THE NHS LIBRARY POLICY REVIEW – DEVELOPING
THE STRATEGIC ROADMAP

A report by

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for

NHS

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Executive summary

The NHS Library\textsuperscript{1} Policy Review – developing the strategic roadmap

The key issues that are impeding the ability of NHS Libraries to deliver the NHS Plan are:

- Fragmentation leading to duplication of resources and which reduces impact and value for money
- Stakeholder disengagement with national initiatives that are disconnected from local library services
- Lack of capacity to support new ways of working, reconfiguration of services, and capitalising on the opportunities provided by the National Programme for I.T.

The solution is a strong framework for national coordination.

The key recommendations that will create this framework are that:

- a top level national champion is identified
- the national leadership of NHS Libraries is clarified in terms of its role and organisational location
- a programme to develop national library services is progressed in partnership with local services
- planning and prioritisation of local service delivery and development takes place at a strategic level in Strategic Health Authorities/Workforce Development Confederations (SHAs/WDCs)
- a coherent approach to funding supports the delivery of strategic priorities
- leadership at Strategic Health Authority/Workforce Development Confederation level is supported and enhanced
- an 'official' and fully funded group is established to bring together national and local level leadership
- quality standards for NHS Library Services are formally adopted
- a national framework for staff development and training is developed for NHS Library Services, based on skills and competencies
- a clear brand for NHS Library Services is established for use throughout the NHS

\textsuperscript{1} The terms NHS Library and NHS Library Services includes Library and Knowledge Services
The NHS Library Policy Review – developing the strategic roadmap

Libraries are critical to the National Health Service (NHS) as it strives to improve patient care and to develop the competence of its staff. An NHS without excellent and rapid access to the published information that informs the development of practice and its staff’s skills is unthinkable. The information management skills possessed by librarians are also demonstrating their relevance to the business of the NHS by facilitating access to its own information and experience through knowledge bases and intranets.

Although there are many examples of good strategic library developments in trusts locally, overall the library services in the NHS are scattered and often small in scale. Library Services reach only a minority of NHS staff. Library staff are a small proportion of the overall NHS workforce (2000 library staff for a workforce of 1.3 million). This small workforce cannot possibly meet the priority needs of its key customers unless library services are modernised, better co-ordinated, and exploit electronic delivery to the optimum.

NHS librarians are only one of the groups involved in the provision of information and knowledge to NHS staff and to patients. Patient Advisory Liaison Services (PALS), NHS Direct, the NHS Information Authority (NHSIA), Social Care Information Centre (SCIE), and the National Knowledge Service (NKS) are just some examples of other initiatives concerned with improving information access. Each group has its own aims, objectives, customers, stakeholders and priorities. Together these groups form a “complicated mass of inter-related and overlapping organisations”. They do not operate within an overall strategic framework. This impedes NHS libraries in responding to change and in developing flexibly and dynamically to support modernisation in the health and social care sector in partnership with these other groups. In short the potential that libraries represent is not yet being realised by the NHS.

Despite limitations of structure and resources, many NHS librarians demonstrate substantial skill and commitment in working co-operatively within and across Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) and other boundaries to develop shareable resources e.g. the Core Content project stimulated by the NHS Library and Knowledge Development Network (LKDN). At the same time nationally driven initiatives such as the National electronic Library for Health (NeLH) are also demonstrating the power of developing services that can be accessed across the NHS. Our vision for NHS libraries builds on these twin pillars of co-operation and co-ordination.

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2 NHS Library Services includes Library and Knowledge Services
3 The project brief focused on the NHS specifically and did not include any detailed consideration of the need for the extension of services across health and social care.
4 By Library Staff we mean those working in library services whether chartered (via the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals - CILIP), otherwise professionally qualified, and paraprofessionals.
1 Vision

The NHS Libraries will become:
“an integrated and co-operative NHS Library Service widely recognised for its contribution to clinical governance and better patient outcomes, the quality of health and social care, public health, patient and public information, education and workforce development, and research”.

The NHS Library Service will be renowned for:
- alignment with the key strategic objectives of the NHS
- its creative and practical blend of national and local provision which avoids duplication of effort and uses resources economically
- partnerships for delivery at national and local level between library professionals, with their organisations, and with key stakeholders within the NHS and beyond
- blending external and internal information to meet the needs of customer groups
- emphasis on services rather than managing resources
- operational efficiency and effectiveness
- outreach - promotion of the NHS Library Services and taking them to where they are needed including networks, wards, and primary and community settings
- dynamism and flexibility in identifying and responding to changing needs
- the professionalism and skills of its staff
- the quality and relevance of its services to the modern NHS

Although the need for coherent library services across Health and Social Care has not been explored in detail in this work, we recognise that this is a very important bridge to be built.

