

Conference 2025

RESILIENCE,

RELEVANCE, AND REACH:

Libraries making an impact!



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Conference 2025

RESILIENCE, RELEVANCE AND REACH

Libraries making an impact!

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2	Chair's Welcome
3	Meet our Sponsors
4	Breakout Sessions
	Breakout 1
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5	Meet your Keynote
6	Meet your Speakers
7	About the Mercian Collaboration Group

Conference 2025 Schedule for the Day

Time	Session	Room
09:15	Arrival and Registration	
09:45	Platinum Sponsor Session	Main Hall
10:00	Keynote	Main Hall
11:00	Break	
11:30	Breakout Sessions 1	Various
13:00	Lunch	
14:00	Breakout Sessions 2	Various
14:45	Break	
15:05	Mercian Leaders Panel Discussion	Main Hall
16:00	Close	



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Welcome

Welcome to the 11th Mercian Conference, our annual in person conference.

We have an exceptional programme for you, including new speakers and presenters alongside experienced staff and featuring a diverse range of submissions and topics. Mercian 25's themes focus on how libraries are adapting to challenges in staffing, resources, and funding; and exploring innovative ideas and approaches in supporting libraries and library staff in meeting these challenges.

In keeping with our themes of adapting to change, fostering innovation and addressing challenges, Mercian 25's Keynote is the inspirational Dr Beth Montague-Hellen, Head of Library & Information Services at The Francis Crick Institute. Beth has recently authored "Practical Tips for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Libraries", timely and essential reading. Beth's open-as-possible, EDI focused approach to research support reflects her advocacy for green OA and radically open data and software sharing.

Mercian 25 is funded by our sponsors and supporters. Without their support Mercian 25 would not be possible, exhibiting and participating throughout the day.

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- Gold Supporters OCLC, Open Book Collective (a community-led, not-for-profit open access supporter).
- Silver sponsor Reassurance Security Services.

Welcome

My thanks to Mercian Conference Group members who have worked all year to give you the best possible conference experience, to Coventry University for hosting and providing exceptional facilities, to our sponsors and supporters, and finally to you.

The Mercian Conference is your conference, with delegates, speakers, presenters, workshops, posters and committee members coming together from libraries, information, archives and special collections staff at Mercian Collaboration member institutions across the East and West Midlands. We hope you enjoy your day and have a welcoming and inclusive experience - meet, learn and be inspired.

Paul Cavanagh Mercian Conference Group Chair *Mercian 25*

Meet our Sponsors and Supporters

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find new connections and create your own.

Find out more about the future of library cataloguing at <u>oc.lc/linked-data-mercian25</u>



The Open Book Collective is a registered charity that delivers sustainable new funding streams to book publishers and open publishing service providers, all deeply committed to open access.

University libraries can use the OBC to browse and easily subscribe to Supporter Programmes offered by our members. In return, supporters receive direct benefits, public recognition, as well as helping collectively fund a fairer future for open access books.

We help publishers move away from having to rely on Book Processing Charges to fund open access books. We see these kinds of charges as unfair, preventing many authors from accessing the benefits of open access. They are also financially unsustainable, placing an ever increasing economic strain on university budgets.

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The commitment shown by library professionals across the industry is deeply valued, particularly during these demanding times. Dedicated to serving your needs, our responsive, UK-based Customer Care and Regional Account Manager teams work closely with libraries to ensure reliable and timely access to the resources required to support your users.



Conference Themes

Sustainability in Libraries

Relevance & Engagement

Student Voice

Digital Innovation

Building a greener future: designing online activities to promote digital sustainability

Dr Inga Jones and Jo Elliot Open University

Environmental Sustainability in Libraries: Developing a Special Interest Group to support Mercian institutions.

Steve Bull, Steve Parton, Charlotte Stockwell, Lizzie McCauley, Jo Elliot, Jess Taylor University of Birmingham

In the FUN channel! Teambuilding through writing a library research paper

Holly Austin-Davies
University of Birmingham

Turning "I think that happens a lot" into "Here's the data": enquiry logging with PowerBI

Katie Mann Birmingham Newman University

Just Read! a library initiative to get students reading

Hayley Chevell Coventry University

Student outreach through a curator Internship initiative

Emma Hibbert and Kat Halliday Loughborough University



Sales representation and account management services for scholarly publishers





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Increasing student engagement with library-led dissertation support

Tracy Lowe, Vandana Sharma, Colin Rogers
Nottingham Trent University

Digital Badges and Libraries: an opportunity to lead innovation

Joe Carey
University of Wolverhampton

Fortune Telling: Achieving accuracy through integrating the LMS and Finance systems

