

## Survey of Nursing Libraries in the Northern Region

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In May 1992 the ENB's Education Advisory Group for the Northern Region commissioned a survey of nursing libraries in the region. The survey arose out of concern about the effects on library services and resources of P2000, PREP and amalgamation of colleges of nursing and midwifery.

Five colleges were covered. All libraries that received funding from these colleges, i.e. both nursing college and multi-disciplinary libraries, were surveyed. The survey consisted of two parts:

- (1) collecting data on the use of the libraries and
- (2) a questionnaire survey of library resources.

For four weeks in the autumn/winter of 1992 usage data collection forms were handed out to every user in the library. The forms asked questions about the profession of the user, reasons for using the library, facilities used and time spent.

6,698 usage data forms were completed with a response rate of 91% to 100%. Individual libraries and colleges varied in percentage use by the different professions but were practically identical for usage by reason, facility and time.

P2000 (21%) and pre-P2000 (16%) student nurses and qualified nurses undertaking a course of study (22%) were the major users. Use by qualified nurses who were not undertaking formal courses of study was small (4%). Use by nursing tutors was 7%. Use by non-nursing professionals was a sizable amount of the total (26%).

The major reason for use of the library services is study purposes (45%), irrespective of the profession. Combined use for "Study" and "Research" (terms often considered synonymous by the users) was 64%. Libraries have an important role to play in the training needs (basic, post-basic and continuing education) of all NHS staff.

The library facilities most used were books (24%), journals (18%), study space (17%) and consulting the librarians (10%). 44% of respondents used the library between 15 minutes to one hour and 33% for over one hour. Adequate resources for the basic components of the library service - stock, accommodation and staffing - are vital.

A questionnaire was sent to:

1. the Directors of Nurse Education, asking questions about the college (sites, courses and staff) and the library (policy and standards, financing, management, staff development, users and issues and challenges), and
2. the librarians, asking questions about their library (sites, staff, expenditure, services, accommodation, stock, usage, the higher education library linked to the college and issues and challenges).

Questionnaires were sent out in late November 1992. They were analyzed against the Colleges of Further and Higher Education (COFHE) Standards.

For the questionnaire survey the response rate was 100%. The results for the individual colleges are very similar. Overall library resources, on all measures, do not meet COfHE standards at the further education (FE) level and when they do pass this level they do not reach the higher education (HE) level. These results should be contrasted with the results of the user survey which shows the importance of library services and the need for adequate resourcing.

Eleven recommendations were made:

1. A Regional Strategy should be developed for library services to all NHS staff;
2. A Regional Librarian should be appointed;
3. The sources of funding for library services should be separated from the management of these services;
4. Colleges of nursing and midwifery should adopt a common standard for library services and a common set of management information;
5. Colleges should establish a regional strategy for library and information services for student and qualified nurses;
6. Colleges should establish a clear library staff structure in the college which will allow career progression;
7. Colleges should use the expertise of their library staff fully;
8. Colleges should look at co-ordination, standardisation and rationalisation of services across the region;
9. Colleges should put more support into Health Libraries North (a professional group of health librarians);
10. Colleges should commission a survey of all higher education libraries in the region;
11. The results in this report should be made available both to individual colleges and individual librarians within those colleges.

The full results of this survey may be found in "Health Libraries Review", vol 11(1), March 1994, p3-28.