



David Archer, M25 Consortium Chair



Earlier this month we met in the splendour of the Weston Room at King's College London's Maughan Library for our Annual Networking event. It was fantastic to come together with colleagues from across the M25 to talk and learn from each other, and to tour the Maughan Library and hear about some of their special collections.

The Trustees and Steering Group will be holding a Planning Day in January to discuss the Consortium's future activities and direction for our Strategic Plan 2026-2029, and conversations from the evening and the findings from our member survey earlier in the year will help guide us. If you have ideas on the future direction of our Consortium please do get in touch.

We have an excellent selection of events and visits coming up in January and February. Our Quality

Assurance event on 20 January focuses on tools to evaluate and assess impact, and our Leadership Briefing on 30 January explores institutional resilience and business continuity. We have upcoming visits to the Linnean Society Library and Lambeth Palace Library too. Visit our Events Listing page for full details of all our upcoming events: www.m25lib.org.uk/events/

We're also excited to announce our call for Lightning Speakers for our Annual Conference 2026 on 9 June. These shorter presentations are a fundamental and very popular part of our Conference programme and provide a great opportunity for staff who want to develop their presenting skills whilst sharing their work and insights. At our conference in 2026 we're celebrating our successes - however small or large - and we'd love to hear from you. Find out more below.

Finally, we include in this newsletter a brief report from our Diversity Group's EDI and Libraries event held in November, and a piece by Cathy Phillpotts, outgoing member of the Steering Group and past M25 Treasurer. Cathy is retiring from her role as University Librarian, London Metropolitan University in January, and is therefore stepping down from the Steering Group. On behalf of the Consortium I want to pass my heartfelt thanks to Cathy for all her work and insights, and for her significant and varied contributions to the M25 Consortium's activities over the years. Happy retirement Cathy, and a joyful festive season and peaceful new year to you all.

Best wishes, David

[Leadership Briefing: Institutional Resilience and Business Continuity](#)

30 January, 2-4pm

Royal College of Nursing



In January we will be holding our first Leadership Briefing of 2026. These half-day briefings for staff in, or aspiring towards, leadership roles, enable open discussions on topical issues in a safe, supportive environment.

Register on our website for your institution's free place to hear our four speakers discuss aspects of resilience and business continuity:

- *Preparing for an emergency. Tips on how to practically prepare for an emergency situation.*
Camilla Churchill, Library and Archive Lead,
British Medical Association
- *Lessons in business continuity from the white cliffs to the land of the long white cloud – What we share and how we differ. Natural disaster response and the lessons we need to learn from Aotearoa as extreme weather events become more normal in the UK.*
Anna Semmens, Director of Library
Services, Queen Mary University of London

- *Disaster in the Archives! A desk-based critical incident exercise. How the LALS team used a desk-based critical incident exercise to inform the review and update of their crisis management plan.*

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

- *Responding to a Cyber Incident: Insights from Birkbeck Library*

Robert Atkinson, Director of Library Services, Birkbeck, University of London

[Book Now](#)



Report from the M25 Diversity Group event

[EDI and libraries: learning from each other to make real change](#)

18 November 2025

The [M25 Diversity Working Group](#) alongside Beth Montague-Hellen held a workshop in November to update attendees on the findings of the 2024 survey on diversity initiatives in libraries and to hear some practical tips from Beth on equality, equity, diversity and inclusion.

The survey has eight recommendation areas for the Consortium and member institutions to consider working on. These include areas like networks, recruitment practices and digital presence. You can read the full report [here](#).

Essential Takeaways

Beth's workshop covered a wide amount of

information and below are some of the key takeaways we had from the workshop:

- Belonging is key and a stronger word than inclusion - belonging is being accepted and respected for the person you are.
- Situating yourself on the academic wheel of privilege is a useful exercise: <https://ukrio.org/ukrio-resources/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/academic-wheel-of-privilege/>
- There are three sections to allyship: Supporters, Allies and Co-Conspirators. We move between these three areas with co-conspirators seeking out opportunities for change and standing up for strangers. Our own knowledge and experience will impact on which type of ally we are for people from different marginalised identities. We need to consider where we do not have the knowledge and what can we do to learn more.
- Examine situations to see whether everyone will be treated the same. Example given is of someone being able to convince a member of staff to waive their fee. Someone else with the same reason may not find this an approachable thing to do. One ends up paying and one does not. Although the policy might be fair on paper, the practice isn't.
- Just because something works for you, that does not mean it works for everyone.

Listening is key and understanding what action you need to take.

Thank you to the M25 Consortium's [Innovation Fund](#) for supporting this event.

Look out for the Diversity Group 2026 survey next year. We want to increase the number of respondents - let us know your views.

[Diversity Group](#) Chairs Erika Delbecque and Cliff Van Dort and Steering Group Sponsor Davina Omar.

[M25 Consortium Annual Conference 2026](#)

9 June 2026, Online

[Call for Lightning Talk Presenters now open](#)

We are pleased to announce our call for speakers to deliver lightning talk presentations at our online Conference in June 2026. We're looking for talks that connect to our Conference theme: **'Sunshine through the rain: celebrating our successes'**.

Has your service worked on an approach that has resonated well with your users? Have you introduced a small adjustment or activity that has helped colleagues to manage change and challenges? Our aim is to provide delegates with positive stories, inspiration, and ideas to consider in their own institutions, however small.

There are four lightning talk slots: two in the morning and two in the afternoon. We strongly



encourage library staff from our member institutions at any level and type of role to apply, particularly if you are new to presenting or have not previously presented at our Annual Conference.