Adam Robinson, Heather Cripps *University of Derby*

Re-imagining Library Spaces

Kate Marshall Nottingham Trent University

Collaborating with academic staff to transform Library Teaching and Learning support

Emma Brown
Birmingham City University

The power of genuine staff-student partnership to enhance and communicate the value of libraries in a changing university landscape

Madalene George, Victoria Collins, Anastasia Kennett University of Worcester

Truth Wars: Guardians of the Galaxy or just False Witnesses? The power of Libraries and Archives in the era of 'fake news'

Sian Hewitt
Coventry University

"About the Role" – A Spotlight on Professional Pathways

Jodie Heap & Kim Hepburn-Woods

Keele University & University of Nottingham Libraries



Mercian Leaders Panel Discussion

Leaders from Mercian member institutions sharing their thoughts and insights about the conference themes, and future priorities, opportunities, etc. for Libraries and Information services and staff, and also the wider sector where relevant.



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Abstracts

Breakout session: 1

Building a greener future: designing online activities to promote digital sustainability

Dr Inga Jones and Jo Elliot Open University

Sustainability

This session explores the process of designing and developing a collection of short, public-facing online activities centred on digital sustainability.

In the ever-changing world of HE and the technological leaps that affect education it is more important than ever to educate staff and students about the impact technology has on our digital footprint. Understanding how sending emails, downloading and storing materials, and using generative AI tools impact the environment are considered core competencies that are in line with the Open University's mission as an educator that places sustainability at the heart of its teaching, research and knowledge exchange.

The session will highlight how libraries can play a pivotal role in climate action by framing digital and information literacy skills as essential sustainability competencies. We will share insights into the rationale, design principles, and content development involved in creating these activities. Attendees will also be encouraged to use these activities to empower their own communities to make informed, sustainable choices when working online.

Environmental Sustainability in Libraries: Developing a Special Interest Group to support Mercian Institutions.

Steve Bull, Steve Parton, Charlotte Stockwell, Lizzie McCauley, Jo Elliot, Jess Taylor
University of Birmingham
Sustainability

At the 2024 Mercian Conference, colleagues from the Open University and University of Birmingham presented on different aspects of sustainability.

Post-conference, the speakers exchanged details and along with colleagues at Nottingham Trent University and Keele University, put together a successful online Mercian Training event on Sustainability in February 2025. The event was well attended, with 44 attendees representing 19 Mercian libraries. Post-session feedback was positive with ratings of good to excellent from 99% of survey respondents. Feedback also suggested there was a strong sense that sustainability is an area that lends itself to cross-library working, both for sharing ideas/ experiences and to capitalise on the strength of a combined voice.

To this end, we are keen to explore what a combined voice might look like, how we can work in collaboration, and the potential for a Mercian Collaboration Sustainability Special Interest Group (SIG). This 45-minute interactive workshop will explore these themes further.

In the FUN channel! Teambuilding through writing a library research paper

Holly Austin-Davies
University of Birmingham

Relevance & Engagement

"On the face of it, writing a library research paper is a daunting task. Hours of research and writing alongside the demands of work means that for many the thought of transforming their project into a published article seems impossible. Instead, this session proposes quite the opposite. Through a combination of structured guidance, interaction with your fellow conference-goers and a few fun anecdotes, I will demonstrate how writing a library research paper as a team effort can be a positive experience that brings a team together, enhancing skills and building relationships. Using examples from the University of Birmingham Library Engagement Team's ongoing research paper, I will demonstrate how writing a library research paper as a team can be collaborative, creative and possibly even fun."



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Turning "I think that happens a lot" into "Here's the data": enquiry logging with PowerBI

Katie Mann
Birmingham Newman University

Digital Innovation

In an era of shrinking resources and increasing workloads, academic libraries must find efficient ways to track and evaluate their services. This session explores the journey of a small academic library with limited frontline staff, where monitoring Service Desk enquiries was initially non-existent. Over several years of trial and error, we developed a self-built enquiries dashboard using *Power BI*, an accessible tool that helps visualise trends and assess service impact.

Rather than a technical deep dive, this session will focus on the why and how of logging enquiries, sharing lessons learned, challenges faced, and the benefits of structured enquiry tracking.

The session will conclude with an open discussion on the broader significance of enquiry logging and its role in demonstrating the value of library services and in assisting with resource allocation and service planning.

