

Who are you, where are you based and what do you do?

My name is Jill Howard.

I started as Operations Manager at the M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries on 20 May 2024. I work from home and am based in the borough of Lewisham, South East London.

My role is to lead the Consortium's activities and manage the Consortium's support team. I work closely with the Board of Trustees, the Steering Group and Task Groups to implement the Consortium's strategic objectives and oversee the delivery of our services and activities. I also play a lead role in engaging with members and promoting the value of membership to members and potential members.

My previous employer was CILIP, the library and information association, where I was the Training Manager. I worked at CILIP for nearly sixteen years in a number of different roles including Policy Officer, Development Manager for Member Networks and Onsite Training Manager. I bring to the Consortium a wealth of experience of the library and information sector and specifically developing and delivering services for members.

I also have experience of governance, stakeholder engagement, promotion and planning, and running online training events. On a personal level, I'm really excited to join the M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries and to promote and deliver our wide-ranging offer.

What do you most enjoy about your job?

I really enjoy being able to provide services that members value. At CILIP, I was responsible for our online copyright training events, run in partnership with Naomi Korn Associates, which had a high proportion of higher education and scholarly institution delegates. I also managed a contract to deliver annual programmes of online training events for public librarians.

It is very satisfying when delegates tell me that they found an event engaging, that they were enthused and inspired, enjoyed the interaction and that the content was relevant. Others talk about how they appreciate the flexibility that online events provide and the connections that in person event gives. It's important to listen to all feedback and there's always opportunities to learn and to improve services but it's also great to know that the services are worthwhile and give value.

In my new role at the Consortium, I am really looking forward to engaging with all M25 member organisations and to working with the M25 staff team, Steering Group and Task Groups to develop and deliver services that are valued and address members' interests and concerns.

I'm particularly looking forward to the [M25 Consortium Virtual Annual Conference](#) on Thursday 6 June. Our Steering Group Conference committee has put together a great programme on the themes of transformation around technology, space and people. As well as welcoming delegates, I'll be providing logistical support and listening to the keynote, papers and lightning talks. It's going to be a great event so don't miss out and [register for your place](#) now!

How has/can the M25 Consortium support you in your career?

As this question isn't so relevant to me, I'd like to pose a similar question to everyone reading this: how can the M25 Consortium help you in your career? This isn't an exhaustive list, but we offer:

- Mentoring
- CPD Events including Training, Conferences and Visits
- Access25
- Resources
- Networking and Networks
- Staff development awards
- Personal and professional development opportunities by joining our Task Groups and Steering Group

What activities do you attend? How can we make them more relevant and useful to your work? I'd love to hear all your views and feedback.

Would you like to be more involved in shaping our services? There are currently three spaces available on our Steering Group.

Send me an email with your service feedback and if you're interested in joining the Steering Group: m25libadmin@london.ac.uk I look forward to hearing from you!

What would it surprise people to know about you?

I have a special connection to a street tree in Lower St Martins Lane, London. It's an *Aesculus Indica* (Indian Horse Chestnut) and has beautiful flowers and smooth conker casings with dark conkers. I used to pass it on my commute to work every day, 'rescued' it from a tight cable lock and took away conkers to grow my own trees. I have shared seedlings with friends and have two of its offspring growing in pots in my garden.

Complete the sentence: If I wasn't working in a library I would be...because...

If I wasn't working in the library and information sector, I would consider retraining to be a horticultural therapist because I believe in the health benefits of growing and nurturing plants.

Jill Howard, May 2024

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