Knowledge for Healthcare:
Service Transformation

Helen Bingham and colleagues report on the progress of the Service Transformation Working Group, continuing our series of articles on the implementation of *Knowledge for Healthcare*, Health Education England's strategic development framework for NHS-funded library and knowledge services in England.

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FOUR working groups have been established to focus on different aspects of Knowledge for Healthcare (as explained in October's *Update*).[1] The Service Transformation Group is concentrating on the customer service elements, and the challenge of providing proactive, high impact services to healthcare's very large, diverse and highly fragmented body of staff and students – in ways which are both affordable and sustainable.

A rare opportunity

'Transformation' implies change which is marked or profound. Most change in the NHS is incremental, characterised by small steps rather than giant leaps, and 'bottom-up' spread of innovation. Whilst tried and tested methods of improvement will have a role, *Knowledge for Healthcare* presents a rare opportunity to make a step-change in critical areas. It is clearly vital to consult widely, so we are seeking to be as collaborative and inclusive as possible, and to 'co-design' solutions to the challenge we face with the involvement of experienced managers and front-line staff alike.

The work is being progressed via 'task and finish' groups, backed up by 'extended reference groups'. Healthcare library staff from across the country voluntarily contribute their time, energy, enthusiasm and expertise – itself a testimony to a shared commitment to improving the design and delivery of services. Our work is governed by principles of equity, collaboration and streamlining to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Our focus is on innovation – improving, extending, spreading and embedding approaches that have been tried and tested over recent years. Alongside this we want to raise expectations of library and knowledge services.

Our priorities

For 2015/16 these project groups are focusing on six priorities:

1 A standard core service offer
The first is to establish a standard core service offer so that staff and learners

Our Vision

NHS bodies, their staff, learners, patients and the public use the right knowledge and evidence, at the right time, in the right place, enabling high quality decision-making, learning, research and innovation to achieve excellent healthcare and health improvement.

benefit from a consistent, equitable service wherever they are based. Widespread adoption of the NHS Library Quality Assurance Framework (England)[2] means that NHS-funded library and knowledge services in England offer a broadly similar range of services. However, there is significant variation in user experience of access and charging policies.

The challenge is to articulate a national service offer that is aspirational, yet realistic to implement in a wide variety of settings, and which is framed in a way which is easily understood by customers and stakeholders.

Knowledge for Healthcare

2 Providing library and knowledge services to the wider NHS

A closely-linked challenge is to extend and improve provision of library and knowledge services to 'the wider NHS'. Ninety per cent of NHS-funded library services are hosted by NHS Trusts. Staff who work for trusts are generally well served compared with those who work in organisations which deliver primary, community, public health and social care services, which commission care, or which have a national function. Access to library services often stops at organisational boundaries.

However the NHS Five Year Forward View[3] places great emphasis on person-centred, co-ordinated care, which sees care staff working across organisational and sector boundaries and, through prevention and empowerment, keeping patients out of hospital where possible. Responding to this shift in emphasis, we aim to engage with stakeholders to establish funded services that meet the information needs of a wider user base. Our ambition is for library and knowledge services to become essential elements of informed decision-making and innovation across the breadth of healthcare settings.

3 Current awareness services

We believe that provision of current awareness services is one of the elements of the NHS library and knowledge core service offer with the most potential for improving reach, quality and impact through collaboration. Many NHS library services invest a significant amount of staff time in the production of current awareness bulletins and horizon-scanning services; due to resource limitations, others do relatively little. We know that customers of NHS library services want personalised alerts tailored to their needs and interests, but from a system-wide perspective, we cannot afford to duplicate effort.

4 Knowledge management

Knowledge management is an area of growing prominence. Knowledge is a valuable asset, key to efficiencies and improving patient outcomes, but there is much to do to develop and improve KM at every level of

the NHS, and library professionals have a significant role to play. Emily Hopkins explains in the box below.

5 Public and patient information

Due to the policy emphasis on empowerment and prevention, public and patient information is another area receiving a significant amount of attention, and another area where library and knowledge staff can play a significant role. Carol-Ann Regan explains more in the box on the opposite page.

6 Streamlining document delivery

In a context where NHS library and knowledge services can do much more, but must do so with less, it is vital that development initiatives are underpinned by work to release time from functions that can be streamlined or more efficiently delivered at scale. Our sixth group is therefore looking at options for streamlining. Having identified several areas for potential efficiency gains, in year one the focus is assessing options for streamlining document delivery. Speedy document delivery is a highly-valued element of the core service offer but challenged by fragmentation of the NHS knowledge base, and the cost and complexity of supplying copies from external sources.