Student outreach through a curator Internship initiative

Emma Hibbert and Kat Halliday Loughborough University

Student Voice

This presentation details the process of setting up Loughborough University's first Curator Internship program, designed to add student voices to library collections and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. The talk will explore the steps taken to launch the internship. Key aspects covered include:

- Program Development
- Recruitment and Selection
- Project Execution
- Collaboration
- · Final reflection and impact

The session will also reflect on the impact the program had on the library's collections and the broader academic community, offering insights into how such initiatives can help libraries engage with diverse student voices and make a lasting impact.

Just Read! a library initiative to get students reading

Hayley Chevell Coventry University

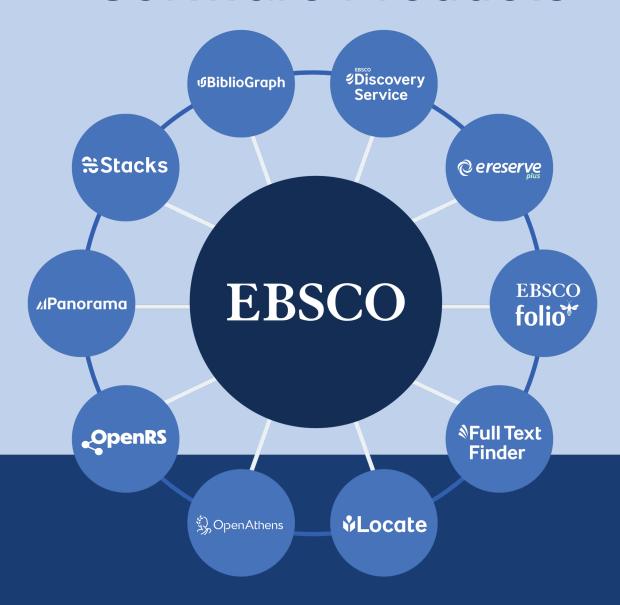
Student Voice

When demonstrating the relevance and reach of a library, what better use of resources and staff time than an initiative to encourage reading!

Reading improves our mental wellbeing, increases our vocabulary, enhances our personal development and impacts our academic ability. This relates to any form of reading, from magazines, newspapers and websites, to fiction and non-fiction titles. Basically, the more you read, the easier it becomes, and developing good reading habits can improve the quality of your life and give you a greater understanding of the world. We wanted to share this with our students and staff, and so this year the Coventry University Group libraries launched Just Read!

Through Just Read! events, library staff have had the opportunity to chat with students and staff about reading, and also promote our amazing collections. For the launch event, we had a 'Read the World' theme which showcased a selection of fiction titles written by authors from across the globe. We also asked students to recommend us titles from their home country which we could add to the collection, and hopefully bring a sense of belonging to the community.

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Increasing student engagement with library-led dissertation support

Tracy Lowe, Vandana Sharma, Colin Rogers
Nottingham Trent University

Relevance & Engagement

The School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences at NTU has a high proportion of students from Widening Participation groups. Notably, 49% of students have disclosed a disability, and many hold university entry qualifications that are not A-levels.

Final year students expressed a need for more dissertation support, yet historically, drop-in sessions had very low attendance. Recent NTU research highlighted that final year students prefer familiar, consistent, and accessible support, and they value the library as a place for help and guidance. The Academic Engagement Team could provide this support, but the challenge was increasing attendance.

Delegates will learn about our work and how a small shift from dropin sessions to timetabled support made a substantial difference. We will share our successes and future plans and encourage delegates to reflect and share ideas.

Digital Badges and Libraries: an opportunity to lead innovation

Joe Carey
University of Wolverhampton

Digital Innovation

Over the last twelve months, the University of Wolverhampton has implemented a brand-new digital badge framework, coordinated by staff within Library Services. This proposed talk will explore in detail the progress of this project, offering useful insights into how other library staff can demonstrate their skill-sets through digital innovation.

The potential of digital badges to positively impact learning and teaching, across an institution will be highlighted. The opportunity to build upon the reach of library staff will also be considered.

This presentation will also make clear how we have built a formal, digital badge framework which consistently highlights their relevance to students' careers through alignment with graduate attributes.

Finally, we will discuss the challenges faced by library staff throughout this project; coordinating staff across a range of stakeholders; navigating a route of best practice for the university; responding to student engagement issues and will set out a roadmap for the further development of the digital badge framework at Wolverhampton

Fortune Telling: Achieving accuracy through integrating the LMS and Finance systems

Adam Robinson, Heather Cripps *University of Derby*

Digital Innovation

This presentation will provide an overview of an innovative integration project between the Alma Library Management System and the Oracle finance system at the University of Derby.

This pioneering work has significantly improved the efficiency and accuracy of library financial processes. By eliminating double entry, minimising reconciliation activities, and enhancing expenditure tracking, the integration has saved valuable staff time and improved reporting accuracy.

