David Archer, M25 Consortium Chair

The University of Bedfordshire was a successful recipient of an M25 Innovation Fund award this year with their proposal to develop a bespoke Library Excellence Framework. The first stage of their Innovation Funded project is a Focus Group and in this newsletter you'll find the call for participants. Details are below.

A reminder that this year the M25 Consortium annual conference is taking place online on 9 June. We're very pleased to announce our Keynote Speaker, Martin Reid, Director of the House of Commons Library. Martin brings a wealth of experience and he will be sharing his insights and

successes. We're also excited to have Dr Andy Cope joining us to close the Conference with a session reminding us all of our brilliance. With something for everyone, don't forget to register for your two free places.

There's also the opportunity to present a five minute lightning talk on our theme of sharing our successes, however small. We're very keen to hear from a range of our member institutions. See below to find out more. Details are also on our website.

Don't forget that all library staff, at whatever level, can apply for an M25 Consortium Staff Development Award in order to attend one of our conferences or training events for free. We have extended the deadline to 23 April and look forward to receiving your applications.

Finally, we will be electing new members to the Steering Group at our AGM on 28 April. If you are a Member Rep considering nomination, the deadline is 8 April.

Best wishes, David

Join us at the M25 Consortium Annual Conference 2026
Tuesday 9th June, Online
10.00am-12.45pm & 1.30-3.30pm

Our conference theme is "**Sunshine Through the Rain: Celebrating our Successes**". Libraries continue to deliver outstanding services for their users during these challenging times. At Conference we'll hear from voices across the sector, sharing inspirational stories of achievements, initiatives, and activities that are making a difference.

Keynote Speaker
We're very pleased to introduce our Keynote Speaker, Martin Reid, Director of Library Services at the House of Commons, one of our member libraries. Martin will be sharing insights from his team and developments that, in an age of AI and misinformation, put authoritative, timely and impartial information at the heart of parliament.

Programme highlights
We'll also be hearing from Anchal Bhatt and Kate Cheney from UCL about professional developments, and Dr Andy Cope (Art of Brilliance) will close the Conference.

We are also looking forward to showcasing our members' lightning talks. Apply to present one by this Friday 27 March. Find out more here: www.m25lib.org.uk/2025/12/11/call-for-lightning-talk-speakers-now-open/

Bonus Conference features:

End of lunch mindful reset session
As the Conference is online, we're offering a 15 minute end of lunchtime mindfulness 'reset and refresh' session led by Jem Shackleford.

In person post-conference visit to Senate House Library & Exhibition: English Print Revolution: Caxton & Beyond
5-6pm, Senate House, London

Conference delegates will have priority booking and visit bookings will open next week.

Register your delegate place now
All member libraries receive two free delegate places. Register here: www.m25lib.org.uk/events/virtual-annual-conference-2026/

University of Bedfordshire

Call for Participants: Online Focus Group – Developing a Bespoke Library Excellence Framework

At the 2025 M25 Conference, colleagues from the University of Bedfordshire delivered a lightning talk challenging Customer Service Excellence charter marks. It was proposed that institutions may benefit more from developing a bespoke, institution-specific library excellence framework.

Developing this idea further, the University of Bedfordshire team have since published a Times Higher Education Campus article outlining what such a framework could include and why a more

tailored model may offer greater value. The article can be found here: www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/how-develop-your-own-university-library-excellence-standard

The early model identifies ten areas that could form the basis of a bespoke framework:

1. Compliance

2. Staff development

3. Feedback

4. Data

5. Learning Resources

6. External dissemination

7. Policy and processes

8. Civic engagement

9. Communications

During the 2025/26 academic year, we will be piloting this approach at the University of Bedfordshire. Recognising that many M25 member libraries are navigating similar pressures, including cost reduction, process efficiencies, and agile service improvement, we hope to develop resources that will benefit our learning community. These will include:

- a template library excellence framework

- template training slides

- template communications

All resources will be released under a Creative Commons licence for local adaptation.

We are now seeking colleagues from across M25 member institutions to join a short online focus group to help inform the next phase of the project. We welcome participants from all library backgrounds.

Session details:

- **Format:** 45-minute online focus group in April 2026

- **Platform:** Zoom (hosted by M25)

- **Purpose:** To gather insights that will shape the development of the framework.

If you would like to participate, please contact Jill Howard at: m25libadmin@london.ac.uk to express your interest.

Carly Ramirez-Herelle (Head of Library and Academy Services)
Steve Briggs (Director of Learning, Teaching and Libraries)

Staff Development Awards 2026

We want to ensure that staff in our member libraries have the chance to apply for free cpd. So we have extended the closing date for our Staff Development Awards to Thursday 23 April 2026.

What are the Staff Development Awards?
We offer Staff Development Awards each year for staff of member libraries to attend one of our events for free, in exchange for submitting a short post-event reflection.

We recognise that supporting library staff to achieve their potential is key to the success for our members. These Awards provide a fantastic opportunity for staff working in any role at any level to enhance their professional development and to network with others.

Eight Awards
There are eight Staff Development Awards available offering free places across M25 and cpd25 events and Conferences:

- Free attendance at the cpd25 Cataloguing with Confidence Training event 12 May 2026 (in person at British Library in London, two awards available)

- Free attendance at the M25 Consortium Annual Conference 2026 Tuesday 9 June, (online, two awards available). Please note all member libraries are allocated two free places at the conference; this award provides two further free places.

- Free attendance at the cpd25 LISA Conference 23 June 2026 (in person in London, two awards available)

- Free attendance at a cpd25 event **of the applicant's choice** taking place 1 August 2027 (two awards available).

Find out more and download the application form here: www.m25lib.org.uk/m25-resources-and-activities/staff-development-awards/

Don't delay: the closing date is 23 April 2026
Send your completed application form
to m25libadmin@london.ac.uk

Image by RDNE Stock Project, Pexels

Library staff vacancies at our member libraries

If you have a vacancy in your library that you would like to promote in our monthly newsletter (and in the News area of our website) send the details to Jill Howard, Operations Manager: m25libadmin@london.ac.uk

SpeedMeet Profile for March: Louise Savage

March 2026's SpeedMeet profile is Louise Savage. Find out about Louise's role and interests here: www.m25lib.org.uk/m25-resources-and-activities/m25-speedmeet/

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

21 & 22 April
Moving into Management
London Mathematical Society 9.30-4

28 April
AGM 2026
Online, 11-12

12 May
Cataloguing with Confidence
British Library, 10am-4.30pm

26 May
The GLAM sector: what can we learn from Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums
British Library,1.30-4.00pm

9 June
M25 Annual Conference
Sunshine through the rain: celebrating our successes
Online, 10am-3,30pm

26 June
LISA Conference Change through the lens of self-kindness
Mary Ward House, 10am-4pm

Browse all our upcoming events, including visits, here: www.m25lib.org.uk/events/

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
WHELF: https://whelf.ac.uk/

M25 Consortium website

Follow us on Bluesky   M25 on Bluesky

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Apologies for cross-posting