UCL students and researchers, plus NHS staff at our six partner NHS Trusts.

This included providing digital copies of journal articles and book chapters from the UCL's online collections, that would normally only be available to NHS staff via an in-person visit to one of our libraries, direct to their desktops. Additional free online content was also obtained from publishers and free interlibrary loans introduced. UCL Library Services invested heavily in electronic resources across all subjects, obtaining access to an additional 270,000 e-books and other materials, buying over 500 e-books in response to student requests and obtaining access to 30 new databases. Online reading lists have been encouraged and heavily promoted. Membership extensions were granted. Contingency arrangements and online services were clearly signposted on new library webpages, prepared and made available at very short notice.

When physical library spaces were able to reopen, click and collect and bookable socially distanced spaces were provided.

Enquiry services moved online with live LibChat and information literacy and database training pivoted online early in the pandemic, with asynchronous materials as well as live sessions via Teams, Zoom and Skype. This was greatly appreciated by incredibly busy healthcare workers:

"Thank you for the training and guidance provided. This has put me in good stead to proceed with my search and project work. I am deeply grateful." (RNOH Consultant Orthopaedic & Trauma Surgeon)

"Thank you so much for meeting with me today. It was extremely helpful and I learned a lot in term a broad literature search. I also much appreciate sending me the word document as this will save me a huge amount of time. Thank you again for your guidance..." (NHNN Stroke Registrar)

Mediated literature searching and evidence services continued throughout.

Individual Joint UCL-NHS Libraries responded in a timely fashion to local needs, so for example the Librarian of the Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health Library negotiated with the supplier for NHS staff to have access to EndNote from their home computers as well as on site. EndNote licences were also made available to Moorfields Eye Hospital staff members.

Locally, nationally and internationally Paul Ayris (Pro-Vice-Provost: UCL Library Services & UCL Office for Open Science and Scholarship) led Library Services in championing Open Science, with reproducibility and transparency of research as a mechanism to deal with crises such as Covid-19. In this spirit UCL Press, the innovative university open access publisher, led on the creation of the online 'UCL Covid-19 Research Collection', listing all UCL contributed published content related to the Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic https://www.scienceopen.com/collection/UCL_COVID19

In these challenging times Library staff have made a positive impact:

"Thank you to you and your staff for your proactive support in maintaining this essential service to clinicians, research workers and through them to our patients in these unprecedented times." (Former Medical Director Moorfields Eye Hospital)

Royal College of Nursing
Anna Semmens

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has been on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting our members in all care settings and vaccine delivery. The library has been there throughout, providing the evidence base for RCN staff to create clinical guidance for members and to lobby the Government and employers over issues including PPE, burnout and long-COVID in health care workers.

In the early days we focused on our online offer, adapting our individual training sessions to run online, and launched new online group sessions. We purchased BrowZine and LibKey to increase the online accessibility of our collections. We launched our first online only exhibition 'Many-faced myths of nursing' and our podcast 'Past Caring'. Additionally, we cancelled all fines and extended loan periods for print books launching free postal loans and returns to allow our members access to physical books while our buildings remained closed.

In April 2020, we started weekly online creative sessions exclusively for members to take some time out and focus on their wellbeing with the 'Time to…' series which have included drawing, poetry, yoga, meditation, baking and gardening. In response to Black Lives Matter we began an Inclusion Café Book Club, where members could read, learn and discuss material on black nursing history and diversity. We have now held eight public events exploring the impact of the pandemic on nursing and nurses. Featuring live interviews with nursing staff from different situations and experience, recordings of the events will be added to the RCN archive to capture the memories of the pandemic.

Our archive has been proactively collecting the materials created by the RCN in response to COVID-19 to add to the corporate archive through archiving the website, member email updates and internal reports. We have also started new projects to archive relevant digital communications such as nursing leaders' emails. Finally, we created a 'Ministry of Fun' to lead activities aimed at maintaining staff morale while working from home and shared those ideas with the wider organisation.

University of Surrey
Paul Johnson

Library and Learning Services support for Health Sciences
The University Library building was closed in March because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the majority of our services moved online. Library and Learning Services developed increased access to e-books and online resources, taking part in the Kortext programme to increase e-text availability for universities at the end of academic year 2019-20, and providing links to additional resources made available open access by publishers during that period. Enquiry services moved online with the implementation of a Library Chat service available from the Library Web pages. Learning Development appointments, drop-ins and dissertation workshops for Health Science students moved online to Teams and Zoom services, improving flexibility and availability of appointments. Amongst other initiatives the Faculty Engagement Team also offered a series of online training for Researchers, and new staff introductions online via Zoom.

Subsequent developments for the academic year 2020-21 included the implementation of a University-wide Personal Digital Texts project with BibliU, providing personal digital copies of a selection of essential textbooks for students, as selected by academic colleagues in the Health Sciences programmes teams. The Library's Learning Development team have also developed a 'My Learning Development' module available via the University Virtual Learning Environment; a set of interactive resources designed to help students adapt to, and thrive in, the hybrid learning environment. The resources provide advice and guidance to help students navigate the hybrid learning setting, with tips in becoming independent learners and studying effectively, and advice on how students can stay connected and actively be part of their learning community.

The Library building re-opened on 1st September 2020, 8am – 8pm, moving to 24-hour opening at the start of Semester. Access to physical collections is via a click and collect / click and post service, and study spaces can be booked online in advance. It has been very important to keep students and staff at the School updated via several communication routes, such as Library Web pages including FAQs, video guides, and social media.