This presentation will share the challenges, solutions, and outcomes of this project, offering valuable insights for other institutions looking to optimise their library acquisition workflows.



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Abstracts Breakout session: 2

Re-imagining Library Spaces

Kate Marshall
Nottingham Trent University



The session will consider the evolution of academic libraries from repository of knowledge toward library as space, considering the future of library spaces in light of changing patterns of usage post-pandemic and budget constraints. It will reflect on the opportunities presented by the contraction of print collections to develop new spaces to meet the evolving needs of users.

The presentation will reflect on creating library spaces that are adaptable, which promote innovation and collaboration, and which support students to develop employability skills for a post-Al world. Universal design principles and the co-creation of inclusive library spaces to meet the diverse needs of users will be explored. This session will include a case study from Nottingham Trent University which has developed a new spaces vision and designed a variety of inclusive library spaces including a multifaith reflection space, a family study room, Glow Sensory rooms, and a Rest Nest wellbeing space.

'Collaborating with academic staff to transform Library Teaching and Learning support'

Emma Brown

Birmingham City University

Relevance & Engagement

Arts students have unique needs when it comes to the Library support and resources they require to be successful in their studies.

In this session, Emma will demonstrate how she collaborated with academic staff from Art and Design courses to transform library instruction to better meet the needs of students on practical courses and demonstrate the value of library resources.

Examples of more non-traditional, experimental teaching methods will be explored, including how workshops and materials were developed and delivered, feedback from students and examples of outcomes in their work.

The Power of genuine staff-student partnership to enhance and communicate the value of libraries in a changing university landscape: the evolution of Worcester's Library

Madalene George, Victoria Collins, Anastasia Kennett

The Hive

Student Voice

This session will explore the development of the University of Worcester Library Student Team over its first three years and share how this student partnership scheme empowers staff and students to enhance and communicate the value of the library in a rapidly changing university landscape.

We will discuss how our approach to partnership empowers students to work with us as consultants and then leaders to gain insight into diverse and developing student experiences and inform service design that meets changing student needs.

This session will also outline how we assess the impacts of this collaborative programme on the students involved, on library colleagues and the service, and on the wider University of Worcester community.



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Find out more about the future of library cataloging at oc.lc/linked-data-mercian25



Truth Wars: Guardians of the Galaxy or just False Witnesses? The power of Libraries and Archives in the era of 'fake news'

Sian Hewitt

Coventry University

Relevance & Engagement

Fake news' is now a common expression but propaganda - information warfare - is not new. Though, arguably, responsibilities and values of the information professional have changed. In the wake of the two world wars, advancing technology and human rights has given prominence to the democratic importance of data protection and freedom of information.

With it a good archivist is seen as a selfless devotee of the truth where one must respect des fonds. Contrasting the librarian's role, the archivist, whose focus is on unique original primary sources, faces a preservation paradox that making archives accessible can undermine their conservation.

In the digital age this juxtaposition may seem less relevant but with it are we losing a tactile sense of history - exacerbating the question of who/what can one really trust? Is the true power of archives, and libraries that support them, that they give access to trusted original material?

"About the Role" - A Spotlight on Professional Pathways

Jodie Heap & Kim Hepburn-Woods

Keele University & University of Nottingham Libraries

Relevance & Engagement

The aim of this 45-minute workshop is to provide a brief but insightful overview of various roles within library services. This will support cross-institutional understanding, professional development, and workforce planning.

Many institutions do not have the full range of roles found across the sector, which can lead to limited awareness of the scope and function of these positions. For example, some delegates may be unfamiliar with the work of a Scholarly Communications Librarian. Providing accessible descriptions and insights into these roles helps to demystify career pathways and highlight areas of expertise that can enhance collaboration, service design, and strategic planning.

Furthermore, the workshop may help library staff with similar roles to connect and collaborate, providing opportunities to share knowledge.

The workshop will begin with an ice breaker and will continue as a Q&A session, with a different speaker at each table. Speakers will rotate throughout the session so delegates will have the opportunity to ask questions and learn about a variety of different professional pathways.



Poster Displays

For the second year, Mercian 25 is hosting posters submitted by Mercian members as part of the day's activities and knowledge sharing.

The posters will show off a range of innovative projects from across the member institutions in an exciting visual way.

Posters will be available in the same space as the morning's Keynote speech for attendees to view from mid-morning and throughout lunch and afternoon break. During these times, some of the poster contributors will be available to discuss the content of their posters.

