

# NHS SHALL Group

22 November 2011

## Report on the Commissioning Handbook for Librarians

### Progress

The Editorial Group and Champions met in July 2011. Work on action points has since been carried out. In particular:

- The Handbook has been renamed “Commissioning Handbook for Librarians” to make it’s purpose clearer to visitors. In addition, the home page has been improved, providing information about updates and links to the Champions.
- Ask an Expert – we are working with Ben Skinner to link up with the PCC Ask an Expert pilot. Searches requested through the service are being added to the Handbook.
- Anne Gray highlighted the Handbook at a presentation entitled “Information Needs of Commissioners” at a TFPL health SIG meeting on 8 November in London. [http://www.tfpl.com/networks\\_events/health\\_sig.cfm](http://www.tfpl.com/networks_events/health_sig.cfm). There were about 30 attendees, some librarians but also third sector, commercial sector, and clinicians.
- Anne Gray has written an article for December’s edition of the HLG Newsletter (see Appendix 1)
- NHS Networks Commissioning Zone have been asked to include an updated item about the Handbook. This has not yet appeared and will be followed up.
- We have developed a Commissioning Handbook newsletter using MailChimp, a free email marketing tool. The newsletter first came out in September 2011, and to date there have been two issues.

There are now 48 subscribers to the newsletter, including Knowledge Managers, Primary Care Librarians, Public Health Librarians and Clinical Librarians. The newsletter has been promoted through LIS-Medical and the Primary Care Librarians list, and sign up links are on the Commissioning Handbook for Librarians site and [www.libraryservices.nhs.uk](http://www.libraryservices.nhs.uk).

It’s early days, but an analysis of the first two issues reveals that there is a high open rate, and the percentage of people clicking on links has improved

| Issue          | Sent to | Number opened | Number of clicks |
|----------------|---------|---------------|------------------|
| September 2011 | 37      | 26 (70.2%)    | 12 (32.4%)       |
| October 2011   | 44      | 31 (70.5%)    | 17 (38.6%)       |

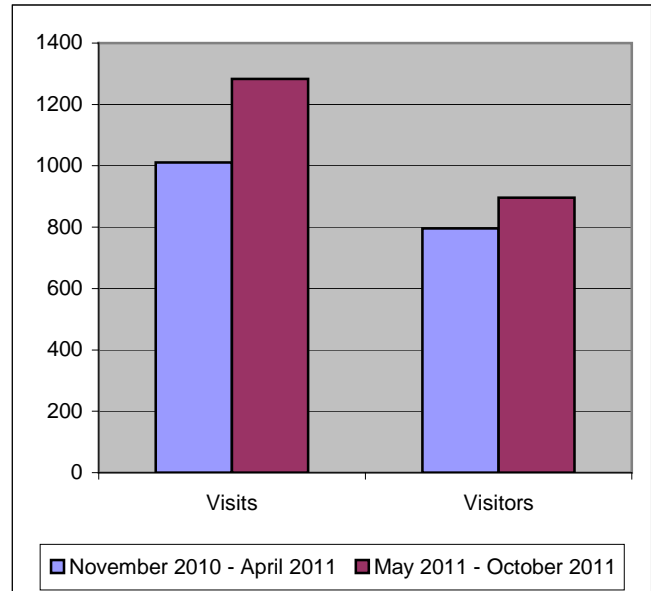
## Activity from 1 November 2010 to 31 October 2011

### Visits

In the period, there have been a total of 2,294 visits from 1,651 visitors, with a rise in visits and visitors in the last six months.

This increase in activity has been largely due to the new Commissioning Handbook Newsletter. The following table shows a peak in September and October for both visits in general, and visits from returning visitors.

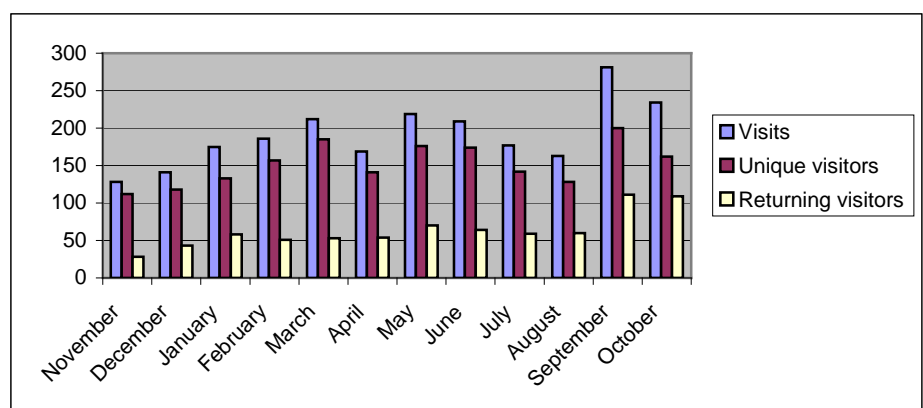
The second issue of the newsletter was issued on 1 November, so the visits resulting from this are not represented in these results.