University of Surrey continued

An important initiative throughout the period has been holding numerous virtual Student and Library Engagement Forums to ensure communication with our community continued and that services were user-centred as possible. Information and constant feedback were maintained to keep users at the heart of our services.

All images on this page: St George's, University of London

St George's, University of London
Sue David

Supporting the NHS during Covid

St George's, University of London is co-located with St George's Hospitals NHS Trust at the site in Tooting. The Library provides services to the NHS as well as to its core user group of medical and healthcare students and researchers.

Like most HE libraries we gave access to a large array of online content made freely available by publishers to support students and staff struggling to access physical content. Whilst much of this content was aimed at students and university staff we were able to also make material available to our NHS colleagues. Of particular value was our NHS-focused LibGuide on coronavirus information sources which was included in the trust's daily coronavirus updates at the height of the first lockdown.

We were able to provide copies of papers from our HE subscriptions to NHS staff during the pandemic and we have been able to continue with this service. Whilst only a small number of these papers were specifically Covid related (most Covid research has been available via open access) staff have appreciated gaining access to more content, which previously required a physical onsite presence (as a walk-in user).

SGUL is a specialist university and as all programmes focus on healthcare our courses were able to continue onsite throughout the pandemic after the initial lockdown. This means that the library was open to support both the students and NHS staff. They benefitted from a large, quiet study environment, access to print resources, access to PCs both on the SGUL and NHS networks and access to a limited face to face enquiry service. Full enquiry and support services were available online and we have found that the flexibility of online support has been appreciated by our NHS colleagues and plan to continue to offer both face-to-face and online services as we move forward.

Kingston University Town House

Sara Burnett, Information Specialist
Elizabeth Malone, Former Co-Director of Library & Learning Services and Former Head of Student Services Kingston University
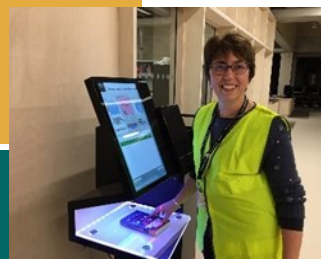
A new space in the time of pandemic
Images: Kingston University

Kingston University's road towards the new Town House building was never straight forward, but then along came the pandemic …

Is anyone reading this old enough to remember the Follett Report? We had to Google it to remind ourselves but it was 1996 and it offered a new vision for university libraries and money to go with it. Many library staff already had dreams of a new library on our Penrhyn Road campus but it was to be a long wait.

History
Penrhyn Road is the university's largest and most prominent campus en route to the centre of Kingston. In 1996 the library was a complex conglomeration of three separate buildings.

Over the next decade all of Kingston's libraries were either extended, relocated or refurbished in some way. Despite an extension to Penrhyn Road library bringing much needed computer space and a café, it was clear that the building was overcrowded, dark and not fit for purpose. A major reorganisation in 2003 and a further refurbishment of the ground floor c. 2008 all helped but didn't provide a long-term solution. However, there was light at the end of the tunnel. Between 2003 and 2011 there was much talk of a new library and a number of different options were explored by the Estates team. Then in 2012 plans suddenly leapt forward with the announcement of a RIBA competition to find a design to replace the old Town House building with a new library, dance studio and facilities, and public facing space. At the end of 2013 Grafton Architects came up trumps with their winning design and the starting pistol had been fired!

Planning challenges
Some would say that the Town House has been a challenging project and in many respects it would be hard to disagree. The first big hurdle was planning.

The Borough advised that the initial proposal was too high and so we spent many hours working out the effect of removing a floor. The new design went to the local planning committee only to be rejected! No one had expected this and the team stood outside the borough offices in the rain like the losing team on The Apprentice. However, there's nothing like a bit of adversity to bring a team together and everyone was soon back on their feet, revising the design and, hoorah, planning permission was achieved!

Down came the old Town House. We now look back fondly on the old building but we don't miss its persistent smell of drains, the weird wobbly staircase or the buddleia growing out of the roof. We loved seeing the process of demolition and more than one librarian was seen leaning out the staff room window opposite marking off their 'truck spotter' sheet during their lunch break!

Adapting
But what were we getting ourselves into? What would the new building offer us? Well for a start it would be purpose built. No longer would we have to

Image: Penrhyn Road Old Library, Kingston University

Kingston University: A new space in the time of pandemic

Images: Kingston University

Image: Demolition of the old Town House, Kingston University

examine the floor loading plans every time we wanted to move a bay of shelving. More importantly for our students it offered them space, decent sized study desks, convenient power and data and significantly improved lighting. For our dance students, it provided them with excellent dedicated studios with all mod cons in terms of performance spaces. We know what you're going to ask. Can dance and the library be comfortable bedfellows? With the right architecture, the answer is most definitely 'yes'. Box-within-box construction keeps the music in, whilst cleverly positioned double-glazing enables library users to peek in to a performance. Overall the space is generous. Throughout the building ceiling heights change, sometimes double height and sometimes even triple, helping to denote different spaces. Whilst large, the building is also very navigable. You can always see where you are heading. The architects spent a great deal of time with us talking about how students would work and move around the building and, in response to this, the library team also gave this a huge amount of thought, coming up with solutions such as flags at the end of shelving bays to help denote different subject areas

and ensuring that furniture choices matched the type of area, e.g. large benches by the printers for art and design students to lay out work, cut and paste.

