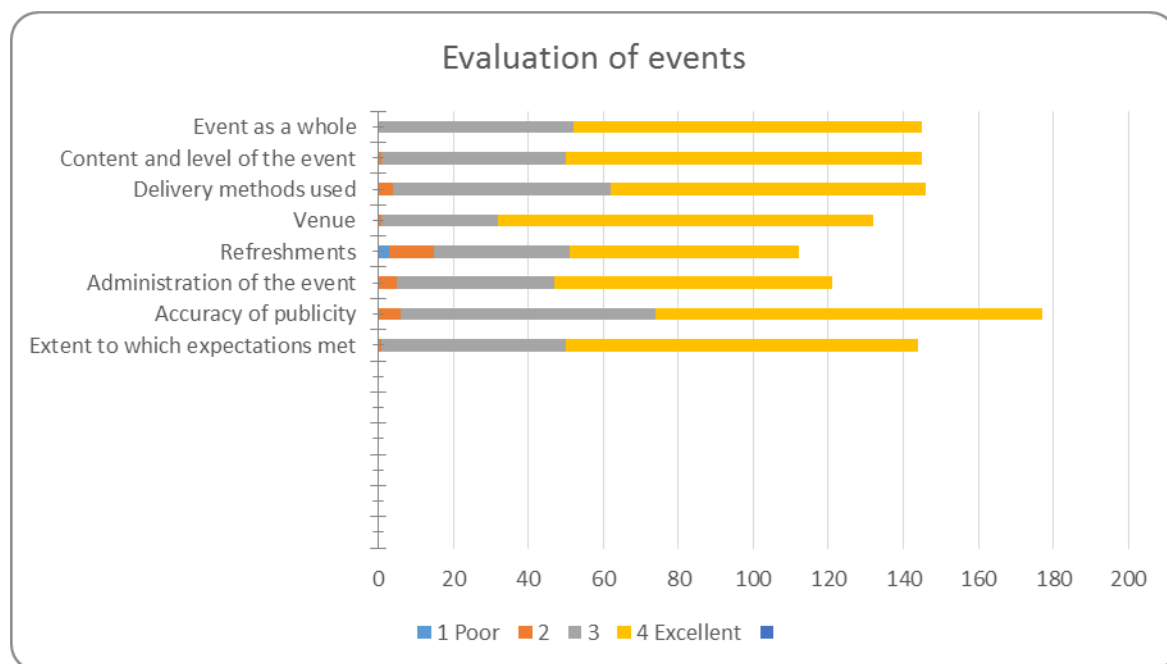# Mercian Staff Development Group Report - Autumn 2016

1. Annual report of Training Programme

This year we have run two evaluations.

Please see Appendix 1 for a summary of individual session evaluations. We had 181 attendees in total.

We also ran a review of the entire programme by contacting all those who had booked through the MSDG Eventbrite account using Survey Monkey. (All bookings will be through this method for the 2016-17.) We asked five key questions. Please see Appendix 2 for the full report.

- Q1, Has what you learned at a Mercian Staff Development event influenced how you work? If yes, how. 78% Yes
- Q2, Have you remained in contact with anyone you met at an event? - 22% have
- Q3, Have you or would you attend another event or recommend an MSDG event to others?
- Q4, Please suggest a topic for a future session.
- Q5, Would you be interested in contributing to a future MSDG event? – 39% said YES

We feel that the combined feedback paints an overall positive experience and that the programme is being pitched at the right level. There are some areas (refreshments) that we need to think about further.

2. Update from the September MSDG meeting

a. We have agreed that elections to Chair will take place at the March 2017 meeting. We will also elect an Administration Officer and an Evaluation Officer to support the business of the group. However, please can we clarify moving forward what support Gaz is likely to be able to give us administratively?

b. We plan to put photos and contact details of reps on the web site. Please could we gently remind Directors that if their rep moves role, we do need to know who their nominated replacement is.

c. Payment of invoices. In future we will advise external speakers of a 90 day payment window. If this could be speeded up that would be appreciated.

2.1 2016-17 Confirmed Programme

2.11 All The Same But Different
The following institutions have volunteered to run one of these sessions in the next programme.