2 Why is this vision needed now?

2.1 Leveraging capability, optimising capacity

Realising this vision is urgent. If the opportunity to make changes is not taken then the NHS will have missed a significant chance. Without a framework within which national services can be developed for use by all libraries, co-operation cannot be fostered, and good practice shared,
- Duplication of effort and cost will continue to be incurred in acquiring resources and developing tools required across the NHS many times over
- NHS collective purchasing power will be wasted
- Library staff time will be spent on the more routine activities of collection management and document supply rather than in embedding good information use into the day to day work of NHS staff
The talent available to forge effective working relationships with customers and to develop innovative knowledge based services will be restrained by the capacity required for basic service provision

The information services required by the NHS will not be delivered

2.2 Learning from experience

In 1994, Baroness Cumberlege (the Junior Minister for Health) and the British Library acknowledged the need to tackle the barriers to library service development. The establishment of a policy lead at national level led to the publication of a Health Service Guideline in 1997. This stimulated the NHS regions to recognise the importance of library services for the development of evidence-based practice and patient care and the national strategic framework focused attention on the need for access to the best evidence. A programme of library service modernisation followed including, access to the Internet, development of intranets, region wide contracting for electronic content, the development of library skills and the professional coordination of services. NHS librarians developed more consistent national quality standards for library services via an accreditation scheme and began to establish national contracts for purchasing books and electronic resources.

However, the focus on successful procurement of the NHS IT infrastructure and drive towards local accountability for many NHS services has meant reduced attention being given to achieving local and national library coordination. Earlier successes need to be built on and it is timely to review comprehensively how NHS library services can support the delivery of the broader aims of the NHS Plan and other key drivers of change in the NHS.

3 Realising the vision

Whilst many of the librarians in the NHS are already demonstrating their capability and their commitment to innovate and to work co-operatively e.g. via LKDN and whilst national initiatives such as NeLH signal the opportunity to transform library operations on the ground; the complexity of the NHS organisation and its funding structures for libraries; the small proportion of librarians in the NHS workforce; the expansion of their customer base with initiatives such as National Health Service University (NHSU); the number of players in the NHS information scene; the gulf that sometimes occurs between nationally driven initiatives and local librarians; the commitment of librarians to the principle of equality of access and service for all despite the scarcity of resources; and the continued focus on collection management mean that to realise the potential offered by the vision requires real change in the following areas:

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5 Library and Information Services (HSG(97) 47)
• leadership, ownership, and championship at national and “local” level\textsuperscript{6}
• flexible and dynamic structures which foster co-operative activity and the development of specialisms within a framework of strong leadership, national direction, and local initiative
• a market driven approach driven by customer\textsuperscript{7} needs and characterised by effective use of partnerships
• coordinated and coherent funding streams
• fostering national, national/local, and local coordination with:
  o an acceleration towards digital services
  o making choices, taking decisions, involving wider networks and understanding user needs
  o a national ‘e’ library and associated services driven by ‘local’ needs enabling a systematic shift from collection management to content exploitation \textsuperscript{8}
  o an accreditation and quality framework to ensure interoperability and consistency of services across the NHS Library Service and its partners
  o routes for planning and leading local service provision that exploit and influence national services to meet local needs
  o the development of communities of practice within the library community and beyond to provide mechanisms for co-operation
  o stimulation and recognition of centres of excellence
• the willingness and indeed enthusiasm of local services to embrace and act as ambassadors for nationally available e-services
• a planned and managed process to reduce the focus on collection building at a local level; this process will make use of an evidence-based approach, be based on analysis and prioritisation of customer needs and will draw upon experience from other sectors. This topic is particularly controversial. Whilst libraries outside the NHS e.g. in the pharmaceutical industry are moving rapidly away from physical collections to electronic access at the desktop, many NHS librarians regard physical stock as essential to meet the needs of students with a wide range of educational experience and to support users who continue to prefer access to materials in print. They have great concerns that funding levels do not allow them to maintain even a minimum collection of relevant and current material for students. They also stress that limitations in IT infrastructure, unevenness of IT skills, and current customer preferences suggest that the hybrid library service offering high quality physical and virtual services will need to continue for some time. Nevertheless many consulted are convinced that digitally provided services represent much of the future and are concerned that a continued emphasis on physical collections is preventing librarians from managing the expectations of their customers and from moving forward into new and better ways of satisfying the needs

