



# **Mercian Disability Forum**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July

1.00 – 4.00

The University of Nottingham, George Green Library, University Park:  
Room B04

### **Present**

Carol Keddie, Gaz Johnson, Ivana Frlan, Keith Brisland, Janice Morris,  
Amanda Dow, Beck Maguire

### **Apologies**

Vicki McGarvey, Jenny Townend, Kay Jeffries, Liz Mills, Laura Waller, Lisa  
Lawrence, Geri Huzar

## **Introduction from Gaz Johnson giving some background on the Mercian Collaboration and an overview of future objectives:**

The Mercian Collaboration (MC) formed in late 2014, partly from the merger of the pre-existing East and West Midlands Libraries training groups, but also as a consolidated effort from the Directors of SCOUNL member regional HE libraries. The MC comprises 22 academic library members, who each pay a subscription fee based on their JISC Band to support the MC's aspirations and activities. Each member library's Director (or equivalent) sits on the Mercian Directors' Committee, a board forming the organisation's ultimate decision making tier. Operationally the MC is led by a Steering Group, whose members are elected from among the Directors, on a two yearly term basis. Currently, this group is chaired by Dave Parkes (DMU), with Diane Job (Birmingham) as his Vice-Chair, with a treasurer (Paul Reynolds, Keele) and three ordinary SG members rounding out this group.

Now in its third year, the MC has begun to identify its core priorities, many of which revolve around workforce development, manifesting through events and special interest groups, but also in the proposed buddying and talent management schemes. However, the benefits of collective agency, lobbying and procurement from collaborative working are also of keen interest to the MC. Directors regularly review these focuses at their biannual meetings. There are three other subgroups: Staff Development (SDG), Conference (CG) and Research Data Management (RDM), with SDG being the longest standing. Groups' interests are represented by the MCDO in direct liaison with each subgroup's chair and through regular and annual reports to the Directors' Committee. However, this will be enhanced in the near future once SG sponsors are allocated to each subgroup. It is anticipated that staff and Directors will enjoy enhanced collegiality and a greater awareness of activities within their regional compatriots' libraries.

The crucial operational role of MC Libraries Development Officer (MCDO) arose in mid-2015, with Gareth J Johnson appointed to the role in November 2015. Working one day a week and reporting directly to the Chair and SG, Gareth's role is to act as the MC's secretariat; meaning he facilitates communications between subgroups, directors and the SG, attends meetings as the SG's representative, runs the website, handles marketing and brand management, performs external and inter-collaboration liaison, along with maintaining oversight and advising on

governance procedures and protocols. He is an ex-officio member of all Mercian committees and subgroups, and wherever possible attends their meetings and events to provide continuity and insight across the Collaboration's activities.

## **Terms of Reference**

The group discussed the draft Terms of Reference

**Actions:** BM to redraft and circulate for comment to the wider group

## **Plan of future activities**

### **Group Meeting**

- November (whole day)
- Possibly at Warwick
- Agenda ideas:
  - Planning of possible event to be held March/April 2018 looking at inclusion and the bigger picture – inclusive practice and universal design - possibly with outside speakers such as Alistair McNaught from JISC (possible **funding** implication here as it would be outside the scope of the host institution)
    - This would be open to all collaboration members, not just MDF
  - Good practice and issues – practice rather than theory
    - Develop a wish list
  - Assistive technology and lecture capture
- Tour?

**Actions:** BM to follow up with Laura Waller from Warwick re hosting the meeting and to co-ordinate dates etc.

### **Mercian Conference**

Beck Maguire and Carol Keddie to present at the conference in September. BM and CK updated the group with regard to the subject of the session and the ideas around alternative formats provision and the wider issues of inclusion and universal design.

## **Updates from Members – general discussion**

### **24/7**

- Birmingham – wellbeing team provide support during 24/7 in libraries
- Lincoln – herb teas and fruit during 24/7 and a masseur

- Nottingham – Chinese Brush painting

### **How to gain feedback and build inclusive practice**

- Overseas agenda – could this be used to build on for inclusive practice?
- Lincoln – vinyl tree with post-its for feedback
- DMU have an Assistive Tech person who is within libraries. This role was created as part of the Disability Enhancement Project and is a permanent position

### **Useful info/links**

JM mentioned using YouTube for Read and Write info/tutorials – various videos below:

- [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=read+and+write+gold+video+tutorials](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=read+and+write+gold+video+tutorials)

JISC Webinar on inclusive practice and auditing institutions

- ppt attached with email (BM participated in a JISC webinar re auditing institutions on accessibility and good practice)

Xerte Toolkits – BM mentioned these as Birkbeck College have created a toolkit (open resource) for creating accessible learning materials which looks useful

- [http://app1.its.bbk.ac.uk/xerte2/play.php?template\\_id=468](http://app1.its.bbk.ac.uk/xerte2/play.php?template_id=468)