

NHS Library and Knowledge specialist give health professionals the gift of time

All healthcare staff are short of an invaluable resource – time. Time to spend caring for their patients while being confident they have the most relevant, evidence-based information they need to plan and deliver that care.

A report to an All-Party Parliamentary Group this week/month [Mon 2 Nov 2020] clearly outlines the true value of NHS Library and Knowledge Services, having both a direct and indirect effect on the care patients receive. They make a positive impact on services as a whole, providing an economic value of millions of pounds to the NHS.

Health Education England (HEE) commissioned the report *Library and Knowledge Services Value Proposition: The Gift of Time*. This identifies key benefits of a library and knowledge service within an NHS organisation and, specifically, the specialist roles embedded within NHS teams.

Health librarians and knowledge specialists make the gathering of information as easy as possible for healthcare professionals, relieving the burden of sourcing and synthesising evidence while enabling NHS organisations to meet their statutory obligations to get evidence into practice across the service.

Findings in a recently published international literature review [see p21 of Report for list of referenced materials] showed that for every \$1 of funding spent on library and knowledge services a return of \$2.4 is received. If applicable to the NHS it suggests that library and knowledge services are already delivering a net economic benefit of £77m per annum. Were HEE's [recommended staff ratio](#) for qualified librarians per member of the NHS workforce achieved, this could increase to £106m per annum. Moreover, this includes only the benefits of time saving and expense, not the value of improvement to patient care, safety and operational efficiencies.

Patrick Mitchell, Director of Innovation and Transformation, Health Education England, said: *“This report gives us some truly great insight into the value that embedded NHS Library and Knowledge Services bring to staff at all levels of the healthcare system when planning and delivering care for local people.*

“Librarians are probably not the first role that spring to mind when people think about the NHS. However, the part they play, and the specialist expertise they provide, give clinicians some of the most important tools they have to treat patients effectively – information, and time. All the evidence shows that the right knowledge services improve outcomes for patients.

“Every politician, every system leader should be asking, ‘where is your librarian...?’”

Sue Lacey Bryant, National Lead for NHS Library and Knowledge Services, HEE said: *“We are passionate about the positive impact that librarians and knowledge managers have on the quality of care. Our regional library teams will now work with NHS organisations and local library services to help the NHS fully realise all these benefits.*

We will continue to work with trusts, Integrated Care Systems and Arm's Length Bodies to make sure that NHS library services are adequately resourced; aligned with local priorities and able to support the organisation to adopt NICE guidelines and CQC standards”.

[Read the report](#) and find out more about NHS Library and Knowledge Services