\textsuperscript{6} The Terms ‘national’ and ‘local’ are used in this report as terms widely used to distinguish nationally developed and locally provided library services although we endorse the views from consultation for this report that these terms create an artificial barrier for NHS library staff in both directions.
\textsuperscript{7} The term customer is used in preference to user to reinforce that customers have service choices and need to be attracted and retained with relevant services and products.
\textsuperscript{8} This will build on current proposals for a National Library of Health.
reconsideration and imaginative use of ‘space’ that moves libraries further towards environments for learning and interaction rather than the base for a physical collection; these new environments are already needed, will become more practical as access to digital services is increased, and can be considered in conjunction with any planning for local NHSU space provision

- recognition that whilst the principle of equality of access needs to apply to core services, new service development is best directed to the areas of greatest priority; this will require librarians to give up some current activity to develop more important services
- a flexible workforce making use of the ‘traditional’ skills of Library staff in order to work in multidisciplinary teams and networks across a range of NHS customers and with other organisations
- the emphasis within the NHS on broadening access to training and development offers opportunities for NHS librarians but these need to be prioritised against competing service demands and their provision must reflect the availability of funding.

The challenges facing libraries in the NHS are not unique. The recent research by Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) found that in other arenas the fragmentation, duplication of effort, and lack of strategic leadership are impeding progress towards the vision of information literate users, with access to seamless electronic information resources, and with library and information services supporting skills development and the exploitation of information resources to deliver filtered and focused services. Appendix 4 gives more information and an extract on their shared vision for library and information services.

### 4 Recommendations and next steps

This report recommends action in the areas of leadership, national service development, planning services in communities and organisations, development of more coherent funding streams, quality and evidence-based practice, and workforce development, and marketing and branding. The recommendations featured are, in our view, the most critical for the immediate future.

#### 4.1 National Leadership

Effective leadership for the NHS Library Service is essential. To achieve this leadership it will be necessary to:

1. Identify a top level national champion for the NHS Library Service who will ensure that library services are factored into NHS policy development and who is well informed about NHS Library issues.
2. Clarify the leadership of the NHS Library Service. The role of national leadership must include:
   1. Developing and leading the delivery plan for the NHS Library Service
2. Championing the NHS Library Service with SHAs/WDCs and Senior NHS managers
3. Acting as a lead figure for ensuring that national developments are realised
4. Working with a cohort of NHS Librarians, to lead change, sponsor innovation, develop a network for development and learning, and to drive forward the definition of what needs to happen nationally and locally.
5. Spearheading the principle and the development of NHS Library communities of practice to deliver cooperative initiatives and prevent unnecessary duplication
6. The stimulation of centres of excellence
7. Working with NHS Libraries and the newly launched Health Care Commission (previously Commission for Health Audit and Inspection (CHAI)) to embed libraries in the development of core standards and in the NHS assessment process; ensuring that valid benchmarks exist across the NHS libraries and with external organisations
8. Leading a fundamental shift in mindset and skill-set for all the people in the NHS Library Service from a largely inward service focus to an outward facing orientation that ensures they are engaged with the front line services
9. Owning and leading a national programme for skills accreditation and re-accreditation which is delivered nationally as a managed process

3. Designate an organisational ‘home’ for the national leadership of the NHS Library Service. In the present context of change a ‘home’ for the NHS Library Service cannot be recommended but from the context of current structures it is important that the leader has the clout to forge high level partnerships with health, social care and key external bodies e.g. Higher Education.

4. Reinforce the role of local leaderships and provide clear mechanisms for interactive planning and delivery of policy and strategy optimising local and national resources, including establishing a formally recognised coordinating body. We note that LKDN has demonstrated the power of a community-based approach as a coordinating body working in partnership with national leaders.

4.2 National Development of Services

There are some key opportunities to develop NHS-wide services. The provisional scope for the proposed National Library of Health includes the provision of the NHS supply chain for e-journals, e-books and databases and the tools e.g. portals, search engines and navigation tools to simplify the location and use of this information. On the assumption that a programme of national library service development is progressed we recommend that it is responsible for the following:
1. Leading on technical interoperability for the integration of locally and nationally driven resources and services
2. Expanding its provisional scope to undertake on behalf of the NHS leadership:
• Exploration of the feasibility of a national document supply service (to be provided by the NHS or contracted out)
• Testing the concept and practicality of an NHS ‘bookshop’

3. Recognising that national activities need to reflect local requirements by
• involving the NHS library community in national development programmes
• including change management planning in national initiatives in order to foster take-up and demonstrate understanding of the impact of new national services on local activities, resources and skills
• acknowledging that some nationally required initiatives can best be tackled locally or regionally by groups of NHS librarians

4. Recognising in its planning that the potential use of its content will need to go beyond NHS staff to patients and to the public
5. Recognising that information skills are critical for users of library services and a cornerstone of lifelong learning, and therefore developing and promoting a modular programme to develop Information Skills for NHS staff.

