

# Libraries and knowledge management

Join the team and make a difference

**Libraries and knowledge management staff provide an essential service – the backbone of information about health running right through the NHS. They support the highest standards of patient care by making sure all staff can access the latest evidence and information about health, treatment and services.**

## What will you do?

### Knowledge and information manager

Knowledge managers lead the strategic development of physical and virtual knowledge services (libraries and electronic information). Your role is to ensure all staff in the trust can get the information they need, so that the decisions health professionals and managers take are based on the best possible evidence.

You must have a vision for where you want to take the service, and you are likely to spend a lot of time developing both strategic and operational plans. You may put in bids for money from sources such as education departments or national funds. For this, you will need to make a persuasive business case and present it. You will need to look ahead to future developments in information technology and make sure your service is in a position to take advantage of them.

You are likely to have overall responsibility for a number of physical libraries, as well as for developing information accessed via the internet. You will also have overall



responsibility for budgets, and for appointing, training and managing staff. You may also actively help clinicians review evidence and facilitate discussion, for example by running journal clubs.

### Library services manager

It is your job to carry out the day-to-day running of the library or information service.

Library users could be staff, academics or people on placements in the trust, as well as patients, carers and members of the public. Your job is to take an innovative and proactive approach so that the maximum number of people can access the information they need.

Training healthcare professionals how to access and also how to critically appraise the quality of information could be a key part of the job. You will manage print and electronic journal subscriptions and you are likely to work closely with the trust's web team or Information and Communication Technology (ICT) staff to develop website presentations and content. An important part of your job is promoting the use of the library service.

### **Information officer**

The library or information officer is a front-line role, directly helping people in the trust, from consultants to NVQ students, as well as patients and families access information. There are a number of roles at information officer level.

**Clinical librarians** are attached to clinical teams. They attend ward rounds with a specialist team (for example cardiology), pick up their queries about individual patients' cases at the bedside, and research packages of information that support patient care and staff training and development. They alert clinicians to new research and train staff in how to search for and appraise information.

**Knowledge management librarians** also promote evidence-based practice, by making sure healthcare professionals have up-to-date knowledge and research. Your role involves a keen understanding of the interests of healthcare professionals, and providing them with updates on national guidelines, reviews and policy.

**Health promotion librarians/public health librarians** take information and resources, such as videos, models and leaflets to GP practices to promote patients' health and well-being. You'll be responsible for all aspects of your service, such as literature searches, training staff to access information, and promoting the service.

### **Knowledge and library skills trainers**

train healthcare staff across the trust to find the information they need via literature searches, electronic databases and electronic journals. Outreach librarians provide a similar training role in the community, for example for GPs or nurses. These librarians also sometimes carry out literature searches for others.

### **Library assistant**

You will be among the front-line staff of the library, running the enquiry desk and helping users with issues, such as patient care, their own professional development or research. You'll use many information resources to research enquiries, from medical textbooks to the internet. You will be responsible for ordering books and journals and the role includes some administration, such as sending out letters and maintaining databases and records.

**Senior library assistants** supervise the library assistants and take on extra responsibilities such as managing the inter-library loan system, and liaising with the deputy head of library services.

### **What entry routes are available?**

**Knowledge and information managers** need a degree and usually a postgraduate qualification such as a masters degree in information and library work. You will have experience of managing a library and information service and of project management, preferably in the NHS. You're likely to be a member of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP).

**Deputy library service managers** need a degree or postgraduate qualification in library and information management, and several years' management experience. You are likely to be a member of CILIP.

Role	Where will you work?	What skills and qualities will you need?
Knowledge and information manager	You will have an office in a hospital, a primary care trust, or a health authority and you are likely to move around between libraries. You'll go out to the organisation and work with, and respond to, local healthcare professionals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ability to analyse information and present it in a user-friendly way</li> <li>• excellent communication and presentation skills</li> <li>• ability to motivate people</li> <li>• ability to anticipate and plan for the future</li> <li>• interest in IT and budgetary management</li> </ul>
Deputy library services manager	You will be based mainly at the trust's library. You will have frequent meetings with other departments and staff in the trust, to make sure the service continues to meet their needs. You will promote the library service at local or regional events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excellent interpersonal skills</li> <li>• interest in website design and maintenance skills</li> <li>• ability to follow a clear strategy for the library service</li> <li>• ability to get on with people</li> <li>• good presentation skills – you will need to produce written and verbal reports on the service, plans or ideas</li> </ul>
Information officer	You will be based in one particular library, or move between two or more depending on the size of the trust. Depending on your role, you could regularly visit healthcare professionals at primary care trusts, GP practices, community trusts and ambulance trusts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interest in the management of information</li> <li>• self-motivation and the ability to work in a team</li> <li>• excellent communication skills, as you will be dealing with people from right across the trust</li> <li>• interest in IT</li> <li>• organised approach – you may need to catalogue and classify information so a user can easily retrieve it</li> <li>• interest in research skills</li> </ul>
Library assistant	You could be based in one library, or moving between two or more, depending on the size of the trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good communication skills and a professional manner</li> <li>• accuracy and good organisation skills</li> <li>• ability to research from a variety of sources</li> <li>• willingness to work as part of a team</li> </ul>

**Information officers** need a librarianship or information science degree, or postgraduate library qualification. For posts that involve training staff to access information, a training qualification will be an advantage. A levels related to medicine, like anatomy and/or physiology, are helpful, but not essential, for library posts with a strong emphasis on health interventions, such as clinical librarian. Preferably you will be a member of CLIP.

If you want to join the library service within the NHS but don't have a relevant degree, there are opportunities to join as a **library assistant**. You are likely to need five GCSEs or equivalent. Experience of working in a library is helpful, but not essential.

For more information on the range of opportunities available in health informatics, please visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications). This gives more specific details about what qualifications are necessary for each role. You can search for current vacancies and download job descriptions at [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk)

### How can you develop your career?

If you join as a library assistant and don't have a relevant degree, you may be able to study for one while you work and train. Once you have a degree and some experience, you can apply to be a library officer. In this role, you can develop skills, such as website design, managing electronic services and teaching critical appraisal. This is valuable experience for applying for deputy library services manager.

As a deputy library services manager you are well-placed if you want senior management experience, including managing budgets and staff. This may enable you to apply to become a knowledge information manager.

As knowledge information manager, you can build on your experience in a number of ways. You may move to a larger organisation where you will have more staff and resources, or to a strategic health authority, where you can influence the development of regional strategy and work in areas such as staff development. Your skills will also be very useful if you wish to move to areas such as project management or general management in the NHS.

For more information about training in clinical informatics and courses you can take to progress your career, please visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/training](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/training)

As well as moving to more senior and specialised roles within this area, you will also have the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities and progress within the organisation, as part of the Career Framework. For more information about this initiative please see the *Careers in health informatics* booklet.

### Pay

The national pay system in the NHS is called Agenda for Change (AfC). This applies to all staff in health informatics except the most senior managers. These are examples of roles and the AfC bands at which they may be paid: library technician (Band 3); librarian (Band 5); librarian service manager (Band 7). For more information, visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits)

**To find out more about careers in the health informatics team, please visit**

[www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working)

**For all contact details, visit**

[www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts)