



Mercian Disability Forum

Meeting Minutes

Monday 13th November 2017

10.00 - 15.00

University of Warwick

Present

Carol Keddie, Vicki McGarvey, Jenny Townend, Ivana Frlan, Keith Brisland, Laura Waller, Geri Huzar, Beck Maguire

Apologies

Kay Jeffries, Liz Mills, Lisa Lawrence, Amanda Dow, Gaz Johnson

General Mercian

Conference Feedback

- Rooms were not always the right size or setup for the activities/presentations
- Confusion around social media element
- More focussed subjects
- More senior reps or more information to allow people to make an informed choice about the usefulness of a session, and the level of staff for which it would be appropriate
- Generally though, it was felt that the conference was really positive and a valuable event

MDF Specific updates

- Agreed previous meeting's minutes
- Note special thanks to Laura for hosting the meeting at Warwick and for the tour and presentation, and also to Carol for presenting an update on activities at DMU

Feedback from MCDO (Gaz)

- MDF Terms of Reference: These were accepted and given an official blessing with the following minor requests for improvement
 - 1) Commented that there was nothing about services or service developments within the ToR, and that having a line about aspirations in that direction would be helpful.
 - 2) Request to move the opening paragraph (about group sponsor) to lower down the document - probably towards the bottom.
 - **BM to make amendments and circulate to the group for approval (see attached doc)**

- MDF sponsor is Phil Brabban – Coventry
- Mercian SIG Governance Rules – few new elements with 'lightweight formalities'

MDF Event

- Possible dates - March/April 2018
- Suggested subject area -

Inclusion and Universal design - the impact of assistive technology on equity

- Strategic thinking around accessibility
- Accessibility basics - top five tips for a more inclusive library provision
- Assistive technology - what's out there, what's the scope for improving access to resources via technologies
- We need to identify a clear focus and title for the event - is it information sharing/activities/training?
- Outside providers/speakers could be e.g. JISC, AbilityNet
 - **BM to contact Alistair McNaught as a starting point and then disseminate ideas to the group for further discussion via email**
 - **BM to contact Phil Brabban for info and for ideas re focus**

Inclusive Practice - The University of Nottingham

Brief overview from Beck with regard to initiatives currently happening at Nottingham

Library support which is still for disabled students only:

- Enhanced library support
 - Students referred via the Accessibility Team in student support. They are given access to the assistive tech rooms, extended short loans, book pick and save service and 121 support from library staff
- Alternative formats
 - 1 FTE member of staff funded by Libraries, supporting 28 students 2017/18

University wide initiatives which are feeding into library strategy and vice versa:

- Inclusive curriculum design including e.g. lecture capture policy, networked software purchases
- Disability Action Plans to be rolled out 2018 - audit tool to be completed across Schools to increase awareness of inclusion and good practice and to reinforce the strategic priorities, policies and services available across the institution
- Various high level projects e.g. 'Next Gen Help and Enquiries Library project' - including student surveys, focus groups, staff feedback etc and aiming towards a more inclusive package of support for library users
- Building projects/Marketing/Student records systems - all re-aligning their policies to consider inclusion at the beginning of processes etc - positive steps forwards

De Montfort University - Universal Design (Carol's presentation attached - supplementary notes below)

Universal Design - central policy with buy in from management

Study spaces

- Extended number to 8
- Kept 2 for disabled students only, others are open to all - no issues so far
- All rooms have adjustable lighting - colour and intensity can be changed
- Booking system - in the past booked in person now part of the system which is much more inclusive
- Noise cancelling headphones available

Assistive software

- Claro, Read and Write, Mind mapping all networked
- Dragon in individual spaces
- AT person in the library - really made a difference and works with the AFS on accessing texts

General materials

- Use Talis - online reading lists mandated
- Blackboard
- Content digitised

Alternative Formats Service

- 1 FTE
- 21/22 students

Student Support

- Study support team at DMU

- Bridging the gap - drop in sessions
- Enhanced tutorials
- Embedded study support that everyone gets
- Library info sessions use assistive software e.g. mind mapping
- Raising awareness with academics
- Teaching available online in advance

Other

- Disabled Student Survey
- Sensus Access - online conversion available to all students
- Peer Learning - sharing experiences top tips

University of Warwick - (Laura's presentation attached - supplementary notes below)

General Overview

- Inductions - better uptake this year
- Loan equipment - not used so looking at moving into Accessible Study Rooms for use.
- Adjustable desks and furniture across campus at Library sites.
- Video guides - project group
- Online feedback forms
 - Html web link emailed straight to Laura which has been really useful - quick wins achieved
- Accessible Study Room refurb- Art work, painting, décor, lighting, lamps added or changed which has worked well

Sensory study space

- Sensory Study Room modified from lesser used Accessible Study Room
- Different lighting options- Bubble tube, colour changing LED strip lighting and lamp
- Soft seating, rocking chair, wobble cushion and bean bag
- Relaxation music
- Sensory objects
- Yoga mat
- Good feedback so far

Training

- Sensory sessions to raise awareness - tasks around senses, and linked to study skills and relaxation called 'Sensory Refresh.'
- Carousel training for front line staff- 20 minutes - disability support one of the sessions
- Ability Net - staff demo - free apps/accessibility and well being
- Training on Read and Write and assistive software for front line staff
- Student sessions- 'How to make you Word document accessible- top 10 tips.'

Student help and support

- 360 Project – Library areas photographed producing 360 photos allowing anyone to tour the library before they visit virtually, in an attempt to reduce 'library anxiety.'
- Induction Planning - Get Started
 - Early arrivals induction and then feedback session in June - 20ish people attended - quick fixes, really helpful
- Self-guided tours - bus stop signs
- Week 1 - Library Fair with disability support stand
- Week 2 - Dyslexia awareness week (useful for international students as well) - freebies including highlighters, post-its, coloured overlays. Positive feedback on social media.

Good practice and issues – practice rather than theory

Group discussions around specific issues. Input from the whole group with regard to solutions/ideas

Issue:

Student requiring an online book in print. The title is commercially available in print

Who pays?

- Can't come out of library budget as not able to buy for individual student. Need provision
- Equality and equity

[Update from Geri via email:

- The academics who wrote the module decided that a reasonable adjustment would be print 4 short chapters, which just came in under the 10% of the book and the student accepted that.
- Our Disabled Student Services also agreed that where an individual needs access to a print book, they will buy it]

Individual student with issues - high support needs

- How much support should the library give? Where does the responsibility for support lie?
- Sometimes students aren't on the right course/at the right institution for them which can bring its own difficulties when trying to support
- Gap with regard to assistive tech support
- Can cause huge issues for library staff who may not be best placed to intervene but are on the front line

Accessible formats services

General issues

- Communication needs improving - lack of input from students can be an issue
- Lecturer awareness is also an issue and reading list allocation etc
- Understanding of what AFS does
- Copyright
- Awareness of formats
 - Audio books
 - Text to speech
 - Human speech
- Levels of service vary across institutions
- Printing - need for hard copy where students can't use/don't like electronic
- Publishers asking for admin fee to provide alternative formats
- Receiving information re materials in advance doesn't always happen and is an issue
- Need confidence to say when something isn't reasonable

Other issues or comments

- Inconsistency of provision across institutions
- Need buy in from above for successful implementation of an inclusive curriculum/provision
- Mental health issues becoming more prominent
- General awareness needs raising - get the basics right, not always about assistive tech but definitely a gap in this area across institutions with regard to support and technical input
- Load to learn
 - Good when it works but issues