To illustrate the impact of the second newsletter, activity on 1 November consisted of:

- 35 visits from 33 unique visitors, compared to 17 visits from 14 unique visitors the day before
- Pages highlighted in the newsletter were:
  - 8.2 Examples of search strategies relating to Ask an Expert – 20 page views
  - Home page – 14 page views
  - 3.1 Clinical Commissioning Groups – 13 page views

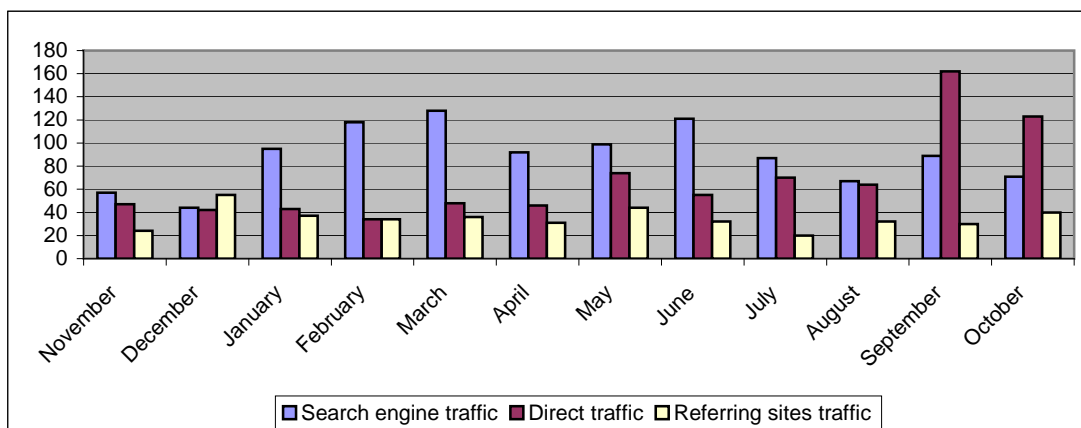
Over the year, activity has varied, with the usual dip in July and August, and a marked increase in September and October prompted by the new term and the newsletters.



### Traffic sources

In the last report, we highlighted the need to increase traffic from direct visitors and referring sites, as search engine traffic is not likely to be made up of our target visitors. The introduction of the newsletters coincides with a major change in where our visitors come from, direct traffic increasing substantially in September and

October. Work is still needed to increase the traffic from referring sites, eg NHS Networks Commissioning Zone (see above), but this trend is very positive.



### Concluding remarks

- The work done on the Handbook and newsletters has had a very positive impact on the use of the Handbook, resulting in improvements in access to new resources, and an increase of visitors within our target group.
- The collaboration with the “Ask and Expert” pilot has been very positive, providing a way to share searches to other librarians.
- In order to capitalise on the improvements made to content and activity, work should continue on content development, newsletter production and other promotion.

### Recommendations

At the last meeting, it was agreed that SHALL would fund the Handbook for a second six month period, from 1 June 2011 to 30 November 2011.

It is recommended that SHALL continues to fund the development of the Handbook for a further six months at a cost of £1,750.

Sharon Riddle, Anne Gray and Helen Bingham  
November 2011

## Appendix 1

Article submitted for publication in HLG Newsletter December 2011

### **Commissioning Handbook for Librarians – where is it going?**

The Commissioning Handbook for Librarians at <http://commissioning.pbworks.com/> is a wiki based resource that has been developed by – and for – the NHS library community to support NHS staff involved in the commissioning of health services.

The aim of the Handbook is to provide a working collection which contributors regard as key resources and good starting–points for investigation as well as examples of best practice amongst library services. It was created to fulfil a need recognised by librarians who were increasingly being asked to find out about service development, and retrieve service specifications, and information about models of service developed by other trusts. Answers to these questions lie deep in Board papers, government documents, reports and case studies – the ‘grey literature’ which is not readily retrieved from traditional library resources or databases. Colleagues recognised that this was a new area for most librarians and this led to discussions about the quality of the service they were providing, and how it could be improved and shared? The answer came in the form of a wiki – one of the new online collaborative tools which can be accessed by all, developed and maintained on a shoestring and is flexible enough to be adapted as the landscape changes. (For a detailed description of the early development of the Handbook see the article by Alison Price<sup>1</sup>)

The structure of the Handbook reflects the stages of the commissioning cycle and was guided by World Class Commissioning, at the time a new government approach to commissioning of health service in which evidence based practice and knowledge management was key.<sup>2</sup> When the Handbook was conceived Specialist Collections around Commissioning and Health Management were available via the National Library for Health. These were key collections of resources compiled by the Kings Fund and the Handbook aimed to compliment, not duplicate, these collections giving librarians both a supplementary place to look and a place to share their findings with others.

