



Mercian Disability Forum

Minutes

Tuesday 4 July 2023, 13:00

Present: Simon Satchwell-Giles (Chair, Newman), Julie Adams (Staffordshire), Anna Cope (Harper Adams), Jane Dashwood (Warwick), Deborah Munro (Aston), Kathryn Devine (Worcester), Lara Skelly (Loughborough), John Mackay (NTU), Rose Roberto (BGU), Sally Forrest (Derby), Manda Laine (Open), Clare Williams (Nottingham), Ruth Jenkins (Mercian Officer).

Apologies: None recorded.

Summary of Actions

ACTION: Ruth to share proposed changes to the Terms of Reference with the Mercian Collaboration Steering Group (SG) in advance of their next meeting.

ACTION: Ruth to ask the Steering Group for confirmation of who will be taking over as SG Sponsor for the MDF, now that Chris Powis has stepped down from the SG.

ACTION: Deborah and Manda to meet to discuss next steps for the MDF.

ACTION: ALL to share any updates from their institutions with Ruth so that these can be included in meeting minutes.

ACTION: Deborah to poll members to find a suitable date in the autumn for the next meeting.

1. Housekeeping, apologies and welcome to new members

Simon welcomed everyone to the meeting, with a particularly warm welcome to the new members of the MDF:

- Anna Cope (Harper Adams)
- Lara Skelly (Loughborough)
- Clare Williams (Nottingham)
- Ruth Jenkins (Mercian Collaboration Executive Officer)

Simon asked Ruth to introduce herself as the new Mercian Officer and to give a brief update on activity. Ruth said that she had started in post in April 2023, having previously worked at BCU. Ruth noted that she was currently involved in preparations for the Mercian 2023 Conference in Birmingham on 7th September, and that she hoped that some members of the MDF would be there so that it would be possible to say hello in person.



2. Minutes and actions from the last meeting (January 2023)

https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/sites/default/files/minutes/MDF_Minutes_20230110.pdf

The minutes were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising, other than those already on the agenda.

4. Changes to Terms of Reference for the Mercian Disability Forum

The focus of this meeting was to discuss the draft updated Terms of Reference, including proposals to create a Vice Chair role and to amend the membership criteria to allow for two nominated delegates from member institutions.

The proposal to amend the membership criteria to allow for two nominated delegates from member institutions was discussed.

In general, there was interest in this proposal. People felt the roles involved in supporting all the aspects covered by MDF are much wider now, and it is no longer a case of institutions having a single lead person for disability support.

It was noted that online meetings were easier for people to attend, with less cost and less time taken out of the day, compared to in-person meetings.

Not everyone is free to attend every MDF meeting, and it would make it more straightforward to ensure that at least one representative from each institution could attend.

However, it was noted that some smaller institutions may still find it difficult to free up more than one person to attend MDF meetings.

Kathryn said for example with Worcester they would “just look at who was available, and what the event was about, and decide which of us would be best placed to go, if it was a case of only being able to have one of us.”

Ruth noted that Library Directors would need to have the final say on the Proposal to approve an updated Terms of Reference.

Some Directors will want to discuss and consider the proposal to amend the membership criteria to allow for two nominated delegates from member institutions, as this would have an impact on the total time commitment being made to Mercian Collaboration activities. Any proposals to increase the frequency of MDF meetings would also require approval from the Directors.

ACTION: Ruth to share proposed changes to the Terms of Reference with the Mercian Collaboration Steering Group (SG) in advance of their next meeting on 6th October.

ACTION: Ruth ask the Steering Group for confirmation of who will be taking over as SG Sponsor for the MDF, now that Chris Powis has stepped down from the SG.



5. Election of MDF leadership for 2023-25

As noted at the previous meeting, Simon Satchwell-Giles was stepping down as MDF Chair.

Simon recommended creating a Vice Chair role to share the workload and help facilitate a smooth transition from one Chair to the next.

Ruth noted that SCOUNL and Academic Libraries North have started to establish Co-Chairs rather than having an individual Chair and a Vice Chair.

It was agreed that Deborah Munro (Aston) and Manda Laine (Open) would work together as Co-Chairs.

ACTION: Deborah and Manda to meet to discuss next steps for the MDF.

6. Updates from member institutions

Simon explained that is normally a 'round-table' discussion for members to bring developments at their institutions, and their experiences of supporting accessibility and inclusion, to the attention of the group.

However, there was only limited time available for updates from member institutions during this meeting due to the time taken to discuss the proposals to update the Terms of Reference.

Manda talked about their 'Exploring Equality and Diversity' initiative, which brings together selected resources related to EDI topics, and shared the following link in the meeting chat:

<https://www5.open.ac.uk/library/library-resources/exploring-library-resources>

She noted that this was still a work in progress and feedback would be welcome.

ACTION: ALL to share any updates from their institutions with Ruth so that these can be included in meeting minutes

7. Making staff training accessible – sessions to run in 2023-24

Simon reminded everyone that there was small project undertaken in the Spring and Summer of 2022 between members of MDF and MSDG to develop a presentation and workshop to deliver to member institutions of the Mercian Collaboration on how they can be more inclusive in staff training. The project led to a short 30 minute presentation at the Mercian 2022 Conference in September 2022, with a view to developing a longer, more interactive workshop

Simon hoped that there would be a Task & Finish group meeting soon to get the ball rolling on our joint MDF/MSDG event in Spring 2024.

He thanked people who have already done work on this, and encouraged anyone else who was interested to get involved.



We are looking for:

- People with ideas for information sessions and workshop-style activities to bring the subject alive.
- People with lived experience of accessibility needs and inclusive and exclusionary practice in staff training they have encountered.
- People who would like to help run the day, including delegate welcome and signposting, or running or assisting sessions.

8. [Date of next meeting](#)

The next MDF meeting should be held in the autumn term. This will be an online meeting.

ACTION: Deborah to poll members to find a suitable date in the autumn for the next meeting.