Diverse members

- We have 17 members, all deeply committed to sustainable, affordable OA book publishing
- They include both small scholar-led publishers (e.g. Open Book Publishers, African Minds) and larger university presses (e.g. University of London Press, LSE Press)
- We also have 3 service provider members, building vital open source OA book infrastructures: PKP / Open Monograph Press, OAPEN/DOAB & Thoth Open Metadata)

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We help publishers move away from having to rely on Book Processing Charges to fund open access books. We see these kinds of charges as unfair, preventing many authors from accessing the benefits of open access. They are also financially unsustainable, placing an ever increasing economic strain on university budgets.

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support multiple initiatives via

a single procurement process

other benefits offered by

publishers/service providers

packages, with pricing tiered

according to unversity size

Meet your Keynote



Dr Beth Montague-Hellen

Head of Library & Information Services
The Francis Crick Institute

Mercian 25's Keynote speaker is the inspirational Dr Beth Montague-Hellen. Beth has recently authored "Practical Tips for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Libraries", Facet, September 2024, which has been well-received and seems more important than ever.

Beth started off academic life as a Molecular Biologist studying at Manchester University. The next 14 years were spent as a bioinformatician, accruing an MSc and a PhD on the way.

Following this, Beth decided that supporting others to do excellent research was far more rewarding than actually doing the research and so moved into Libraries and Research Support.

Beth takes an as open-as-possible, EDI focused approach to research support and is a big advocate for green OA alongside a completely transparent research cycle including radically open data and software sharing.

Meet your Speakers

Holly Austin-Davies (she/her) Library Engagement Advisor *University of Birmingham*

Holly Austin-Davies is an experienced information professional, having worked for 19 years in public, commercial, NHS and university libraries. As a Library Engagement Advisor at the University of Birmingham she works with the College of Social Sciences to build bridges, forge relationships and facilitate developments in library provision for staff and students. She has a particular interest in teambuilding and collaboration, both within library environments and with wider stakeholder groups, and in promoting library services to (occasionally reluctant) users.

Emma Brown (she/her) Learning and Teaching Librarian Birmingham City University

Emma has worked in academic libraries around the West Midlands since 2015. She has an educational background in the arts with a BA in Art History and a CILIP accredited Information and Library Studies MA (both qualifications attained from Aberystwyth University). Since 2022, Emma has supported Arts, Design and Media courses at Birmingham City University as a Learning and Teaching Librarian. She is passionate about working with academic colleagues to embed library resources, information literacy, and researching skills into the curriculum.

Steve Bull (he/him) Library Engagement Advisor *University of Birmingham*

Steve Bull is working together as part of a collaborative group accross the region, to advocate for sustainability in their libraries and across the Mercian community. The group first met at the 2024 Mercian Conference and have since hosted a Mercian Sustainability event in February 2025 for library staff across the network. With the challenges facing the HE sector, the group are looking for ways to help everyone continue to pursue sustainability in libraries despite budgetary, staffing and time pressures. Collaboration has been the cornerstone of their approach to sustainability and is key to the events they have facilitated.

Joe Carey (he/him) Information & Academic Skills Manager *University of Wolverhampton*

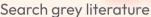
Joe manages the Skills for Learning team (SfL), which sits within Library Services at the University of Wolverhampton. As the manager of SfL, Joe leads a team of academic support tutors who teach workshops on topics such as academic writing, research skills and referencing, coordinating the development of new teaching and learning resources, such as video tutorials, peer mentoring programmes and - most recently - digital badges within Canvas. Joe is also a trained observer for the University's three faculties, providing feedback to enhance colleagues' teaching practice. Areas of particular interest include academic skills development, digital learning design and peer-to-peer learning.

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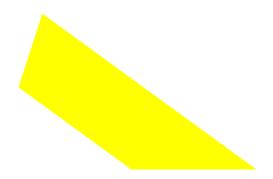


Hayley Chevell (she/her) Academic Liaison Librarian Coventry University

Hayley Chevell is an Academic Liaison Librarian at Coventry University Library. She supports the Business School and wider Coventry University group library outreach programs. She is a member of the Library Engagement Group which encompasses the Just Read! project and has a strong interest in student wellbeing and reading for pleasure initiatives.

Victoria Collins (she/her) Academic Liaison Librarian *University of Worcester*

Victoria Collins is a Student Engagement Coordinator for University of Worcester Library Services. Based at The Hive, Europe's first fully integrated university and public library, her focus is on working in partnership with students to create an innovative and inclusive service. Victoria's engagement work includes overseeing the Library Student Team and student work placements and collaborating on student-focused research projects.

