

Mercian Staff Development Group Minutes

28th September 2023

1. Welcome and Apologies

- a. Apologies: Emma Hollingshead, Brittany Moster, Cheryl Gardner, Anna Pelekanou (Amy Jackson, Sarah Purcell)
- b. Present: Annmarie Lee, Ruth Knowles, Ruth Stubbings, Jon Gardner, Matthew Cunningham, Chris Porter, Kate Marshall, Vicki Fairweather, Liz Gardner, Ruth Jenkins, Steve Parton, Teresa Jordan, Kirsty Kift, Heather McBryde-Wilding, Laurian Williams, Alison Pope, Kay Jeffries

2. Minutes / Matters Arising

a. Passed as correct

b. Matters arising

- i. Additional request to reps to request people use work email when booking on Eventbrite **COMPLETED.**
- ii. Request to make sure (especially if capped numbers event) attendees are reminded to say if they can't attend, so those and on waiting lists can be slotted. **COMPLETED.**
- iii. AML to chase the session at Northampton that had to be cancelled. **This is on programme for 2023-24. COMPLETED.**
- iv. Buddy scheme. RJ to have a look at existing information and make sure it's visible. **See item 7 and AOB.**
- v. **ACTION:** Cheryl to send round information about participation. **See item 7.**
- vi. **ACTION:** Reps to go back and ask about All the Same But Different and also knowledge exchange session around more technical aspects eg doc supply. **Aston have volunteered and see item 8.**
- vii. **ACTION:** TJ to check if the UX session could be in person to ensure a mix. **Confirmed this is possible. COMPLETED.**

3. Chairs Update

Simon Satchwell-Giles Mercian Disability Forum Group held a summer meeting and they want to do a half day training event on making staff training accessible in May/June. Will be four sessions. Session likely to be at Newman.

- A panel discussion or Human Library with real world experiences of disabled staff.
- Universal Design for Learning Theory and Practise session which worked well at last year's conference. It will be a theory and practise session.
- BCU staff do a session on dyslexia award and other inclusivity initiatives.
- A hands-on accessible technology session.

ACTION: Please contact AM if you have staff who want to get involved, especially if they have experience of training as a disabled staff member.

4. Mercian Officer Update (Ruth Jenkins)

No specific updates but the Steering group is next Friday so will be taking new programme and end of year evaluation for discussion.

Emma Walton is new chair, and she wants to review all groups. This will include terms of reference to ensure they reflect right priorities, give value and are accountable. There are no concerns re the MSDG but there were for other groups.

KK made the point that she hoped that the steering group would discuss any proposed changes with the groups to make sure those are workable and agreed. RJ recommended talking to group sponsor (Sarah Pittaway) about any concerns.

5. Conference Update (Matt Cunningham)

Loads of positive feedback at the event and also from reps in the group. Content was well received and programme was good. Minor issues with catering to take away (!) Waiting on final evaluation responses.

Next conference is likely to be at Nottingham with Sue Ackerman becoming sponsor so there will be a new committee. Laura is stepping down as chair as she is moving outside the region.

If anyone has someone who would like to join please say. Beginning to think of themes for next year so ideas welcome.

RJ also mentioned the possibility of speakers from the groups being at the next meeting. It was confirmed that there was a good spread of attendance from across the region with nearly all institutions sending at least one delegate.

Group thanked Matt and the committee for all their hard work on a successful event.

6. End of Year Evaluation (Ruth Stubbings)

The feedback on the evaluation form was that everyone was happy with it! So, it will stay the same and the link is on the Teams site.

ACTION: Please can reps see if they can make their own copy they can edit and feedback to Ruth Stubbings.

It was agreed the evaluation report was really positive and shows we are doing the right things.

7. Update on Buddy Scheme (Cheryl Gardner by email/Steve Parton)

Discussion under matters arising regarding needing to publicise the scheme more. RJ requested that a news item be sent for the web site as the information is quite tricky to find. At least one person was asking at the conference. Last news item was November 2022. Agreed that it would be helpful to include case studies, quotes and testimonials to highlight the value of getting involved.