Following a rapid development phase the Handbook (then known as the Commissioning wiki) went live in late 2008. Since then the landscape of NHS primary care in England has changed radically following the election of a new coalition government, the mothballing of the World Class Commissioning initiative, introduction of the Health & Social Care Bill heralding GP consortia and then Clinical Commissioning Groups. In some cases, the radical restructure of PCTs and SHAs has been accompanied by the loss of some primary care librarian posts, and the services they offered. In addition the dispersal of the former NLH Health Management and Commissioning Specialist Collections across NHS Evidence has left librarians and health managers without ready access to key collections at a time of major change across the NHS. Primary care clinicians, most of whom have little or no previous experience in service development, are asking questions relating to commissioning and management of services. Library and information services must be prepared to pick up these questions from the clinicians in their new roles to support evidence based development of high quality services and to brief clinicians

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<sup>1</sup> The Commissioning Handbook: dynamic collaboration, Alison Price  
Inform: newsletter of IfM Healthcare, 2910, v20(2), p14-18, <http://ifmh.org.uk/commwiki.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> World Class Commissioning - Vision, DH 2007  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/dr\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_080953.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/dr_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_080953.pdf)

on their new role. Further, librarians will want to demonstrate the contribution they can make in the new commissioning support landscape. Because of its flexibility the Handbook is ideally placed to provide practical support to information professionals - a new page around the coalition government health policies and another on Clinical Commissioning Groups have been added to reflect political changes on the ground.

One of the original aims of the Handbook was to provide a place to share searches and strategies which may of interest to others, not as examples of best practice but rather as a means of sharing learning amongst librarians, enabling improvement in knowledge and skills across this emerging area. In practice few searches have been put forward – whether through lack of time, lack of confidence, or because searches have not been considered to be of interest to others is unclear. However involvement in the Ask an Expert service at <http://www.pcc-cic.org.uk/ask-an-expert> is a key development to support collaborative working and to raise the profile of libraries to commissioners. NHS Library and Knowledge Services from across the country have joined with NHS Primary Care Commissioning ([See http://www.pcc.nhs.uk](http://www.pcc.nhs.uk)) and the South East Coast Quality Observatory to pilot this new online help desk for NHS Commissioners who have questions about data sets, contracts, rules of competition and procurement as well as evidence from research. Library services from across England have volunteered to take questions from NHS staff in their locality and hopefully form new links between commissioners and their local NHS libraries. The resulting reports are being shared through the Handbook. See <http://commissioning.pbworks.com/08-2--Examples-of-search-strategies>

Development of the Handbook is under the guidance of a Steering Group and regional champions from each SHA. The Handbook initially benefited from some funding from NLH, and later SHALL for project management, administrative and website support. This was particularly important in the initial development phase, and to ensure that the pages are kept up to date to a standard expected from a group of information professionals. In recent months a large number of broken links to the Commissioning and Health Management Specialist Collections have been removed. With the changes to SHAs and library services the future of funding is uncertain.

Over the past year there have been nearly 2,000 visitors to the Handbook, over 300 of whom have visited 9 or more times. If this is a useful tool worth revisiting, it is important that librarians maintain and develop it, supporting our ongoing work with commissioners of the future.

See the latest additions to the Handbook by signing up for the **Commissioning Handbook for Librarians Newsletter** here: <http://eepurl.com/fT8xn>

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## **Commissioning – Internet sites of interest**

### **Commissioning Handbook for Librarians**

<http://commissioning.pbworks.com/> - the librarians' resource.

### **The Commissioning Zone**

[www.networks.nhs.uk/commissioning](http://www.networks.nhs.uk/commissioning)

A collaborative portal for clinicians, managers and anyone else involved in commissioning bringing together the best sources and resources. Resources are assigned to Policy & guidance, Reports & analysis, Data & tools and Resources. The weekly update is a good way to keep up to date with the latest publications and government documents.

### **Quality MK – Knowledge Zone**

[http://www.qualitymk.nhs.uk/knowledge\\_zone.htm](http://www.qualitymk.nhs.uk/knowledge_zone.htm)

A collection of pages, including Hot Topics, Where to find, and alerting services from the NHS primary care librarians in Milton Keynes to support their emerging Clinical Commissioning Group.

### **Health and Care**

<http://healthandcare.dh.gov.uk/>

News and resources from the Department of Health around developments in health and social care.

### **RCGP Centre for Commissioning**

<http://commissioning.rcgp.org.uk/>

Support for GPs from the RCGP

### **QIPP - Quality, Improvement Productivity and Prevention**

<http://www.qualitymk.nhs.uk/default-ContentID-4034.htm>

A collection of useful resources around the QIPP agenda – the Department of Health's guiding principles to help the NHS deliver its quality and efficiency commitment.

### **NHS Networks – Long Term Conditions**

<http://www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/commissioning-for-long-term-conditions/> -

Resources supporting the government's agenda around Long term conditions

### **Primary care libraries google group**

<http://groups.google.com/group/primary-care-libraries>

An email group of librarians and knowledge managers who support primary care and public health. The goal of the group is to exchange information and ideas, pose questions, share good practice and promote collaborative working. A low activity but high quality email group.