Balloons, dance flash-mobs and champagne (just discretely for the library staff!) heralded the opening of the building on 6 January 2020. Somewhere between 5,000 and 6,000 visits were made to the building that day. From reading this, we suspect you will sense how much we love our new building so to see it locked up again after just eleven weeks due to the pandemic was an emotional experience. When you've worked hard on a project for eight years, you want your students to be benefitting from the space and your staff to be enjoying showing people around and introducing them to the building, you do not want to be going into lockdown!

Opening 2.0

On 15 July 2020 we re-opened the doors to the Town House. It wasn't quite such jubilation as the original opening on 6 January, but it was yet another huge achievement. Since then, our students have clearly been drawn to the new space. Pre-pandemic,

the old Penrhyn Road library saw approximately 48% of all library visits each year but, during the pandemic (admittedly with odd opening hours and some restrictions), Town House has seen 60% of library visits. We sincerely hope that this means our students enjoy the building as much as we do.

Postscript

In what feels like a fairy-tale ending, on Thursday 14 October 2021 the Town House won the RIBA Stirling Prize 2021, thereby becoming the UK's best new building. Speaking on behalf of the 2021 RIBA Stirling Prize jury, Lord Norman Foster, said, "Kingston University Town House is a theatre for life – a warehouse of ideas. It seamlessly brings together student and town communities, creating a progressive new model for higher education … In this highly original work of architecture, quiet reading, loud performance, research and learning, can delightfully co-exist … Education must be our future – and this must be the future of education." Kingston's staff and students are rightly proud of this building which has provided an injection of quality, style and spirit to the Penrhyn Road campus with the library at its heart. We sincerely hope that many generations of students will benefit from all it has to offer.

Image: Exterior of Town House, Kingston University

Image: Project Space, Town House, Kingston University

Directors' Briefing: IT Security

Andrew Preater,
Director of Library Services
University of West London

In recent years, universities, libraries and cultural institutions have seen an increase in cyberattacks from criminals and other attackers. This Directors' Briefing event presented three case studies, lessons learned and reflection from three institutions with practical experience of overcoming recent cyberattacks. We heard from three speakers: Paul Butler, Director of Information and Library Services at University of Greenwich, Alison Chojna, Group Director of Library and Learning Resources at London South Bank University (LSBU); and Adrian Ellison, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor and Chief Information Officer at University of West London (UWL).

Most interesting to me were the common factors in each speakers' experiences and the responses of their institutions to cyberattacks, which I'll explore below. The entry point for the attack at Greenwich was an old conference website which was vulnerable to attack, while at UWL and LSBU the initial attacks were based on ransomware targeting Windows PC systems. In a ransomware attack, malware encrypts the victim's data until payment is made to the attacker. At UWL the initial alert was a popup on infected Windows PCs demanding 6 Bitcoin per device to unlock - approximately £30,000 per device at the time of the attack in spring 2020. Advice from the UK National Cyber Security Centre is clear: do not pay; however, at this price doing so would not have been a realistic option.

Having gained a foothold in the institutional network, the attackers' approach was similar in all cases: to attack and attempt to gain access to other systems within the wider IT estate. Attacks typically seek privilege escalation, which means exploiting configuration oversights, bugs or design flaws to gain elevated access to other resources and systems. Our speakers had similar immediate practical responses based on existing malware response plans, which was to shut down the network which stops all traffic and therefore halts attacks. IT is widely and deeply embedded in our operations, and our speakers highlighted areas their institutions had not anticipated that an attack targeted at desktop PCs and servers would affect, and that would require workarounds. Examples included: phones, which are commonly IP based and include emergency phone systems without

which lifts cannot operate; access control systems including door swipes; and finance systems required to ensure suppliers are paid on time.

All our speakers had similar response plans. After they had plugged immediate security holes and audited user and administration accounts to ensure these were secure, they implemented new security approaches and policies, and in the longer term worked toward new working practices and cultural shifts that made their IT estates and infrastructure more resilient. Technical improvements included: implementing new tiered security models for Active Directory to minimise what administrative accounts can access and control; for Microsoft 365 sites, implementing a higher (E5) security level as standard; moving file storage from legacy network drives to OneDrive; and automating stricter security as much as possible for IT asset provision, software licensing and backups. One major shift has been institutions implementing multi-factor authentication (MFA) for user logins, which prevents almost all phishing attacks.

Paul's view from Greenwich was the institution was "once bitten, twice shy", and took very seriously all future cybersecurity issues having had practical experience. This meant a new risk management approach, and a more proactive technical approach to external monitoring and active scanning for vulnerability. Rather than being reactive, it means actively finding risks and weaknesses and either mitigating or remediating them. At UWL, Adrian reflected that overall he feels this preparedness will be key for the future: as well as solid IT policies and practices, all of our staff and students need an appropriate level of awareness, and institutionally we require senior buy-in to ensure financial resources are in place for both preparedness and incident management responses.

Andrew Preater,
Director of Library Services
University of West London

In discussion Regina Everitt, Assistant COO (Service Excellence) and Director of Library, Archives, and Learning Services at University of East London reflected on the importance of our procurement processes to ensure a thoroughgoing approach to security with safeguards including IT oversight. Put simply we should not be able to buy systems and services without appropriate information security in place, and checks and balances at the procurement stage tend to be highly effective in ensuring this. At Greenwich, Paul explained their new approach had teeth, and had seen contracts being cancelled at renewal where there was insufficient confidence in suppliers' practices.

For me, throughout the human element seems most critical as well as implementing practical technological fixes. There is still a perception that higher education providers are vulnerable to cyberattacks as Universities hold valuable data due to our research activities and -regardless of the truth of this- are thought by attackers to have underinvested in our IT estates. From the event, I was left convinced that cybersecurity is another issue which, rather than being the responsibility of a single technical team, requires a 'whole institution' response, training, and awareness which starts with us as leaders.