If the programme for national library service development is not progressed, other mechanisms must be determined for scoping, planning and delivering the services listed above.

4.3 Planning and prioritising the delivery and development of services within communities and organisations at a strategic level.

With digital resources available at the desktop, the potential for local library services increases. At the same time we note the uneven distribution of librarians and libraries across local trusts and the health and social care spectrum, biased to acute services. We do not anticipate extra funding at this point to make this distribution more even and recognise that modernised provision of services across the local health economy will require more dynamic and flexible cooperation between libraries and other local services. We recommend the following approaches to the reconfiguration of local services:

• Librarians take advantage of the national service provision as defined above to re-appraise and to contain the effort they currently expend on traditional roles such as collection management and document supply so that they can develop new services and new ways of working in support of NHS modernisation. The motto should be “Exploit the nationally available services and do not replicate the development of these locally or regionally”. This would also mean building on what’s nationally available to make it locally relevant and useful.

• Librarians responsible for leading existing libraries will determine and prioritise library services to meet the key objectives and local priorities of their organisation, in conjunction with their senior

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9 An NHS book shop could negotiate discounts with suppliers and provide online ordering mechanisms with facilities for advising of previous purchases by others in the same organisation and for the exchange of comments on the item. The Amazon.com model demonstrates the power of this approach.
managers and key stakeholders. We anticipate a core set of services being available to all customers, e.g. access to digital and physical resources and the training to use them, with added value services (targeting and filtering information, assembling bodies of knowledge) being directed to critical work streams and other priority needs e.g. subject networks. Service planning will consider the opportunities for outreach services e.g. positioning librarians such as clinical librarians with key user groups and the impact of the health and social care continuum.

- Librarians recognise that they will need to foster the customers’ use of e-services through training. They will also need to say ‘no’ to customers who demand a paper–based service when an equivalent e-service is available, accessible, and economic.
- Local librarians begin to plan the transformation of library spaces from the current collection focus to learning spaces and wherever possible co-locate these to be most accessible to the principal customers of the service.
- Local librarians should identify all relevant opportunities to work in partnership with other libraries to tackle similar challenges thus containing the limitations of operating in small units. This will stimulate topic – based and/or geographic partnerships, building on the experience of successful regional networks.
- Most Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs)/Workforce Development Confederations (WDCs) have appointed SHA Library and Knowledge Services Advisors who are visibly demonstrating value in service standards, investment and innovation. To reinforce these potentially powerful and strategic roles and to ensure consistency, we recommend that all SHAs, given their responsibility for performance management, identify an SHA Library and Knowledge Services Advisor leader to plan and develop frameworks for resourcing and delivery across their area of responsibility thus fostering local initiatives and co-operation. This may involve rewriting job descriptions and re-grading posts to reflect these responsibilities. This framework must cover the spectrum of health and social care activity and the role of the SHA Library and Knowledge Services Advisors must be acknowledged as influential with the organisations operating within the SHA. This resource planning is best focused at SHA level, given the current NHS structures, but SHA Library and Knowledge Services Advisors must recognise the potential of regional cooperation and aim to network with their counterparts.
- The SHA Library and Knowledge Services Advisors will require the remit to review existing organisational structures and the role the library plays in the wider institution and to facilitate change - this may involve mergers, closure of smaller concerns, re-disposition of staff, and the use of skills audits to identify deficiencies in expertise within an organisation. At local level audits of information needs will provide the basis for prioritising the service required by each organisation. We recognise in making this recommendation that the role of an SHA is not to command and control. The SHA library advisor nevertheless must be given strong senior management backing to facilitate change by working with trusts at a senior level. We would expect the national champion and leadership to stimulate support.
4.4 Patient Information

The importance of contributing their skills to the provision of patient information and therefore to informed patient choice has been mentioned in interviews and workshops. Nevertheless, given the importance of meeting the needs of the NHS workforce and, given that NHS Direct is leading on the provision of health information to patients and the public, this cannot be a main priority for the NHS Library Service at the current time. Instead we recommend that:

- Local librarians identify opportunities to better exploit the information provided by NHS Direct and catalyse relationships between NHS Direct and other local organisations, such as public libraries and community health information services that provide public and patient information.