Just over a third of our members are smaller libraries. To reflect the broad range of M25 members, we encourage submissions from those working in smaller HE libraries and specialist scholarly libraries.

Why apply?

As well as providing a great professional development opportunity at a highly respected academic library sector event, the four lightning talk speakers will receive a free delegate place to Conference and be featured in an M25 Monthly Newsletter.

How to apply

Send a short summary, of not more than 250 words, outlining the subject of your talk, to the Conference Planning Group via Jill Howard, M25 Consortium Operations

Manager M25libadmin@london.ac.uk. The deadline for submissions is **Wednesday 27 February 2026**.

[Download full details](#)



Cathy Phillpotts: Reflections from my career

Here are some reflections from my career as I prepare for the next chapter - retirement. Over the years, I have regularly benefited from training and visits offered by [cpd25](#) - especially when I was doing my CILIP Chartership. So when I had the opportunity to join a [cpd25 Task Group](#) and help with the organisation of events, I jumped at the chance.

This was while I was working as Team Leader Social Sciences at Senate House Library (2002-2007), so I was ideally centrally placed to be able to attend our Task Group meetings which rotated around the libraries of the Task Group Members. The Operations Task Group (TG3 if I recall correctly) had quite a wide remit and membership of the group enabled me to build my own professional network of colleagues to go to for help, support and to cajole into giving presentations or workshops for cpd25.

On one occasion, Carole Pickaver, our Task Group Chair, was unable to chair the meeting unexpectedly, due to being snowed in - and as the rest of the Group had assembled for our TG3 meeting, I thought we may as well cover at least some of the agenda and report back to Carole later, so I stood in as chair. Maybe this is what caused me to be asked to take over chairing the group when Carole stood down?

I was approached by Mary Nixon (of Goldsmiths at that time) and went to meet her and get more information about what chairing a group would

mean (in terms of time, commitments etc). Mary seemed happy that I was up to the task!

When I applied for my first job at London Met in 2007 (Learning Resources Manager for the Commercial Road Library), the interview panel was very interested in my involvement in cpd25, and I think the planning, organising and budgeting skills I had developed were a real aid in the role being offered to me.

Having been promoted into the Director role at London Met Library Services, I then became the M25 Rep for our organisation. Caroline Lloyd (of Birkbeck) was Treasurer at the time and needed to step down. Caroline persuaded me to put myself forward for the role of Treasurer for the M25 Consortium and I was duly elected at the AGM.

At the time, SCONUL had just undertaken a review of membership fees and there had been some changes in Jisc bandings (with a number of institutions moving to lower bands), so one of my first tasks was to produce a new membership fee model, that would take into account the new Jisc bands and any reduction in membership fees that might arise as a result, but still ensure an appropriate level of income to secure the future of the M25 Consortium. I spent many an evening modelling different options! All good experience for financial skills.

Of course, as Treasurer, I was a member of the Steering Group and a Trustee of the Consortium, so again, lots of opportunities to build my own professional network, to liaise with colleagues

across the region, to hear about developments in the member libraries and to take away ideas that could be implemented at London Met.

I served as Treasurer for eight years (the maximum allowed) and was subsequently co-opted onto the M25 Steering Group which I have enjoyed immensely! Yes, it has been extra work, but it has also been beneficial to my own personal and professional development. I have met so many fantastic people, some of whom are not just colleagues but friends.

I'm a firm believer that the opportunities from the voluntary work I have done for cpd25 and the M25 Consortium have helped my career significantly and I think all of those who get involved do benefit personally. I mentioned a few names above - and there are so many others (too many to list!) who have been with me on this journey - you know who you are!

It was unexpected and amazing to be called to the front and presented with a gift at the M25 Consortium Networking Event. Thank you!

I'm looking forward to the next chapter (more museum and gallery visits, more motorcycling), but I will miss colleagues and my visits to libraries. You never know - I may pop up from time to time in your libraries.

Catherine Phillpotts, University Librarian, London Metropolitan University

Photo credit: Naomi Elliott, London Metropolitan University

[SpeedMeet Profile for December](#)

December's SpeedMeet profile is Lydia Harris who is Collections Manager at King's College London and also a member of cpd25 Task Group One. Find out what motivates Lydia in her work and what her out of work passion is on our [SpeedMeet page](#).

Be our next M25 SpeedMeet or Spotlight person

What member library do you work at and what's your role? What M25 Group are you involved with and how does it benefit your career? Send an email to m25libadmin@london.ac.uk and we will feature you and your library.



Upcoming dates

20 January

[Quality Assurance](#)

Online, 2-4pm

30 January

[Leadership Briefing: Institutional Resilience and Business Continuity](#)

Royal College of Nursing, 2-4pm

All members receive one free place

12 February

[Deaf Awareness Training with Dot Sign Language](#)

Online, 10am-12.30pm

19 February

[Celebrating LGBT+ History Month](#)

Online, 2-4pm

26 February

[Staying Positive in Trying Times: Looking after yourself](#)

Online, 10-11.30am

17 March

[Visit to Lambeth Palace Library](#)

Lambeth Palace, 2-3.30pm

[Browse all our upcoming events](#)

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Peer organisations:

SCONUL: <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/>

Mercian Collaboration: <https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/>

White Rose Libraries: <https://whiterose.ac.uk/projects/white-rose-libraries/>

Academic Libraries North: <https://www.academiclibrariesnorth.ac.uk>

SCURL: <https://www.scurl.ac.uk/about>

WHELP: <https://whelf.ac.uk/>

[M25 Consortium website](#)

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