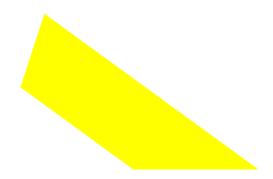


Heather Cripps (she/her) Content Delivery Officer University of Derby

Heather is Content Delivery Officer at the University of Derby. She oversees acquisitions processes, such as book ordering, subscriptions and Inter Library Loans. She has a range of experience in different roles in both public and academic libraries. Heather is particularly interested in Library budget management and streamlining workflows for accuracy and efficiency.

Victoria Collins (she/her) Academic Liaison Librarian *University of Worcester*

Victoria Collins is a Student Engagement Coordinator for University of Worcester Library Services. Based at The Hive, Europe's first fully integrated university and public library. Her focus is on working in partnership with students to create an innovative and inclusive service. Victoria's engagement work includes overseeing the Library Student Team and student work placements and collaborating on student-focused research projects.



Jo Elliot (she/her) Learning and Teaching Librarian Open University

Jo Elliot is a part-time Learning and Teaching Librarian at the Open University, working primarily in the authoring and live engagement teams. Her main responsibilities are the design, production and delivery of online learning activities and live student facing lectures and tutorials covering digital and information literacy. Jo is passionate about the environment and an active member of the Open University Green Libraries Network. She was also one of the organisers of the recent Mercian Sustainability Event. Before working at the Open University, Jo was Head Librarian at a UK Boarding School, with a focus on information literacy and reader development.

Madalene George (she/her)
Student Engagement Coordinator
University of Worcester

Madalene George is a Student Engagement Coordinator for University of Worcester Library Services. Based at The Hive, Europe's first fully integrated university and public library. Her focus is on working in partnership with students to create an innovative and inclusive service. Madalene's engagement work includes overseeing the Library Student Team and student work placements and collaborating on student-focused research projects.





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Memberships



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Packages

Kat Halliday (she/her) Academic Librarian Loughborough University

Kat Halliday is an experienced librarian with over 13 years in the profession, having worked across academic, health, and legal libraries. She is currently the Business Librarian at Loughborough University. Kat's professional interests include student collaboration, inclusive information practices, and the decolonisation of libraries, reflecting her commitment to equity and engagement in academic environments.

Sian Hewitt

Head of Archives and Records Management *Coventry University*

A qualified Archivist and Records Manager, graduating with an MLitt in both subjects from the University of Dundee in 2015, Sian Hewitt started her career in the public sector for Warwickshire Country Council's records management service. A year later she represented her team at the Information Records Management Society's awards where they won team of the year. From WCC, Sian moved to Coventry University where she is now proud to represent both Archive and Records Management services as Coventry University's new corporate Head of Archives and Records Management.

Emma Hibbert (she/her) Student Experience and Accessibility Librarian Loughborough University

Emma is currently taken a new post as Loughborough University's S.E.A.L (Student Experience and Accessibility Librarian). Her main duties include enhancing student engagement with Library services. Deepen Library understanding of changing user expectations and needs amongst students at all levels and mode of study and support the inclusive design of Library services, identifying and supporting user needs in relation to accessibility.

Dr Inga Jones (she/her)
Learning and Teaching Librarian
Open University

Dr Inga Jones is a Learning and Teaching Librarian at the Open University. For the past four years her work has largely focused on digital information literacy, academic liaison, accessibility of digital resources, as well as the design and development of learning activities. Before working at the Open University, she was a library manager in an independent school library, where she taught and delivered information literacy skills as well as the Extended Project Qualification to 6th form students, with a particular focus on critical thinking.

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Anastasia Kennett (she/her) Student Library Team Member *University of Worcester*

Anastasia Kennett is a PhD student in the Institute of Education at the University of Worcester, an Associate Lecturer in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, and a member of the Library Student Team. Research interests include student voice within higher education partnerships, neurodiversity and mental health, inclusive curriculum design, and transformative education.

Tracy Lowe (she/her)
Academic Skills Tutor
Nottingham Trent University

Tracy Lowe has worked in the Libraries and Learning Resources team at NTU since 2014. In 2023, after extensive experience in the User Experience Team, she joined the Academic Engagement Team as an Academic Skills Tutor. Tracy delivers embedded academic skills teaching, skills workshops and one-to-one academic skills support. This year, she has worked on a Library Spaces project, which examined the impact of library spaces on Neurodivergent students, and projects supporting Success for All initiatives. Tracy also leads the NTU Staff Book Club.

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Katie Mann (she/they)

Assistant Director of Library Services (Engagement & Experience)

University of Worcester

Katie started their library career in 2012. They have worked at a few different Midlands universities in a subject librarian capacity, and also once relocated to Scarborough "just for fun" in a unique role setting up a campus library. Back in Brum now, they have worked at Birmingham Newman University for 4 years and are currently in the role of Assistant Director of Library Services (Engagement & Experience). Katie's favourite things are cats, Lego, and going to bed.