4.5 Development of more coherent funding streams

The problems of complex funding streams, the short-term nature of development funding, and the unevenness of funding across the NHS have been stressed during consultation on this strategy. Whilst changes to the management and the quantity of funding are outside the scope of this work we recommend that:

- Steps are taken to ensure a current and accurate picture of the resources invested in NHS libraries (staff numbers and revenue budgets) and how this is distributed
- An initial mapping of current funding structures is undertaken so that this can be tested against the strategic objectives and local delivery of NHS Library services to ensure that funding streams are not impeding progress and change
- Urgent steps are taken to align NHS Library policy with changes to the multi professional education and training (MPET) funding stream.
- Any national review of NHS funding should take account of the need to fund relevant library services
- The principle of clear access to NHS Library and Knowledge Service management statistics and data at local level is recognised as critical to support an evidence-based culture and to demonstrate impact and value for money, and that protocols to collate this data are established to ensure consistency across NHS libraries

The importance of ensuring adequate funding for service development and for staff training and development has been noted frequently in consultation.

4.6 Quality and evidence–based practice

To reinforce the importance of securing consistency of standards in local service delivery across the NHS we recommend that:
• The current accreditation programme for ongoing quality management and service development is sustained and developed in conjunction with the role of SHAs for performance management. The inclusion of libraries in the processes of the Health Care Commission must be established and the process of engaging with senior stakeholders to plan strategically for trust needs must be included in accreditation schemes.

• Accreditation policies are confirmed as one of the key responsibilities for the national leadership

• The work to develop a skills and competency framework for NHS library staff, within the framework of Agenda for Change, is continued and that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and re-accreditation programmes as being developed by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) are actively encouraged and build efficiently on the work already being done by the UK Council for Health Informatics Professions (UKCHIP), Skills for Health, and the new Lifelong Learning Sector Skills Council. The risk of duplication of effort is significant in this area and must be avoided by simple and acknowledged mechanisms for cooperation

Evidence is regarded by many consulted as the foundation for proving impact and guiding choice of further investment, given the evidence-based nature of the NHS itself. Although it is beyond the scope of this work to recommend areas where the evidence base can provide most potential value we recommend that:

• An evidence-based culture is established and cultivated so that library services in the NHS are founded on knowledge of impact and best practice, not just habit. The development of evidence of value must be built into new service development as part of the development process; this will foster the evidence base and value assessment processes for assessing the value of new activity

• Mechanisms are established for sharing evidence with the NHS library community; an Intranet site for the NHS library community is of potential value.

• This may necessitate a national benchmarking function incorporating leadership and research.

4.7 Workforce Development

The following recommendations are aimed at fostering leadership and the increased organisational capability and skills required to deliver a modernised service:

• Develop a co-ordinated national framework for staff development and training which informs and guides local frameworks. It is essential that this identifies both core technical skills and the key emerging skills and competencies required for new roles. It is essential that this framework reflects external national professional standards

• Identify and implement an NHS policy on the accreditation of its staff as CILIP implements its new Framework of Qualifications

• Implement Personal Development Plans for each member of the workforce. These need to contribute directly to team operational plans that articulate clear activities and outcomes for the library service
Develop mechanisms to identify NHS librarians with the potential to innovate and lead and to support them with appropriate training. Many librarians will require support to achieve the transitions presented in this report and managing library services strategically demands a workforce of the necessary quality. This will demand strategic succession planning.

Foster communities of practice (virtual, real, cross sectoral) that enable the NHS librarians to optimise their collective knowledge, and share good practice in the NHS and cross-sectorally.

Implement a consistent business planning cycle from strategic plan downwards.

4.8 Marketing and branding

Underpinning all the previous recommendations is the critical need for a more consistent approach to the marketing of services nationally and locally. We have already recommended that the products and services, to be delivered nationally and locally, are developed using the marketing principles of identifying priority customer need and developing products that meet these. We also recommend that a clear brand be established for the NHS Library Service which can be used by all libraries in promotion and which will increase identity and visibility.

5 Context and background

“Knowledge in the health service is as important as the nervous system in the body. It is a vital component that keeps the system working to best effect and helps it develop and grow.”

5.1 NHS Priorities and NHS Libraries

NHS libraries have a vital role to play in developing and disseminating the knowledge that supports the delivery of NHS priorities as detailed in a range of strategies including:

- ‘The NHS Plan’ which describes an NHS that:
  - provides high quality modernised services
  - uses evidence-based decision making and practice to improve health and patient outcomes
  - uses modern technologies to deliver seamless access to information and services and works with social care and key partners

- ‘Information for Health’ which was developed to enable NHS professionals to have the information they need both to provide care and to play their part in improving the public’s health and had the National electronic Library for Health as a key deliverable which aims to:
  - provide easy access to best current knowledge
  - help improve health and healthcare, clinical practice, and patient choice.