- Nottingham (new build) - APRIL
- Northampton -NOV
- Harper Adams (small campus/specialist service) - JUNE
- Birmingham (new build) - FEB

2.12 Learning Exchanges

Topic	Description	Audience	Venue	Partner	Date
Circulation reviews	To feed into new LMS acquisitions, changing behaviours of users, fines behaviour etc.	Customer service managers, LMS teams	Loughborough	Lincoln, Wolverhampton	Nov 2016
Managing recruitment	Sharing experience of how to recruit differently. Alternative approaches.	Recruiting managers especially Library Assistant level.	Derby	Worcester, OU	April 2017
Partner relationships and alternative services	Overseas, students at a distance, pop-up libraries etc. to include licensing issues.	Subject staff, electronic resources staff, managers	Northampton	DMU, Coventry	May

Ethnographics for service planning	External speaker	Anyone who is interested.	NTU	Warwick	March
What do Y1 students need to know – let's start afresh	A chance to pick apart what we do and whether this is still relevant.	Subject teams	Aston	DMU, Nottingham	Jan/Feb
Building design – lessons learned	Aim to create an online package of case studies to help fellow members with space changes and a 'dos and don'ts' list.	Staff involved in space planning	Coventry	Newman	Jan 2017
Getting yourself published/research cycle awareness	So Library staff can better understand the needs of researchers. Held over from 2015-16	Research support staff	Warwick	Loughborough, Leicester	June 2017

3. Proposal for a Facilitated Buddy Scheme
Please see Appendix 3

Appendix 3. - Buddying Scheme Proposal

Background: A relatively inexperienced manager with a challenging team at Aston University Library. Was working very hard with the team, but had recurrent problems. Wanted to be able to talk things through and benefit from the experience of someone else, without feeling too exposed.

The University's own mentoring scheme seemed to be too formal; mainly aimed at academics; and mainly aimed at career progression.

We decided to try buddying with a more experienced person doing a similar role elsewhere, who could ask questions, elicit some suggestions and offer reassurance about the fact that some problems seemed to be intractable. Somebody neutral and non-judgemental.

Local Universities were contacted so as to enable meetings and minimise time spent travelling – Birmingham, BCU and Wolverhampton, and all responded positively.

It was agreed to go ahead with Wolverhampton.

The 2 parties met, had a couple of meetings in both libraries and exchanged some emails

> This is what happened:
- Staff members got to know one another and ascertained that they could work together
- The issues were outlined honestly
- Discussion of issues
- Aston manger felt

Similar to "All The Same But Different", both staff members went away with some new ideas for amending procedures. Feedback was very positive:

"*Speaking to someone in another organisation made me realise that challenging and trying to deal with difficult situations rather than letting them go on or trying to avoid issues, was the issue.*"

Proposal

The proposal is that this procedure should be rolled out to staff in all Mercian Collaboration Libraries, and that managers should support staff availing of the scheme by permitting work time to be used.

- Buddying should normally be peer to peer (same or similar pay grade/ role). It is most suitable for people new in role.
- A manger or MSDG rep should mediate finding a contact.
- Ideally use a local or similar university.
- 6 months should be the normal term. Less if there is a specific issue and it is resolved sooner.
- Meetings should take place during normal working hours
- Each meeting should normally be about 2 hours
- Emails/phone calls can also be exchanged
- At the end there should be a review of the usefulness of the arrangement and the lessons learnt.

Practicalities

What are the characteristics of a buddy?

- Be open and committed to the scheme– it can be a learning experience for both parties
- Be non-judgmental
- Have relevant knowledge and experience to be able to provide the right level of support
- Be trained in giving successful feedback
- Be able to ask challenging questions
- Be able to use questions to encourage buddies to think for themselves
- Don't have all the answers

- **At the outset:**
- Outline your role and experience
- Find out about the other person's background and experience and identify their understanding of the "buddy" relationship and how it will work
- Identify the issue(s) they would like support with
- Clarify expectations of what you can do

During the relationship

- Exchange notes after meetings
- Don't create dependency
- Feedback to your line manager about the usefulness of the arrangement

Angela Brady

Aston University Library

September 2016