



# **Mercian Disability Forum**

**Minutes of the meeting, Wednesday 2nd May**

**De Montfort University, Leicester**

Kimberlin Library – Room KL0.11

## **Present**

Carol Keddie (DMU), Natasha Skeen (Uni of Worcester), Janice Morris (Bishop Grosseteste), Jenny Townend (Northampton), Laura Waller (Warwick), Vicki McGarvey (Staffordshire), Beck Maguire (Nottingham)

## **Apologies**

Gaz Johnson, Keith Brisland, Amanda Dow, Geri Huzar, Ivana Frlan, Kay Jeffries, Lisa Lawrence, Liz Mills, Kathryn Devine

## **Minutes**

### **1). Welcome and Introduction to the afternoon - update on general Mercian activities**

Welcome to new members:

- Kathryn Devine and Natasha Skeen (Uni of Worcester)
- Anneliese Cooke (Newman University)
- Anne Knight (Cranfield University)

### **Conference interest**

Carol: Assistive Tech angle

Vicki: Inclusion and how it's presented at different institutions

- Possibility of case studies and how people would approach different scenarios

**Action:** BM will follow up with individuals for further discussion re MDF input

### **MDF presence at conference?**

This was generally felt to be a positive thing and that the group needed representation at the conference. This could be a poster or stand where delegates can find out more about the group

**Action:** BM to liaise with Gaz re MDF input

## **2). Agree agenda for the event including facilitators/roles for MDF throughout the day**

Agreed title for the event:

### **Inclusivity and Assistive Technologies, enabling all to participate**

Agenda agreed - final draft attached

Carol and Jina from DMU to present as well as Laura Waller from Warwick. Screens for presentations, and Read and Write Gold on the presenting machine are needed.

**Action: BM** to check equipment and also the space/options within the computer room for pair work

### **3). Promotion and bookings - create the flyer for the event and wording for the website**

Suggested flyer distributed to meeting delegates.

**Actions:** **All** to comment/amend. **BM** to finalise and send to Gaz for publication on website. **BM** to set up Eventbrite page for bookings and facilitate this.

### **4). Any other event issues or thoughts!**

Tour of George Green Library - felt to be of use and a positive addition

**Action:** **BM** to arrange with Nottingham Customer Services Staff

Lunch - BM mentioned that funding for lunch might be available. It was felt that this would be really positive but that delegates would be happy to bring their own if needed

**Action:** **BM** to follow up with Nottingham SMT

### **5). Wellbeing event hosted by Warwick**

BM gave an overview of the event which was hosted at Warwick (BM and CK attended) - see attachments for more detail

Vicki mentioned the following which are in place at Staffordshire:

- Head space area
- Games, craft, clay etc
- Therapy rabbits
- Director with wellbeing as a central theme

Jenny mentioned that she is co-ordinating a number of Mindfulness events but that no one was booked to attend at that point

## **6). Ebooks and accessibility of databases**

General consensus that it is difficult to work with the many different ebook platforms which are available and to know about, or understand, the accessibility of each - general consensus that the Jisc ebook audit may prove helpful

Natasha mentioned testing some platforms with assistive tech and the group were interested in the results of this. Natasha also mentioned that Askews were doing in-house testing as well.

Janice spoke about databases with audio options and everyone agreed that these tools seemed helpful but there was no consistency on what's available and no consultation with users around what's useful. General discussion around platforms removing and changing features based on stats rather than usability

Link below to the audio files leaflet from Minesotta which Janice mentioned:

[http://www2.smumn.edu/deptpages/tclibrary/tutorials/databases/audio\\_files.pdf](http://www2.smumn.edu/deptpages/tclibrary/tutorials/databases/audio_files.pdf)

Vicki - LibGuides from King's College. Staffordshire used this as a template and just adapted for their use.

The link to this info on the Staffordshire website can be found here (looks great!):

<http://libguides.staffs.ac.uk/eresources-accessibility>

## **7). Assistive technology (AT) and the bigger picture**

At Nottingham, BM outlined the current gap in provision for an assistive tech lead and the idea of moving towards an inclusive curriculum with embedded 'productivity tools'

At Warwick the AT falls to Laura but it isn't technically in her role

- there is some budget for AT within libraries but not for networked software

Natasha: IT have very little input and don't support it

Vicki:

- AT not used and has been moved out to the Enabling Centre.
- roaming profiles which allow for personalisation of the desktop.
- Digital Capability project - JISC Digital Capability Framework
  - Training for staff
  - Free apps plus training
  - Digital U - student tracker and Digital Capability questionnaire

DMU - Carol talked through the Disability Enhancement Project

Assistive Tech post

- Library based as no one in IT
- Workshops, 121s
- Writes funding bids an IT then buy the software/hardware
- Universal Design for Learning - technology strand - horizon scanning
- Raise awareness of software
- Next year - home licences
- Centre for Learning - collaborative projects

Janice - Bishop Grosseteste have Digital Champions but support is siloed with pockets of expertise which don't talk to each other.

Jenny - No ATRs, not used so they were taken away.

Suggestion: This area could be a panel question which we lead with for the event