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10 Introduction to ‘Exploiting the Power of Knowledge in NHS Scotland: A National Strategy 2004’
12 Information for Health: an information Strategy for a Modern NHS 1998
• “Working Together Learning Together”\textsuperscript{13} describes NHS Libraries that ‘offer access to a wide range of electronic and print learning and knowledge resources, complementing those available via the National electronic library for Health. Many of these are available 24 hours a day. Working in partnership with the future NHSU and with learning networks in higher and further education, NHS Library Services are a vital part of the current and future NHS learning landscape.’

• Functions of the Workforce Development Confederation\textsuperscript{14} states that ‘Confederations will use funding from MPET budget and other sources to support library facilities to which all the healthcare workforce and learners have access’

5.2 NHS Libraries and Education

Access to knowledge is needed by health and social care staff and students who need to move between NHS and Higher Education locations. Contracts for library services provide some services but many users, including consultants, researchers and students, find that their need for information is restricted by the terms of licenses for electronic content. The \textit{Users First} report, commissioned by the NHS and Higher Education, has identified what needs to be done to simplify and improve services for users and has prioritised projects to achieve the required change. Partnership working across the NHS UK wide and with Higher Education, Further Education and public libraries will be increasingly important in helping NHS staff and patients to gain access to the information they need. This report focuses on NHS library service development. Additional work will be required if library services are to meet the needs of the social care workforce. National and local library service development will need to include partnership working.

5.3 Opportunities for NHS Libraries

Delivering the NHS plan and the recent Wanless\textsuperscript{15} Report on Public Health will depend on high quality information and library services. The current opportunities for the NHS to modernise in order to deliver the NHS Plan require the NHS Library Service to demonstrate how it can support this modernisation. In marketing their services, NHS Libraries need to demonstrate their capacity to contribute to the delivery of NHS priorities and the core business of their organisations. This pressure will be particularly intense in the current political climate when debate is focused on whether the investment in the NHS is being well used. In this context it is important that the NHS Library Service is better promoted and can demonstrate how it adds value and provides value for money.

Opportunities for the NHS Library Service include:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Working Together Learning Together; a framework for lifelong learning in the NHS. 2001
  \item Workforce Development Confederations – Functions, Accountabilities and Working Relationships, April 2002
  \item Securing Good Health for the Whole Population. February 2004
\end{itemize}
The opportunities provided by the emphasis on evidence-based services and clinical governance and the potential to transform clinical practice through the mobilisation of information and knowledge – these are key areas where the NHS Library Service can demonstrate the importance of quality information services delivered to the clinician to support practice.

The capacity and need for integrating access to information and knowledge with electronic patient records.

The review of health and social care information provision and the need to provide services that bridge health and social care.

The emphasis on a patient centred NHS depending upon quality information to support health and treatment choice.

Lifelong learning and workforce development and the development of the NHSU requires the support of the NHS Library Service for access to information and support in using it.

The National Programme for Information Technology (NPfIT) provides opportunities for the NHS Library Service to identify specific areas that depend on quality information as well as providing delivery opportunities.

### 5.4 Modernisation of NHS libraries

All these opportunities require the modernisation of the NHS Library Service. Likewise the increase in the availability of electronic information provides customers of NHS Library Service with more choice about how they access information. This may lead to changing or decreasing use of library space but it offers opportunities to promote traditional information skills whilst changing the way services are delivered and releasing capacity for new ways of working.

The shift in the balance of power to local delivery requires consistent and coherent local library services which can demonstrate how they measure quality and impact. Reconfiguration of services will be needed to ensure even coverage across local health economies and to address the current disparity of provision between the acute and primary and community sectors. Changing ways of working in the NHS with an emphasis on networks and working in partnership needs to be mirrored and supported by its library services.

It is a challenging time for NHS Librarians when many aspects of their traditional role are being questioned and as a profession they are having to reinvent themselves. But this is essential if they are to demonstrate their flexibility in adapting to new service demands.

This period of uncertainty is not helped by ongoing organisational change and the current confusion of leadership at national level. In this, the NHS Library Service is not unique. Local change is also affecting libraries as WDCs are taken into SHAs and as the regional tier in health has disappeared.
In such a climate the opportunity is to review what is already being done and to consider how the innovation and radical thinking that has been going on in the library sector can be drawn together to establish a strategic direction of travel and delivery plan.

It is important to be realistic about what can be achieved. However, the case needs to be made for the added value of library services, demonstrating and building on the innovation and change already taking place within the NHS Library Service to provide more flexible and dynamic services. It is essential that libraries plan for the future and consider how, by utilising nationally provided services, they can re-engineer their more traditional roles in order to release capacity for meeting the demands of a changing NHS by delivering in a different way.

