Knowledge and library services

Knowledge and library service staff make sure crucial evidence and information is available and accessible when and where NHS staff need to use it.

Their work supports decisions about patient treatments and care, funding, policy, research and innovation.

Working life

Information has never been available in such abundance or variety, but evidence does not speak for itself. Knowledge and library staff deal with information in lots of formats (such as online journals, databases, books, websites and social media) to ensure that healthcare staff can find, access and use the best available information to do their jobs.

Staff might work in a physical library space handling enquiries from healthcare staff, supporting users and promoting the service. Or they might work in a virtual service helping maintain online resources and offer training on how to use a range of digital resources to find
The work is varied, stimulating and rewarding. Knowledge and library staff:

- are creative in promoting their services to demonstrate how the right evidence and information at the right time can save healthcare staff time and make their lives easier
- are outgoing and enjoy talking to people. They work with everyone in their organisation to ensure they have the evidence and information they need in a way that is useful to them. For example, a clinician might ask you to collect evidence on a treatment option and summarise the results in a report. This is sometimes referred to as literature searching or evidence summarising
- are interested not just in knowledge found in books or websites, but also in the knowledge and experience that people have. They look for ways to help staff share learning and experience with each other
- work with different IT systems and embrace new technologies that support their work and the work of healthcare colleagues

**Roles in knowledge and library services**

Knowledge and library staff work in different types of knowledge and library services. Individuals might be based in a hospital with a physical library base, or an office with other healthcare staff delivering virtual and in-person services for colleagues.

You could work with staff out in the community or with specific healthcare disciplines such as public health, healthcare science or mental health.

**Library assistants**

Library assistants are the front-line staff of the knowledge or library service. The role involves:

- running the enquiry desk and helping users with their questions, for example finding a resource, helping them access training or supporting them with their professional development
- using information resources to research enquiries, from medical textbooks to online databases via the web
- ordering books, journals and other library resources
- administrative tasks such as answering and writing emails or dealing with enquiries over the phone

Senior library assistants may supervise library assistants and take on additional
responsibilities, such as managing more complex requests for resources or liaising with more senior staff.

**Librarians**

Healthcare librarians have a variety of roles in different settings, for example hospitals, community, mental health or public health settings. You might:

- work on the front-line helping healthcare staff access quality information to inform their decisions
- search the resources available to find information that helps answer an enquiry or question and package that information in a way that is useful to healthcare staff
- create updates to help staff stay up to date with the latest evidence
- deliver training for healthcare staff on assessing the quality of information, or demonstrate techniques for finding reliable information
- work with patients and service users, as well as staff, so they can find reliable information about their own health

Clinical librarians attend clinical meetings and accompany staff on ward rounds when they visit patients. Outreach librarians go out and about a lot, working with a range of staff such as GPs, paramedics or IT managers. And knowledge specialists take the lead on organising activities and events that help capture, disseminate and share knowledge in an organisation.

**Knowledge and library services manager**

As a knowledge or library services manager, you'll:

- lead and inspire a small diverse team allowing them to see the difference they make to frontline staff and patients
- shape the strategic vision for your service and take responsibility for delivering it, as well as moulding and implementing the national strategy
- promote the service so staff from all parts of the organisation are aware of the resources available to them, and the expert support you and your team can provide
- be responsible for the day-to-day running of the service and work autonomously to tailor services to meet the needs of users and organisational objectives
- support your team in developing their skills and continued learning
- champion and facilitate activities and initiatives that encourage staff to share knowledge, learning and experience across the organisation. Where this is the primary focus of the role they may be referred to as knowledge managers

**Want to learn more?**

- Find out about the entry requirements for knowledge and library services [1]
- Find out more about the training and development opportunities in knowledge and library services [2]
- Read a Knowledge for Healthcare blog for more information about the different roles available [3]
Most jobs in knowledge and library services in the NHS are covered by Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales [4]. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. Staff working in knowledge and library services in the NHS will usually work standard hours of 37.5 per week. Terms and conditions for non-NHS employers and contractors will vary.

There are opportunities to progress your career in a number of ways, for example moving into senior management roles and working collaboratively with different teams in the organisation. Knowledge and library staff are actively encouraged to develop skills throughout their careers and continue learning from colleagues. There are opportunities for accredited professional development through our professional body CILIP, the UK’s Library and Information Association.

Find out more about the training and development opportunities in knowledge and library services [2].

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you'll be asked to show how you think the values of the NHS Constitution [5] apply in your everyday work.
Find out more about NHS values [6].

Most NHS organisations advertise their job and apprenticeship vacancies on NHS Jobs. You can find some of the current vacancies below.

- View Vacancy [7]

**Librarian**

Barnstaple, EX31 4JB

- **Salary:**
  
  £24,907 - £30,615 per annum pro rata

- **Type:**
  
  Permanent

- **Employer:**
  
  Northern Devon Healthcare Trust

- View Vacancy

- View Vacancy [8]

**Librarian**

Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr, Ystrad Mynach, Hengoed, NP44 8YN

- **Salary:**
  
  £31,365 - £37,890 per annum

- **Type:**
  
  Permanent

- **Employer:**
  
  Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

- View Vacancy
Site Librarian

Trustwide (based depending on successful applicant), Trustwide, DL2 2TS

- Salary:
  £24,907 - £30,615 per annum

- Type:
  Fixed term

- Employer:
  Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust

Outreach Librarian

Royal Cornwall Hospital, Truro, TR1 3HD

- Salary:
  £31,365 - £37,890 pa (Pay Award Pending)

- Type:
  Permanent

- Employer:
  Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust

Assistant Librarian - Clinical and Outreach
Education Centre, Southend University Hospital, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 0RY

- **Salary:**
  
  £24,907 per annum

- **Type:**
  
  Permanent

- **Employer:**
  
  Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

- View Vacancy
  - View Vacancy [12]

Senior Library Assistant

Grimsby, DN33 2BA

- **Salary:**
  
  £19,737 - £21,142 per annum pro rata

- **Type:**
  
  Permanent

- **Employer:**
  
  Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

- View Vacancy

Further information
For further information about alternative routes into knowledge and library professions:

- Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals (CILIP) [13]
- Health Libraries Group (HLG) [14] – the UK-based network of individuals working in or professionally interested in health and social care

To visit a local health library, contact your regional library lead:

- NHS Knowledge and Library Services [15]

Help us improve your experience of our website

Register your interest in research to improve our website

Let's go [16]

Other roles that may interest you

- Information and communication technology [17]
- Clinical informatics [18]
- Administrative management [19]
- Project manager [20]

Source URL: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/health-informatics/roles-health-informatics/knowledge-and-library-services

Links
[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/health-informatics/libraries-and-knowledge-management/entry-requirements-libraries-and
[14] https://www.cilip.org.uk/members/group_content_view.asp?group=200697&amp;id=686518