Kate Marshall (she/her)

Head of User Experience and Environment Nottingham Trent University

Kate Marshall is Head of User Experience and Environment at Nottingham Trent University, a senior leadership role which focuses on the development of library spaces, frontline customer services and the student experience. She has worked in academic engagement and user experience roles within further and higher education for more than 20 years. Kate is passionate about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and developing inclusive practice within the services she leads. Her particular areas of interest include the development of inclusive library spaces, inclusive recruitment practices and diversifying the library workforce, and supporting continuing professional development for library colleagues.

Lizzie McCauley (she/her) Digital Services Development Officer Open University

Lizzie McCauley is working together as part of a collaborative group accross the region, to advocate for sustainability in their libraries and across the Mercian community. The group first met at the 2024 Mercian Conference and have since hosted a Mercian Sustainability event in February 2025 for library staff across the network. With the challenges facing the HE sector, the group are looking for ways to help everyone continue to pursue sustainability in libraries despite budgetary, staffing and time pressures. Collaboration has been the cornerstone of their approach to sustainability and is key to the events they have facilitated.

Steve Parton

Liaison Librarian: Medicine and Health Sciences Keele University

Steve Parton is working together as part of a collaborative group across the region, to advocate for sustainability in their libraries and across the Mercian community. The group first met at the 2024 Mercian Conference and have since hosted a Mercian Sustainability event in February 2025 for library staff across the network. With the challenges facing the HE sector, the group are looking for ways to help everyone continue to pursue sustainability in libraries despite budgetary, staffing and time pressures. Collaboration has been the cornerstone of their approach to sustainability and is key to the events they have facilitated.

Adam Robinson (he/him) Head of Academic Services University of Derby

Adam is the Head of Academic Services at the University of Derby where he leads the strategic vision of the Academic Enhancement and Research Publication and Practice teams in the Library. Adam has enjoyed many other roles during his career, including taking responsibility for the Library's collection development and management as part of his leadership of the Content and Digital Services team. He is also the Chair of SHERIF overseeing the direction of activity and lobbying for service enhancements from eResource suppliers.

Colin Rogers (he/him)

Academic Skills Tutor: Maths and Stats Nottingham Trent University

Colin Rogers has an extensive background in teaching English to international students and joined the Academic English team at NTU in 2023. He transferred to the Academic Engagement Team in January and now provides support with Maths and Statistics through embedded sessions, workshops and individual appointments.

Vandana Sharma (she/her)

Learning and Teaching Consultant: Academic Skills

Nottingham Trent University

Vandana Sharma joined Nottingham Trent University in 2020 as part of the Academic Engagement Team, having previously worked in higher education, in a Further Education setting. She has worked on several projects during this time, including developing a strategy to support decolonisation across the university, providing bespoke support for international students and currently looking at the impact of AI in this sector. In addition, Vandana delivers embedded teaching sessions as well as providing one-to-one academic support.

Charlotte Stockwell (she/her)

User Experience Manager Nottingham Trent University

Charlotte Stockwell is working together as part of a collaborative group accross the region, to advocate for sustainability in their libraries and across the Mercian community. The group first met at the 2024 Mercian Conference and have since hosted a Mercian Sustainability event in February 2025 for library staff across the network. With the challenges facing the HE sector, the group are looking for ways to help everyone continue to pursue sustainability in libraries despite budgetary, staffing and time pressures. Collaboration has been the cornerstone of their approach to sustainability and is key to the events they have facilitated.

Jess Taylor (she/her) Senior Library Assistant Open University

Jess Taylor is working together as part of a collaborative group accross the region, to advocate for sustainability in their libraries and across the Mercian community. The group first met at the 2024 Mercian Conference and have since hosted a Mercian Sustainability event in February 2025 for library staff across the network. With the challenges facing the HE sector, the group are looking for ways to help everyone continue to pursue sustainability in libraries despite budgetary, staffing and time pressures. Collaboration has been the cornerstone of their approach to sustainability and is key to the events they have facilitated.



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Mercian Collaboration Activities & Groups

The Collaboration operates several special interest groups and communities of practice, which largely have been instigated by demand from within the membership and guided by the Mercian Board's insight.

Each of the groups benefit from representation drawn from across the member organisations, along with support from a Steering Group sponsor. Each group considers the challenges within the individual thematic areas they address in differing ways.

More information on all the Mercian groups is available here: https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/activities-groups/

Conference Group (CG)

The Mercian Conference Group (CG) is responsible for defining, planning and delivering all aspects of the Collaboration's annual conference.