6 The NHS Libraries – The foundation of skills and services

Understanding what is meant by a library is critical to engaging stakeholders in the sponsorship and funding of NHS Libraries and to position libraries in the total NHS information and knowledge landscape. The NHS Library Services are defined by the skills of their staff and the services that these skills enable them to provide. These skills are rooted in the activity of providing access to published information and the core roles that these skills deliver currently include:

- Ascertaining and understanding the information needs of their organisations using techniques such as information auditing and working with their organisations to plan the strategic development of services
- Managing the supply of information (journals, data bases and books) from external sources through e-libraries, physical libraries, and services such as document supply
- Supplying access routes that enable customers to use information sources directly – catalogues, online databases, Intranets and portals
- Providing supportive spaces for individual and group study
- Facilitating the use of information; the service provided by the NHS must be supportive and facilitative given the range of customers; Library staff are the key interface between their customers and the wealth of information that is available; NHS staff risk not using the evidence that is available due to the complexity of the catalogues, data bases, loan systems and core content journals that are available. Facilitation needs have stimulated librarians to develop essential skills in:
  - Teaching information literacy (skills to find and use information)
  - Content exploitation - alerting services and in- depth research including,
  - Finding, collating, analysing, assessing and presenting information to meet specific needs – this skill is normally applied to solve high value problems
  - For the NHS Libraries, the move from collection development to content exploitation must now be a priority
Categorising and labeling information to enable it to be found and used - these skills can be applied to externally and internally generated information.

As the NHS libraries have expanded into knowledge management and published information assigned the knowledge label, many have changed their name to Libraries and Knowledge Services. In doing so they have expanded their strategic role of ascertaining and understanding the information and knowledge needs of their organisations to cover both published information and the knowledge generated within the NHS – both tacit and explicit. This has extended the skills base to include:

- Mobilising the tacit knowledge held in the expertise of individuals and groups for wider use
- Re-packaging information and knowledge to target real priorities in the NHS – libraries are open to all but serve very few dynamically and innovatively
- Designing and delivering information and knowledge services
- Information organisation and content management for Intranets and Internets including taxonomy construction and database creation on behalf of customers, information architecture planning and information standards development.
7 Appendix 1 – The project process

The NHS NKS commissioned TFPL to develop a vision and strategic roadmap to guide the future development of the NHS Libraries. A Steering Group was established by NHS NKS to guide the three phases of the project:

7.1 Phase One: Research

Research with key stakeholders was carried out to identify the key issues, to determine drivers and constraints for change and to begin formulation of ideas for new vision and strategic framework. Analysis was enriched by the Steering Group and used as the basis for further consultation.

7.2 Phase Two: Consultation

Consultation on the most important areas to feature in the strategy was undertaken using a scenario planning workshop that brought together a mix of NHS personnel and external stakeholders and resulted in the development of a strategic road map for NHS libraries that linked directly to the challenges facing the NHS itself. The results of this workshop enabled the development of an outline report covering the vision for NHS libraries; what libraries mean in the NHS; the underpinning principles for change; the needs for trust-based services and for nationally co-ordinated infrastructure and services; the potential for partnership.

A series of questions based on this report was distributed electronically to interviewees and more widely via the NHS Library Advisor. Together with further interviews to test ideas this consultation helped to crystallise the way forward.

7.3 Phase Three: Report development

The development and finalisation of a draft report with advice from the Project Steering Committee.
8 Appendix 2 – Contacts for the review

8.1 Steering Group

- Kate Arnold, NHS Direct
- Veronica Fraser, NHS Library Advisor
- Roger Lund, Department of Health
- Vivien Martin, NHSU
- Ben Toth, NeLH, NHSIA*
- Val Trinder, Thames Valley SHA Library Advisor and LKDN*

* denotes also interviewed

8.2 Interviews

- Ann Brice, Specialist Libraries Development Manager, NeLH
- Muir Gray, Director NeLH
- Diane Gwynne Smith, Director of Knowledge Management, SCIE
- Maggie Haines, Director of Information Services and Systems, Kings College, University of London
- Shapour Hariri, National electronic Library for Medicines Programme Director
- Sally Hernando, Head of Knowledge Resources Development Unit, South West Region
- Pam Prior, Regional Library Adviser West Midlands
- Ron Stamp, Director of Research Outputs Programme, Department of Health
- David Stewart, Director of Health Libraries North West and team
- Pam Westley, Head of NHS Information Management Policy in DH
- Jane Williamson, Knowledge Resources Manager, North Central Sector. WDC
- Jeremy Wyatt, Associate Director of Research, NICE