ACTION: SP/CG to send news items to Ruth Jenkins to publicise.

ACTION: Agreed reps should send periodic reminders about the scheme to their own staff to capture staff churn.

SP reported that there were 24 buddies and 36 people offering to be buddies and it was going well. Another push required as pairings are coming to the end of the cycle.

SP and CG are planning an evaluation exercise to share with the group and feed into improvements moving forward.

8. Finalisation of 2023-24 Programme

See [2023-4 programme for full updates.](#)

20 people have already signed up to customer service session for evening and weekend staff.

MC raised the issue of the free version of Eventbrite now imposing a limited of 25.

Discussion around the best way to tackle this. RJ made the point that the collaboration did not wish to add unnecessary costs for a paid for service. It was agreed we need free

alternative that was not too time consuming and bearing in mind some intuitions won't allow staff to use Google docs.

ACTION: RJ to investigate alternatives to Eventbrite. KK to post link on alternatives.

ACTION: Ruth Stubbings/Kate to set a date for the AI session which will be one event in November.

ACTION: KK to sort a date for Aston all the same but different. (Suggest late Jan)

ACTION: HMW to confirm date and content of Northampton session. Likely to be 19th/26th Feb.

ACTION: Teresa and Ann-Marie to confirm user experience session date and content

ACTION: CG to confirm Trans-awareness session. This will be confirmed in November.

ACTION: Anne-Marie to confirm MDF staff training session discussed under chair's update.

ACTION: LG to provide info for flyer on Warwick all the same but different

MC had an offer of a session on the Open Book Project from his open research lead Gareth at Loughborough for March/April next year.

Discussion around the need for some research focussed sessions.

LW requested if we could do an introductory session on Open Research. She would be happy to deliver.

ACTION: LW and MC to tie together a session on these.

ACTION: KK will update the programme in time for the steering group.

RJ raised a point made at steering group about making sure there was enough on programme for Library Assistants. It was agreed that as already well covered with two All the Same but Different and two customer service sessions and most of the sessions would be relevant and valuable to anyone in a library. We are not receiving feedback that there is a gap in this respect, and we do need to produce an evidence-based programme. RJ made the point this was about breadth of programme and making sure there was broad appeal/use across all job roles.

The group would like more information on what the steering group feel is missing in this respect.

ACTION: AML to speak to Sarah Pittaway a sponsor for more information.

ACTION: Those organising sessions to make sure advertising is as clear as possible that sessions are open to all or more targeted.

9. Points of Discussion - Institutional Updates

CG had recommended a trainer who delivered on neurodiversity and the link in in the institutional update for the OU.

Clarification to the group that the updates are around staff development matters rather than whole institution.

TJ is setting up a community of practice around customer service. Please contact Teresa if anyone is interested.

MJ has been running a mystery shopping exercise with a number of members. It has been very successful. Write up will be shared with the group to see if there is interest in expanding the pilot scheme.

AMH reported on an all-staff training day with Errol Lawson and Dr Andy Cope from the Art of Brilliance around staying positive in the workplace. Recommended.

KK reported on a successful staff 'away day' held at Coventry on the theme of well-being.

10. AOB

KK asked about a contact sheet for document supply, reading lists etc at the request of staff at Coventry which proved useful during COVID. Suggestion was to have a sheet to mail round annually as not everyone is allowed to use Google Docs.

KK confirmed recording would be on secure channel and only viewable by MSDG members with fixed expiry date.

RJ reiterated the need for news items for the website to make it more engaging and clarified that it can be about MSDG activities but also any interesting activities/initiatives going on in member libraries.

AML raised the potential for a shared reading list on staff development which could be a news item. Agreed this would be useful.

ACTION: Members to send in items and RJ to co0ordinate book suggestions and other items on web site.

11. Date of Next Meeting

ACTION: KK to send out Doodle Poll for March.