Directors' Briefing: Staff Diversity in Libraries

Regina Everitt
ACOO (Service Excellence) & Director of Library, Archives and
Learning Services
University of East London

The M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries is committed to increasing representation of Black, Asian, and minoritised ethnic groups across all roles in academic and specialist libraries, but particularly within leadership positions. During the briefing, the 23 attendees considered practical approaches to attracting, retaining, and developing these under-represented staff members within their institutions. Gary Loke, Director of Knowledge, Innovation and Delivery facilitated the session using the Race Equality Charter (REC) as a framework. Hong Anh Nguyen, Information Service Manager from the King's Fund, presented a case study on reverse-mentoring, where junior staff from Black, Asian,and minoritised ethnic backgrounds mentored senior leaders on equality, diversity and inclusion issues.

The event took place online via Zoom just as many services were re-opening buildings following closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Attendance at the event was, therefore, lower than anticipated. Five

attendees provided feedback on the event rating it good, very good, or excellent. The respondents cited the reverse mentoring programme as a key area of interest. In fact, during conception of this briefing, some M25 Steering Group members discussed piloting the reverse mentoring scheme within their services. However, institution rapid response to operational issues surrounding COVID-19 took priority.

Respondents also expressed disappointment in the lack of progress on this issue, particularly from larger universities. The 2019 SCONUL report about the experiences of Black, Asian, and minoritised ethnic staff members within academic libraries called service leaders to action around cultural and behavioural change and active support and development of these staff members. This Director's Briefing was a tiny step toward answering that call, but there are many more steps required to effect attitudinal and demographic change within the sector. We owe it to our diverse range of students and other stakeholders to provide services and staff profiles that represent them.

David Archer

Director of Library, Archive & Open Research Services

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Image by Eloise Carpenter LSHTM

Founded in 1899 as the London School of Tropical Medicine and enlarged in 1924 to incorporate public health as the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, LSHTM is dedicated to Improving Health Worldwide. Today there are well over 5,000 students studying on intensive or online courses, and 3,500 staff employed from 80 different countries based all around the world with core hubs in London and at the MRC Units in The Gambia and Uganda, which joined LSHTM in February 2018.

The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine is renowned for its world-leading public and global health research, postgraduate education and translation of knowledge into policy and practice. In August 2021 LSHTM welcomed a new Director, Professor Liam Smeeth, who set out his vision for our community to work together with mutual trust and respect, truly valuing diversity and promoting equal opportunities. Library, Archive & Open Research Services is committed to these values.

As with all aspects of LSHTM life, Covid-19 has had a significant impact on LAORS and on the way we deliver services. The team has responded magnificently to ensure that students and researchers have been able as far as possible to access the resources and support they need, and that projects have continued to progress. More importantly, they have prioritised the wellbeing of colleagues and our users.

Archives & Records Management
The Archives Team has spent much of the year supporting the LSHTM Colonial History project.

The team have been able to provide access to material despite the restrictions on access to the Keppel Street building, with much material being digitised. In addition, the team have developed a set of decolonising principles for the archives, reviewing how we interpret, describe and offer context to some of the historical material we hold, and are actively engaged with LSHTM's Decolonising Global Health (DGH) network.

The LSHTM Records Retention Schedule, which accompanies the LSHTM Records Management Policy, was updated and published this year. Together these set out the requirements for storing, using, retaining and destroying LSHTM records in both paper and electronic form. The Archivist & Records Manager has also continued to support the Information Governance Board in embedding GDPR good practice across LSHTM.

A flood caused by heavy rain during lockdown resulted in water damage to some records held in our basement store. These were separated out and air dried by the team, with a small number of records then shipped to professional conservators for freeze drying and cleaning. This was a good test of our disaster recovery plan. Thankfully all the affected records were saved.

The Archives Service successfully achieved re-accreditation by The National Archives in March of this year.

User Support & Information Services
The User Services Team has maintained a virtual enquiry service via ServiceDesk throughout the past year, including into the late evenings and at weekends. 96% of queries were responded to within agreed SLAs. Risk assessments and planning were undertaken and bookable study space on campus opened up as soon as the green light was given for us to make this available.

Information literacy training and support has

LSHTM Library, Archive & Open Research Services

David Archer

Director of Library, Archive & Open Research Services

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

continued online throughout the year, and we've received excellent feedback on this. The Information Services Team has worked hard to enhance and adapt teaching sessions to enable students to get the most out of these. In addition, we are close to rolling out an advanced information skills module on Moodle, which has been in the pipeline for some time. The User Support Services Librarian has also continued to support systematic reviews for research projects.

Collections & Open Research Services

Provision of eBooks was prioritised this year in order to ensure as much content as possible was available to students and researchers during the pandemic, and the Collection Services Team has continued to negotiate transformative agreements for e-journals. A project to catalogue our pamphlet collection was completed, greatly improving the discoverability of this material. Updates to collection evaluation and decolonisation analysis of the collections were also undertaken, in order to identify areas where the collections need to be strengthened.

The Collection Services Manager has also successfully updated our classification scheme, a significant undertaking, and subsequent work to reclassify areas of the collections where needed has been completed. The 3rd edition of the Barnard Classification Scheme for Medical & Veterinary Libraries has attracted interest from other institutions with comparable collections, including the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Royal Veterinary College and Wellcome.