8.3 Workshop participants

- Betsy Anagnostellis, NHS
- Kate Arnold, NHS Direct
- Angela Clarke, NHS LIS
- Gavin Coney, Dialog
- Guy Daines, Principal Policy Advisor, Chartered Institute Library and Information Professionals
- Michael Davies, British Library
- Sharon Dobbins, NHS LIS
- Veronica Fraser, NHS Library Advisor
- Bob Gann, NHS Direct
• Scott Gibbens, NHS National Core Content
• Shane Godbolt, Modernisation Agency
• Gary Horrocks, Kings College, London
• Sue Howley, MLA
• Declan Kelly, Research services, BBC
• Bruce Madge, NPSA
• Viv Martin, NHSU
• Tony McSean, BMA Library Advisor
• Judith Palmer, Keeper of the Scientific Books. The Radcliffe Science Library. Oxford University
• Isla Robert, NHS LIS
• Mike Rodham, West Sussex Health Libraries
• Ben Toth, NELH
• Val Trinder, Thames Valley SHA Library Advisor and LKDN
• Anne Weist, London Health Libraries Strategy Development Group
• Jeremy Wyatt, Associate Director of Research, NICE

Comments on the consultation document from:
• Stuart Benjamin, NHS LIS
• Scott Gibbens, NHS National Core Content
• Janet Homewood, SCIE
• Vicky McAdam, NHS LIS
• Valerie Monahan, NHS LIS
• Kay Moore, Sheffield Hallam University
• Pam Prior, Regional Library Adviser West Midlands, NHS LIS
• Declan Kelly, BBC
• Chris Reid, SCIE
• Mike Rodham, West Sussex Health Libraries
• Sarah Sutton, Clinical Sciences Library, Leicester, NHS LIS
• Alison Turner, NeLH
• Rachel Whittlestone, West Midlands Library Services Development Unit, NHS LIS
• Tina Wilson, Kent and Sussex SHA
9 Appendix 3 - Documents consulted

1. Creating a National Library for Health, Presentation, Ben Toth, November 2003
2. Developing Excellence in Library and Knowledge Services; Accreditation of Library and Information Services in the Health Sector – A Checklist to support assessment, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Edition, Chris Fowler and Val Trinder, October 2002
3. Embedding knowledge management in the NHS South-west: pragmatic first steps for a practical concept, Caroline Plaice and Pam Kitch, Health Information and Libraries Journal, 20, 75-85
4. Exploiting the Power of Knowledge In Scotland – A National Strategy 2004
5. Framework for the Future, Action Plan 2003-20062003, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) long term strategic vision for public libraries
8. LKDN Strategy 2003-2006 and DRAFT ACTION PLAN 2003-4
11. NATIONAL eLECTRONIC LIBRARY FOR HEALTH STRATEGY – 2003/20066, June 2003, Dr J A Muir Gray
13. NATIONAL KNOWLEDGE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, J A Muir Gray, May 2003
15. NHSU Library Strategy; Options Appraisal and recommendations, Veronica Fraser, September 2003
16. Outline plan to consolidate the strategic alliance between the National electronic Library For Health and the NHS library and knowledge services leading to the National Library for Health in England, Feb DRAFT 2.5 2004
18. The Example of Health: A Prognosis for the Profession, Issues raised at a workshop held by the CILIP HEAG on 8 May 2003
20. THE NATIONAL LIBRARY FOR HEALTH. J.A. Muir Gray, 11\textsuperscript{th} November 2003
25. Workforce Development Confederations – Functions, Accountabilities and Working Relationships, April 2002
26. Workforce Development Confederations Guidance – functions of a mature Confederation, may 2001
27. Users First : NHS/NE collaboration to remove barriers to knowledge access, Presentation by Veronica Fraser, NHS Library Adviser, DoH Information Policy Unit and NHSU, Draft 1.1, February 2003.
10 Appendix 4 – Extracts from WILIP report, Resource, 2003

Wider Information and Library Issues Project (WILIP)

The main activity of the Wider Information and Library Issues Project was extensive consultation with all kinds of library and information services. This identified general agreement that:

- There is a huge potential in libraries collectively, which is not being realised – yet.
- This is partly caused by continuing fragmentation in the sector, duplication of effort and resources, lack of strategic leadership, and therefore lack of influence in the higher reaches of policy and political power.
- To move forward we need a coherent vision of what libraries, and other information services should now offer, and to rally library and information services to deliver that vision.

Respondents identified four main elements for a shared vision for library and information services:

- Users will be information-literate and should have seamless and unfettered access to information resources at the time and place of their choosing and in the form that they want, no matter where the resources are located.
- Access will be facilitated by more and more information being available electronically, including a wider range of older resources made accessible through digitisation.
- The library and information service will become increasingly the focus for access to the wider range of services.
- The library role will become more closely geared to customers’ needs, supporting self-navigation by users, helping them develop information literacy skills or providing intermediation, according to their requirements.