The group's activities, direction and contributions are overseen by the group's Chair, as guided by input from the Mercian Collaboration Steering Group, and supported by the Executive Officer. The Committee reports and is responsible to the Mercian Directors, via the Mercian Collaboration's Steering Group and Group Sponsor (Sue Ackermann). The group is currently chaired by Paul Cavanagh (University of Nottingham).

Group membership is open to library staff from Mercian Collaboration member institutions, with agreement of their respective Directors.

Staff Development Group (MSDG)

The Mercian Staff Development Group (MSDG) is a core group of the Collaboration, whose committee comprises representatives drawn from each of the member libraries. The MSDG's remit is to organise an annual programme of development and training events, alongside visits and other activities, for library staff within member institutions that aim to provide:

- Opportunities for staff at all levels to share knowledge, exchange ideas, experiences and good practice.
- A programme of staff development events throughout each year: including learning exchanges, workshops and library tours/visits.
- Strategic and operational approaches to the delivery of staff development.
- Advice and consultation to the Mercian Collaboration Directors Board on staff development issues.

Contact your local MSDG representative for more information on forthcoming events or to host a staff development event.

The Deputies & Senior Staff Group (D&SSG)

The Deputies & Senior Staff Group (D&SSG) is a forum for staff who have senior operational and strategic responsibilities within Mercian member libraries. Membership is open to Deputies or members of the senior management team i.e. at the level immediately below the director/head of library services. In a converged service, this may be third tier.

Representation is voluntary and more than one person from each institution can participate should they wish. People who are also members of SCONUL deputies groups are welcome.

Marketing & Communications Group

The Marketing & Communications Group is one of the Collaboration's special interest subgroups. Group members have a particular interests in the marketing, promotion and reputational enhancement of academic libraries to staff, students and the wider community. Membership is largely self-selected by individuals rather than operating a representational model (e.g. like the MSDG).

Group membership is open to all staff working in member libraries with an interest in marketing, promotion, advocacy or communications in any capacity.

Mercian Copyright Group

The Mercian Copyright Group (MCG) is a network of library staff with a responsibility for copyright guidance and advocacy at their institutions.

Copyright and related issues, are complex even for the specialists in the field, and being able to share knowledge and develop best practice is a crucial part of supporting teaching and research active colleagues, and especially in developing fields.

The Group aims to act as a regional community of best practice, sharing effective techniques and methods, and offering new opportunities to work collectively across the 'Midlands Engine' and Mercian membership region.

Mercian Disability Forum

The Mercian Disability Forum (MDF) is a special interest group of the Mercian Collaboration and comprises library professionals working within member institutions with an interest in, or responsibility for, supporting disabled students.

Membership is representational and largely self-selected by individuals within membership organisations

Mercian Metadata Forum

The Mercian Metadata Group is one of the Collaboration's special interest group and, as the name suggests, the group members have a particular interest in and around the creation and management of metadata. Like most of the other SIGs, membership is representational and largely self-selected by individuals within membership organisations.

Library Systems & Technologies Group

The Mercian Library Systems and Technologies Group aims to be a community of practice of staff responsible for implementing and managing various systems within the digital library ecosystem.

Group members will discuss issues from a multi-system perspective, comparing solutions and approaches, and will draw upon each other's experience in managing operational issues and introducing change.

The group also maintains a JISC mail discussion group.

Meet the Conference Group



Paul CavanaghChair
University of
Nottingham



Steve BullVice-Chair
University of
Birmingham



Sue Ackermann
Steering Group
Sponsor
University of
Nottingham



Andy Calvert
Communications and
Programme Co-ordinator
University of Warwick



Kat HallidayCommunications and
Programme Co-ordinator
Loughborough University



Kate SnaithConference
Enhancement
Aston University



Cristiana IlieDelegate Liaison *University of Warwick*



Giada ZanellaDelegate Liaison
Aston *University*



Ruth JenkinsExecutive Officer
[ex officio]

Meet the Conference Group



Matt Cunningham
MSDG Representative
[ex officio]



Peter DovestonSpeaker Liaison
Aston University



Jane Mansfield
Speaker Liaison
De Montfort
University



Clare Towle
Speaker Liaison
University of
Derby



Jodie Heap Sponsorship Co-ordinator Keele University



Kim Hepburn-WoodsSponsorship Co-ordinator *University of Nottingham*



Michelle MayerVenue Co-ordinator
Coventry University

Join the Group!

Why not become a member of this rewarding working group yourself next year?
Email us at
MercianConference@gmail.com if you are interested.

Mercian Collaboration

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