

Implications of PREPP for library and information services

The following submission was prepared by the Library Association and the Nursing Information Sub-Group, in response to the UKCC report on the PREPP.

Information skills

The implications of paragraph 7.8.7 of the PREPP report which states, "The outcomes of the preparation for advanced practice will include the ability to ... utilize existing research and where appropriate, initiate, collate and disseminate new research work" need to be fully understood in the increased demand they will put on library services to teach such skills and provide the necessary research resources. Libraries will need to have extensive input into such programmes.

Increasing need for current awareness for nurses at all levels

Nurses will need access to the latest ideas. They will need to develop information handling skills and become proficient in the use of information technology, such as searching online databases.

Range of learning resources required

Nurses will need access to a wider range of resources including videos, computer assisted learning (CAL) facilities, databases, and graphics and statistical packages as well as more traditional learning materials.

Variety of learning modes

The increasing use of Open and Distance learning means that librarians have gained much experience in helping users with self-directed learning methods. Their contribution is not always recognised, but they have the means to contribute fully to the learning experience of all involved in PREPP. In particular they recognise the need to support mentors/preceptors especially during the proposed first year of post-course experience.

On access

Librarians are aware that course participants will require access to libraries over an extended day and that this will require library staff additional in many cases to current provision.

Planning of learning programmes

It is important that librarians are involved in the planning of PREPP programmes to ensure that the necessary learning materials are available to support proposed courses, and to advise on the types of learning and information resources that are available.

Cost implications of PREPP for library and information services

Staffing

It is important that the increasing demands for information, and for the help of professional librarians, that PREPP

will generate are reflected in the provision of adequate staffing levels in library and information services. There is a need to plan in advance the number and level of additional staff that will be required and to ensure that salaries and grades truly reflect the extended role of library staff. The Library Association recommends that senior librarians responsible for planning and managing the delivery of library and information services to support PREPP should be on academic related scales in Colleges or Institutions of Nursing, or on senior management scales within the NHS.

Library resources and information

It should be recognised that a number of libraries within the health services are very poorly resourced and will need considerable investment to ensure that they are able to satisfy the increased demand and new services which will be required to support PREPP. The special needs of nurses working in isolated situations must also be addressed - who will provide them with a library services and how? It is recommended that a "named" librarian is made responsible for supporting distance learners in each district.

Planning and organisation of libraries

The provision of adequate learning resources, strategic planning and co-ordination are urgently required at the Regional level to ensure that the most appropriate services are available at the local point of need. At the local district, hospital or college level, well-resourced inter-disciplinary libraries, combining services to doctors, man-

agement and allied professions as well as to nurses will be the most cost-effective way of establishing a library network to support PREPP, as "integrated" library services can offer a wide range of materials whilst avoiding costly duplication.

Bibliographic databases

The UKCC should consider funding improved databases for nursing based on the existing ones, such as the RCN Nursing Bibliography or the ENB Careers Services databases. A project is required to link a number of databases together and to produce appropriate thesauri (i.e lists of subject headings) and user friendly systems. Eventually these developments would be used to provide high quality online or compact disc databases. This would assist professional development and reflect the research basis of nursing practice. It would also assist in the creation of a national nursing/health care information network and save unnecessary duplication of funding. Access to such services would overcome the problems of isolation of some nurses.

Cost-benefit analysis

Librarians responsible for library and information services must be fully involved in budget preparation and cost-benefit analysis of library and information services and the monitoring of these services.

The role of the librarian in supporting PREPP

It is essential that librarians are involved at all stages and levels in plan-

ning and implementing PREPP. The role of the librarian should be seen as:

- a) An educator supporting learners on an equal basis with tutors, and not simply an administrator of a service;
- b) An initiator and participant in information networks designed to provide support to nurses from newly registered practitioners to advanced practitioners;
- c) A promoter of active enquiry by the nursing practitioner through the provision of a wide range of information sources and by encouraging the use of information technology;
- d) A provider of information to support the roles of mentor and preceptor.

Professional nurse development and library and information services

The Library Association regards it as axiomatic that a knowledge of the sources of nursing information, the effective use of such sources and the need to keep up to date should be part of the professional development of all Registered nurses.

Conclusion.

The Library Association appreciates the opportunity it has been given to comment on the PREPP project. The Association, through the expertise of its specialist groups such as the Nursing Information Subgroup, is well placed to advise and offer comments on the library and information services

implications of such important educational developments as PREPP, and would welcome a continuing involvement in the PREPP programme.

Summary of recommendations

1. It is suggested that the providers of PREPP programmes review the provision of library and information resources available to support continuing education and consider the information needs of course participants, their tutors and mentors.
2. Course participants will need to develop their information handling skills and this must involve the planned contribution of professional librarians at the sites where programmes are offered as well as those on Open learning courses.
3. Librarians must be fully involved in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of PREPP activities to ensure that appropriate library resources are available.
4. Regional librarians are needed to ensure that there are effective strategic plans to provide learning support to all involved including distance learners, and also to develop information networks in a cost-effective way.
5. A project is required to link together nursing and health bibliographic databases with a view to creating a national, coordinated service across the United Kingdom. Funding for such a project is essential.

6. It should be part of a nurse's professional development to show awareness of the sources of nursing information as well as their use and the need to keep up to date.
7. The LA would welcome the opportunity to be fully involved in the development of PREPP.

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The Disability Interest Librarians Group

Most of the librarians in this group work for national charities. We support each other in coping with new technology and the stresses peculiar to working for a 'good cause'. Although most are members of the MHWLG, we needed a smaller informal group, too. In our work as librarians we have a lot in common. We research and provide a specialised information service to the staff and users of the organisations we serve. We have skills, experience and subject knowledge of the growing and extensive literature about disability. Our combined expertise and knowledge is a valuable resource, which could be made available to and through other librarians. The literature is good, growing and needs promoting. Understanding the handicapping effects of a variety of disabilities can enable librarians to combat the unequal opportunities evident to disabled people (on either side of the counter) in libraries.

Promoting disability awareness in the library school curriculum is a long term aim. Meanwhile we have run a successful study day **The Accessible Librarian** at the Polytechnic of North London, which we will repeat at the Library Association on 8 November 1991. Contact Philippa Lane.*

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