To get involved, find out more about any of our projects, or to discuss how we can work together on areas of common interest, please do not hesitate to contact me at helen.bingham@wessex.hee.nhs.uk [U]

Sarah Johns, Chair, Core Service Offer Task and Finish Group:

'Defining the NHS library core service offer also gives us the opportunity to take a wider view of provision across different sectors and providers. We want to be able to direct members of the public, students and NHS staff to the best service provision available for their needs, whether that is from an NHS library, a public or academic or professional association library. Partnership working and effective signposting are key.'
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References

1 Goswami, L. 'Knowledge for Healthcare.' *Update*, October 2015, pp. 26-28. www.cilip.org.uk/update

2 NHS Library Quality Assurance Framework (LQAF) England. http://bit.ly/1LDMHum

3 NHS England. *The NHS Five Year Forward View*, October 2014. http://bit.ly/1GSzFr0

4 Health Education England. *Knowledge for Healthcare: a development framework…. p.24* http://bit.ly/1GhPZXu

Knowledge Management
Emily Hopkins, Chair, Knowledge Management Task and Finish Group (emily.hopkins@nw.hee.nhs.uk)

Successful KM needs an organisational culture that values and embeds evidence seeking and knowledge sharing into everyday practice. Knowledge is 'a valuable asset that needs to be managed so that healthcare organisations are able to apply knowledge, build know-how and continue to learn'[4] to ensure the best possible outcomes for services and patients.

Key players in KM

Many healthcare library staff are already key players in KM. We have already captured examples where librarians are successfully:

● applying their expertise to organisational databases of policies and clinical guidelines to help healthcare staff find vital information quickly and easily

● creating knowledge retention tools to capture tacit knowledge from experienced staff leaving the organisation, to ensure expertise is not lost when key staff leave

● capturing and organising outcomes

reports from projects for future use (to avoid the dreaded reinvention of the wheel)

● creating communities of practice and other peer-to-peer channels for sharing know-how and expertise.

Our group is tasked with defining the approach to increase the involvement of NHS library services in organisational knowledge management, building on what already exists and leading the way to active KM involvement by all healthcare library services.

Tips and techniques

We are building a bank of case studies and models which we aim to present with practical tips on implementation, including the resources and skills needed. Services completely new to KM can concentrate on a few simple interventions to help them take the first steps; more experienced services will get ideas for developing a more ambitious approach and in doing so, further drive the KM culture in their organisations.

We think that tips and techniques will help librarians realise that they already have many of the skills needed, and that they may already be doing more KM than they think they are!

Sue Robertson, Chair, Streamlining Task and Finish Group:

'Knowledge for Healthcare's underlying principle of 'digital by default' presents us with an exciting opportunity. Can we create a national document supply service that is faster, more efficient and more streamlined for our users, that makes the most of modern technologies and enables library staff to deliver more for less?'
sue.robertson@buckshealthcare.nhs.uk

5 Patient Information Forum. *Is knowledge power? Using information and support to empower patients*. London: PiF, 2015. http://bit.ly/1n1lCLd

6 Patient Information Forum (2013) *Making the case for information*. London: PiF, 2013. http://bit.ly/1OwNtOF

7 Ideas Bank http://bit.ly/1Z2OkIC

Public and patient information Carol-Ann Regan, Chair, Public and Patient Information Task and Finish Group (carol-ann.regan@tst.nhs.uk)

There is a drive to encourage patients and the public to be more actively involved in their health care, either as proactive partners in decision making or in terms of self-management, and to do this they need quality, trustworthy and understandable health information.[5] [6]

Health literacy

NHS libraries are well placed to signpost the public and patients to such quality health information. Health literacy has become a priority for the NHS and for those libraries promoting health literacy this presents opportunities not only for patient contact but also for us to have closer working with clinicians as they deliver health information to patients.

Our group's first task was to scope current activity in this area and gather examples of best practice. This exercise revealed that many NHS libraries are already active in providing public and patient information, with several having formed positive partnerships with their public library colleagues as part of the Society of Chief Librarians' Universal Health Offer.

Ideas Bank

We have used these examples of best practice to create an Ideas Bank[7] to encourage other NHS library services to develop their work in this area and forge new working relationships. Our next task is to produce guidance for NHS libraries on providing public and patient information. This will define a minimum service with steps to a gold standard, and include guidance on healthcare staff education as part of the health literacy agenda.

The group is actively forging links with a wide range of partners with an interest in this area, including the Society of Chief Librarians, Public Heath England, NHS England, the Reading Agency, and Macmillan, and for the first time we have NHS libraries represented on the Reading Agency Mood Boosting Books panel.