The Open Research Services Team has continued to support LSHTM students and researchers with open access publishing and research data management, and played a significant part in ensuring that LSHTM met the open access requirements of the 2021 Research Excellence Framework. Both the LSHTM Open Access Publishing Policy and LSHTM Research Data Management Policy have been revised, and the team has been raising awareness and providing support on Plan S.

The Collections & Open Research Services Librarian has also overseen upgrades to systems and procurement of the platform for the new LSHTM Open Access Press, and we are in the process of forming a new Open Science Working Group to further explore and support open science initiatives at LSHTM.

LSHTM Library, Archive & Open Research Services

David Archer

Director of Library, Archive & Open Research Services

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Future Plans

Over recent months we have been undertaking a consultative programme across LAORS to define and implement new ways of working that strike an effective balance across individual, team, operational and strategic needs. Our initial focus will be to embed these and to monitor their effectiveness.

A review of department policies and procedures, including recruitment criteria and collection policies, is planned from an EDI/decolonisation perspective, along with establishing department-wide principles and staff training in this area. We also plan to test our digital preservation processes and disaster recovery plan over the course of the coming year, and embark on a project to improve our book, archive and records storage facilities. Work to enhance access to study space and collections will continue, and we look forward to launching the Open Science Working Group and LSHTM Open Access Press.

Barnard Room sign, Library, LSHTM

Library training session, LSHTM

M25 Staff Development Awards Conference Bursary - UKSG 2021

Hannah Pyman
Scholarly Communications and Research Support Manager
University of Essex

In February 2020, I was awarded the M25 Conference Bursary Award. At the time, I was an Information Literacy Co-ordinator at the University of Essex Library, and my role specialised in Scholarly Communication and Research Support. I therefore chose to use the bursary to attend UKSG 2020, and was very excited to travel to Brighton and attend what would be my first large conference.

As we all know 2020 didn't quite go to plan, and just weeks before I was due to attend UKSG we were plunged into a global pandemic, a national lockdown, and no chance at all of a national conference! Luckily, the M25 group very generously allowed me to carry my bursary over to 2021, and so when UKSG announced their 2021 conference would be going ahead, albeit without the bright lights of Brighton, I booked a place as soon as I could.

By the time I attended UKSG in April 2021, my job role had changed twice since I first applied for the bursary. However, if anything this made the conference even more beneficial to my professional development, as I am currently on secondment as the Scholarly Communications and Research Support Manager at the University of Essex. UKSG therefore gave me a huge range of valuable and massively interesting sessions that have already begun to shape some of the work we're doing at Essex in Scholarly Communication.

The conference itself had done an excellent job of shifting to online, and I certainly felt I got great value attending. There was a great line-up of keynote speakers over the three days, and the online platform that UKSG had chosen allowed easy navigation between attending live sessions, visiting suppliers, chatting to other attendees, and watching pre-recorded breakout sessions.

The breakout sessions were of most benefit to myself, and I found the fact they were pre-recorded hugely helpful, as I could watch them at times that worked for me. I was also able to begin a session and skip onto something else if it wasn't what I expected, and could adjust the speed of the presenters according to what suited me. I found in using this format I was able to gain more from these breakout sessions than I would have done in person, as I could not only 'attend' more sessions, but could also rewind any parts I missed, or felt I wanted repeating.

It is very difficult to choose the most helpful sessions from the conference, as there was so much great content. But for myself personally, the general themes that shone through from the conference were:

- Discussions around how to simplify the complicated world of scholarly publishing for researchers

- Consideration of how to streamline library and research office workflows around transformative deals

- New models for open access book publishing

These three themes are all key discussions we are currently having at the University of Essex, so it was very helpful to hear different perspectives on these issues. This was true not only of hearing from different Universities, which is always very helpful, but also in hearing from funders and publishers on these topics. Where the conference therefore allowed for Q&A sessions with presenters from various breakout sessions, this allowed these different perspectives to come together in a discussion, which I found very interesting and hugely helpful in terms of getting a broader picture.

In all, receiving the M25 Conference Bursary Award has been very beneficial for both my own professional development and for my institution, as I have brought back a large quantity of notes, ideas, and discussion points which we have already begun to take forward in our work. I am very grateful to the M25 for giving me this opportunity, and I would encourage anyone who is considering applying for this bursary in the future to go ahead and apply!

M25 Staff Development Awards Conference Bursary - CILIP 2020

Lisa Blanshard,
Open Access and Research Data Officer
Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge

Adapting to change – Attending a conference in the 'new normal'

Shifting CPD expectations

I was very pleasantly surprised to win an M25 Staff Development Award last year. I had planned to use the award to attend the UKSG Conference in Brighton in March 2020, to keep up-to-date with developments in scholarly communications. Sadly, but inevitably, the conference was cancelled at the last minute, due to the emergence of COVID-19 in the weeks and months prior. Like everyone else, I had to suddenly and drastically change my expectations when it came to my CPD! Thankfully M25 were very flexible, so I was able to use the award a bit later than planned. I had to start thinking of how I could best meet my CPD needs via some kind of online training or event. In the end, I chose to widen my focus and attend the online CILIP conference, which took place on 19 November 2020.

