Mercian Disability Forum - Minutes
18 July 2019 – DMU University

Present:
Laura Waller (chair), Claire Williams, Liz Mills, Liz Laugherty, Gaz Johnson,
Sarah Akhtaruzzaman, John Mackey, Tim Stubbs, Robert Williams, Carol Keddie, Gill Evans

Minutes of last meeting read
Actions arising: Kathryn Devine (Worcs) ongoing investigation into systematic review training.

Matters arising: GE had contacted Sensus Access who operate free version called Robobraille.
Reply from Tanya Stevns was that it must not be used as follows:

> "As an institutional user, you would have to have a subscription to SensusAccess. RoboBraille is strictly for individual, personal, non-commercial use for people who are not affiliated with any kind of institution, association, company or other entity. We are in charge of both services and you must remove any language or notes referring to our services for now as it is a violation of our rights."

So, no mention of Robobraille on your websites or any other promotional materials!

Gaz Johnson – update from the wider Mercian Collaboration
Action: Group to create poster/flyers for Mercian conference in September 10th.
- MDF group can edit its own webpages on the Mercian Collaboration website – does the group want to do this?
- GJ busy putting together the Mercia Collaboration Annual Report 2019
- Discussion held about whether we want to hold an event. CK suggested talk by RNIB
- Suggestion of doing a future webinar for all MC institutions around making documents accessible

Welcome from De Montfort University and round table update

- **DMU**
  CK explained changes in the structure of the disability team. CK still has input with RW dealing with day-to-day enquiries and CK doing induction and teaching materials.

- **Derby**
  Previous MDF person now been promoted. TS works at Buxton with students who have a high number of learning disabilities and autism.

- **Nottingham Trent**
  No direct disability support provision in the library. JM needs to investigate what other libraries are doing. Support comes from central disability support.
  Discussion followed as to whether, as a group, we should push for some sort of benchmark/guidance in disability support provision to which all Mercian universities should aspire to. Could have framework or 'badge' to show 'disability friendly' or similar.

- **Aston**
  SA is an info specialist with disability support. The Aston Enabling Team on campus contact the library to support relevant students. Sensus Access in operation

- **Keele**
  No disability team in the library.   LL employed to do alternative formats and her work is increasing. Improved fire emergency regs recently.   Want to introduce independent access for RNIB.

- **Loughborough**
  LM based in customer services team.   Took on disability support out of personal interest. They have good counselling disability services team on campus, but they don't do alternative formats.   Signed up to RNIB Bookshare as a result. Good access in the building. Looking at Sensus Access, extended loans.

- **Wolverhampton**
  Harrison library is having a refurb coming up. Not sure if accessibility issues were taken into consideration for this.   One of the lifts is not accessible.   No library disability support team and onus currently on students to ask questions as to what the library offers.   CW got involved out of personal interest.   Need to build on relationship with Student Support and Welfare team. Leganto reading list installed – easier to use.   Revamping websites.

- **Coventry**
  Extra accessibility room to be set up. Disability/assistive libguide being produced.   Small trolleys installed in library near entrances to floors for students to cart books around.   Need to work with student union more closely to tap into student feedback. Will look at Sensus Access in coming year. Campus summer school for disabled students still running which includes library intro. Updating webpages in accordance with new accessibility regs.

- **Warwick**
  Updating webpages in accordance to accessibility regulations to include IT software provision.   Targeted promotion of new website to depts and also show personal tutors. Rewording support from 'register with disability services' to 'do you need help with', 'do you need your books to be ready' etc. Trying to make the service easier to access.   Lots of student events, sensory events, wheelchair challenge with senior management staff, earlier arrivals, social events and end of year events – promote through personal tutors.

Action: Following the round table discussion, it was apparent there was a wide range of job profiles with disability support. CW offered to compile a list of members' jobs and what they cover.

Mercian Staff Development Group collaboration
Discussion of what activities the group can collaborate on and disseminate to the wider Mercian membership.

- **Produce accessibility tips flyers for:**
  - making docs accessible
  - events accessible
  - talks accessible
  - main services accessible

Discussion of the 2019-2020 wider Mercian programme

LW suggests the group focuses on the event 'changing role of the library assistant' at Birmingham in May 2020.

Action: All members to discover what the info assistant role does at their institution and provide feedback from IAs on how they have helped people with disabilities. CW and LL to follow up and email group

- **Software to support systematic review training**
  Action: GE to contact Chris Bark. LW to contact Katherine Devine at Worcester.

- **Playful learning:**
  Escape Rooms – these are generally not accessible – formats, moving around the building etc.
  Action: GE to email the Jisc accessibility forum and speak to Lisa Lawrence at CU for advice. Come up with a list of considerations when devising escape room games eg. don't have a time factor, make accessible fonts, moving quickly around a room, using technology.

- **Best practice for marketing**
  Action: LW and GE to take that forward

- **Delivering info literacy skills online**
  This is being held at OU.
  Action: LW to contact Geri separately.

- **Library carpentry data management**
  Action: LW to check out for info as being held at Warwick.

- **Expectations for new managers**
  Dropped?

- **Decolonising the curriculum/collections/diversifying reading lists**
  CK stated it's not just about increasing variety of authors - think also about wider variety of formats

- **What do students returning from placement need to know?**
  Not taken forward

- **Changing the role of the library assistant**
  LL and CW to take forward. All group members to find out and report back what roles IA's take in accessibility and disability support.

RNIB Bookshare and Alternative Formats

RNIB rep wasn't available so LW presented from some RNIB slides seen at a previous conference. Useful contact: Stacy Scott.

Warwick has had recent JISC accessibility snapshot which stated reference must be made to RNIB Bookshare (Coventry also same issue) so webpages for this now being created.

Push from RNIB towards independent accounts, allowing students to request to become members. Quicker for student to go direct to Bookshare than through library. Process: fill in form at uni - goes to disability services and they determine person's eligibility. If student doesn't want to register with disability services they can send through medical docs as proof to disability services to gain RNIB access and will not be registered with disability services on campus. Dyslexia supported also. English as an additional language and low literary levels not classed as print-disabilities.

Books available increased from 2,000 to 230,000 titles in 3 years. Word, braille, daisy, audio text formats provided. Currently supports 12,000 students in 7,000 institutions.

If the student doesn't modify the book they can request it directly - if they want the book modified the library needs to hold a copy, or the student needs to have a copy themselves.

Dolphin Easy Reader – completely free accessible reading app for iPads, iPhones, iPods, Android, tablets and Chromebook. Change the font, colour, background colour, sentence, line spacing, text wraps, fully navigate via text headings.

PDFs less accessible than Ebooks as a whole

Q&A raised.
Could individual accounts be set up for individual DSA helpers? Yes
Calibri is a talking book service - £30 a time to join.
Action: LW – check GDPR re data storage of student details on RNIB website and verify other RNIB queries received in separate email.

Assistive software
Recommended resources, or used at Warwick?
NDVA
Bluefire reader
Open dyslexic
The AT bar

Action: CW – to ask members about what software provision at their Mercian Collaboration university, in order to see where the shortfalls are and support.

Essay writer – mind mapping tool which helps structure and write essays, creates instant bibliographies

AOB
Support workers in libraries discussion
- Most given staff cards if working for the uni.
- Some restrictions during exam times.
- Lockers? No but commuter lockers at DMU