The conference was centred around adapting to the challenges of COVID and the shift to online provision. As well as being timely, it was an opportunity to find out more about other library and information settings and see if there was anything I could adopt to work more effectively in my own institution. I was also curious to see how well a large-scale conference would work online.
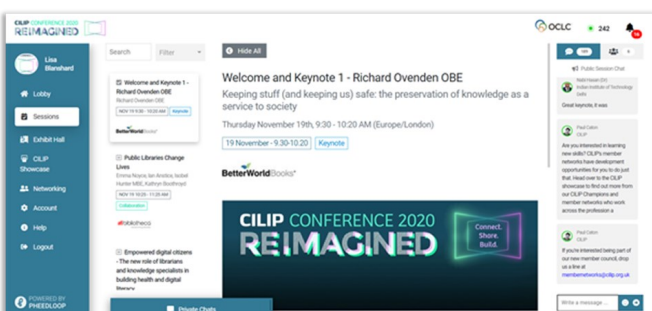

Image: Conference main page screenshot

Moving conferences online

When I logged on, I was impressed with how well the online platform simulated an in-person conference, with different areas for networking and exhibits and so on – there was so much going on! One definite plus of doing the conference online was that the sessions were running concurrently, but I could go back at any point and watch the sessions I missed, so I didn't need to make those tough decisions between two equally relevant sessions. I found this online environment surprisingly good for networking, with people freely approaching me via private message and vice versa. Though nothing can replace talking to people face-to-face, the online conference still felt like a very friendly environment, with the conference organisers doing a great job of checking in with people to make sure things went smoothly and everyone could make the most of the day.

Learning from public libraries

The conference featured a lot of sessions about public libraries, which I decided to make my focal point as I wanted to know more about this area.

Early in the day, I watched "Public Libraries Change Lives" by Emma Noyce, Ian Anstice, Isobel Hunter and Kathryn Boothroyd, who all gave examples of how their libraries had responded to the changing circumstances. It was clear that public libraries had been a vital service during lockdown, with 3 out of 10 people reportedly benefiting from them in some way. Beyond that, libraries had been a lifeline for vulnerable and isolated users. A key quote from this session was "the library is not the building", which really stuck with me. At my institution we have a different user base of students and academics, but I realised our library provision throughout the pandemic (both online and offline) is likely to have been similarly vital for some people, students especially, who may otherwise feel isolated and alone. It certainly inspired me with a sense of purpose when we reopened our campus libraries, which also helped to combat some of the anxiety of being back onsite.

Another standout session later in the day was Keynote 3 delivered by Tracie D. Hall, Executive Director of the American Library Association. Tracie placed public libraries in a social justice context, in an international (American) setting. The session reiterated a key fact, that public libraries are crucial to empowering marginalised communities by ensuring they are not left behind in the digital era. This is not only the case in the US but around the world. As information professionals we all face the same battle in ensuring equity of access and inclusion in our respective communities. This
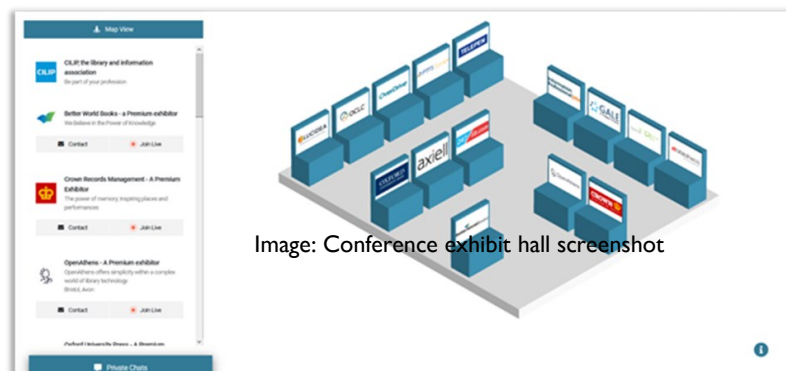
M25 Staff Development Awards
Conference Bursary - CILIP 2020

Lisa Blanshard,

Open Access and Research Data Officer

Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge

session got me thinking about the parallels in my own institution and how important it is that we keep working to help reduce inequalities in learning, teaching and attainment in the University community. I felt like it really grounded me as a professional to hear perspectives like these from outside of my usual bubble and draw these parallels.

Final word

All in all, this conference was a very useful experience. I learned a lot and was able to add what I'd learned to my CILIP chartership portfolio, which was a bonus. Without the Staff Development Award, I'm not sure if I would have been able to attend due to the cost, so I was very grateful for the opportunity and encourage anyone who needs help with CPD costs to apply in the future. Whether it's for an online event or an eventual in-person event, it's well worth giving the application a go!

Image: Conference exhibit hall screenshot

M25 Staff Development Awards
cpd25 Awards

Gordon McQueen

Library Assistant

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Cast your mind back to the start of December 2020. The country had just experienced our second national lockdown and I'm sure for most of us, it was a time of uncertainty and anticipation. Yet, with the winter term drawing to a close and final farewells said to the few who made it to our beautiful Art Deco library - by special arrangement, I received a delightful email from Rachel Telfer (M25 Executive Manager), bringing cheer and good tidings with the announcement that I had been awarded "One full day of cpd25 training" for the coming year.

I started my new role at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine at the beginning of 2020 and within a month, we would be spending most of our time working from home. Nonetheless, I was eager to make the most of the training and events made available, both from within my

institution and beyond. Contrary to the experiences of former award recipients, the cpd25 training sessions for 2021 would exclusively be delivered online. To my advantage, I was able to split my award to attend multiple events.

The drawback of online training is the lack of opportunities to mingle and get to know the other delegates, but I would say most of us made use of the comfort breaks or breakout rooms to get to know one another.

For someone working as a Library Assistant like myself, the first event I attended, entitled *So you want to be a Subject Librarian*, gave a much needed introduction into one of the key roles in most academic libraries and it was really interesting to hear from a variety of speakers at various stages of their careers. Dr J Adam Edwards (Middlesex

cpd25 Awards

Gordon McQueen
Library Assistant
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

University) opened with an overview of what being a subject liaison involves and more importantly, what they are not, before giving a very informative breakdown of the application and interview process. Anne-Lise Harding's (House of Commons) examination of the different skills involved offered a fascinating insight into what to expect and the importance of knowledge brokerage. It's also good to hear the years I've worked in schools will come in handy! Finally, Chloe Starling (Middlesex University) described her experience of making the jump from working as a library assistant to being a subject librarian, including top tips, how to get experience and very good advice to all new starters: Don't be afraid to ask for help!

The second event, *Effective Communication: for today and tomorrow*, delivered by Wendy Smith (Coralstone Training) was an interactive training session focusing on the vital soft skills we need to negotiate our day-to-day working lives. The need to be aware of how we come across, our body language and our tone of voice are especially important, as we become more reliant on video conference platforms, where each person is no more than the size of a large postage stamp. Wendy was able to bring out some of the more important points with a number of fun exercises that focused on key elements, such as 'the pause' and active listening

skills. There were many interesting tips to take away from this session and I would certainly recommend this to people working at all levels of librarianship.

My final event, *Making the most of blended working: hybrid team working*, is as relevant to our current situation as we can possibly imagine. Ash Charlton (Ace Training) gave a lively presentation, with opportunities for each delegate to speak about the issues and solutions they had discovered so far, before bringing it all together under three focal points: staying organized, staying motivated and staying in touch. A couple of things that I will highlight here: first is the wonderful advice to dividing your time into things that you must do, should do and could do; the second, always remember to celebrate things.

I'm sure there are many people behind the scenes at the consortium, but I would like to thank Laura Howlett (Administrator, Events and Programmes) for guiding me through the wealth of events this year. It certainly made what could have been a slow and uncertain year into one development. But for now, let me say, without hope or agenda, just because it's that time of year, and it's a time for celebration: Thank you for what has been a perfect year.

£1,500

awarded to staff in M25 member libraries to attend conferences between 2019-21

11

members of staff from M25 libraries participated in the SpeedMeet between June 2020 and July 2021

53

libraries participate in the Access25 scheme

13

scholarly and specialist member libraries in 2020-21

Members' Quiz

Robert Atkinson
Director of Library Services
Birkbeck, University of London

The evening of Thursday 25th February was a special one, as it was on that evening that the M25 Quiz took place. For obvious reasons it was not possible to hold the annual networking event, so it was decided that a quiz via Zoom should take its place. 22 intrepid souls gathered remotely to put their vast knowledge to the test.

The suave and sophisticated Chair of M25, Matthew Lawson, naturally took on the role of a Jeremy Paxman or, for those of a slightly older generation, Bamber Gascoigne. There were various rounds – identifying book covers was one, an obvious one for a virtual room of librarians, I am ashamed to say what my score was on that round. The round on identifying chocolate bars was much more up my street! One of the rounds involved putting things in order – who knew that Taylor Swift was taller than Beyonce – not me for sure.

Some of the rounds had us working together in groups and we could confer, as Bamber would have said in my youth. A great way to get to know each other better. The winner was Vicky Worsfold from the National Art Library at the V&A with a magnificent score of 102 out of 151. Modesty forbids me to declare my own score, suffice it to say it was not quite as high. The important thing was that the evening was great fun. So much so that it may be repeated.

M25 Support Team

Rachel Taylor
Executive Manager
M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries

The Consortium's support team moved to permanent homeworking in summer 2020 and one year on we're fully embedded in our new way of working. Although it has been another challenging year for organisations and individuals across the region and beyond, the team has been quick to adapt to providing member benefits and activities in a virtual format. I would like to thank the support team, Jeni Kutaika Billiard (Administrator – Finance and Reporting) and Laura Scullion (Administrator – Events and Programmes) for their continued commitment to the success of the Consortium. Thanks to the ongoing efforts of everyone involved in the Consortium's work, members can expect to see the comprehensive programme of events and activities continue to grow, along with exciting new initiatives in 2021-22.

Steering Group

Planning Day: Annual Action Plan

The Steering Group's annual planning day was held virtually in January 2021. The group reviewed the Consortium's achievements over the past year and looked ahead to 2021-22, the final year of the 2019-22 strategy. During the session, Steering Group members identified priorities for the coming year, including new initiatives such as a regional mentoring scheme and a review of the business continuity resources to include lessons learned during the pandemic.

Reflections on our past achievements and a detailed description of the objectives for 2021-22 can be found in the

Annual Action Plan.

Trustees and Steering Group Members 2020-21

M25 Chair
Matthew Lawson, Middlesex University

M25 Secretary
Michelle Wake, UCL

M25 Treasurer
Catherine Phillpotts, London Metropolitan University

cpd25 Chair
David Archer, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
(Succeeded by Sara Burnett on 1 August 2021, member of Steering Group from June 2021)

Robert Atkinson - Birkbeck, University of London (Until June 2021)
Alison Chojna - London South Bank University
Pat Christie - University of the Arts London (Until October 2020)
Christopher Cipkin - Royal Holloway, University of London (Since June 2021)
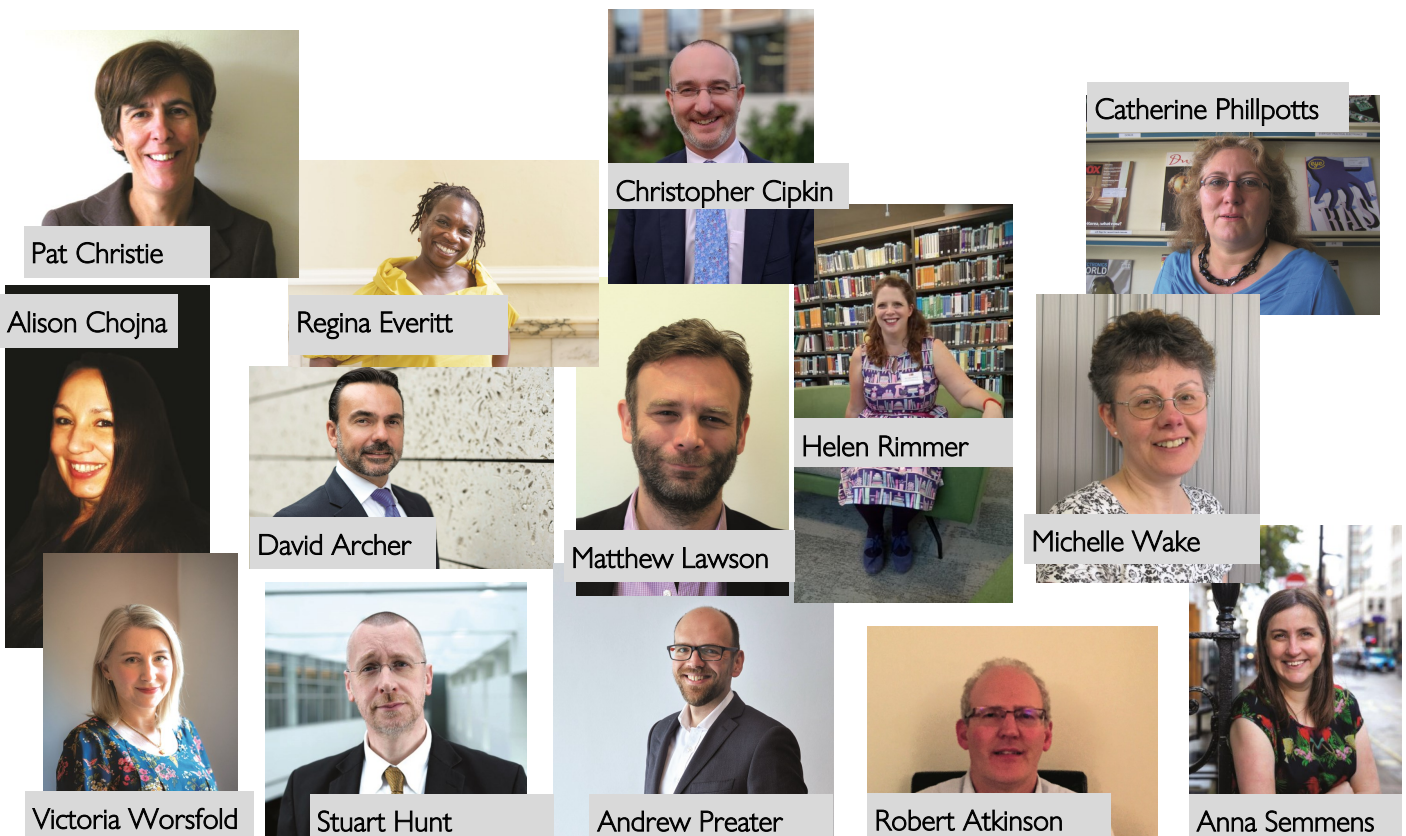**Regina Everitt** - University of East London (Until June 2021)
Stuart Hunt - University of Reading
Andrew Preater - University of West London
Helen Rimmer - University of Westminster
Anna Semmens - Royal College of Nursing (Since June 2021, co-opted since 2020)
Victoria Worsfold - National Art Library at the V&A

Pat Christie

Christopher Cipkin

Catherine Phillpotts

Alison Chojna

Regina Everitt

Helen Rimmer

David Archer

Matthew Lawson

Michelle Wake

Victoria Worsfold

Stuart Hunt

Andrew Preater

Robert Atkinson

Anna Semmens

Anglia Ruskin University • Birkbeck, University of London • British Library • British Museum • Buckinghamshire New University • Canterbury Christ Church University • City, University of London • Courtauld Institute of Art • German Historical Institute London • Goldsmiths, University of London • Horniman Museum • Imperial War Museum • King's College London • Kingston University • Lambeth Palace Library • London Business School • London Metropolitan University • London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine • London South Bank University • Middlesex University • Oxford Brookes University • Queen Mary, University of London • Ravensbourne • Regent's University London • Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London • Royal College of Art • Royal College of Nursing • Royal College of Surgeons of England • Royal Holloway, University of London • Royal Society of Chemistry • Royal Veterinary College • School of Oriental & African Studies • Science Museum • Senate House and SAS Libraries • St George's, University of London • St Mary's University, Twickenham • The National Archives • The Wiener Holocaust Library • University College London • University for the Creative Arts • University of Bedfordshire • University of Buckingham • University of East London • University of Essex • University of Greenwich • University of Kent • University of Reading • University of Surrey • University of Sussex • University of the Arts, London • University of West London • University of Westminster • University of Winchester • Victoria & Albert Museum

With thanks to Consortium staff, Steering Group members and authors for contributing to the Annual Report 2020-21.

With special thanks to Michelle Wake and David Archer.

M25
CONSORTIUM
OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES