Oxford Health
NHS Foundation Trust

Library Newsletter

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The Library Team as a Learning Team

There is a persistent and rather romanticised notion that working in a library means spending long, peaceful hours reading or staring contemplatively into the distance. Those of us who work within healthcare libraries know that nothing could be further from the truth. Healthcare professionals operate in intense, fast-paced environments—and a healthcare library mirrors this pace in its own way. Librarians, much like clinicians, must engage in continuous reflection, adapt to evolving demands, and remain committed to professional development to ensure our services remain relevant, responsive and robust.

Within Oxford Health, we navigate a constant flow of organisational and NHSE communications. As Assistant Library Manager, my day-to-day role involves overseeing operations across both digital and physical spaces. Every decision—whether about online access, in-person support, or the configuration of our systems—directly affects the clinicians who rely on timely, accurate information. Our electronic resources must remain stable and accessible, and our systems must work seamlessly to ensure that the right information is available the moment it is needed. This includes point-of-care tools such as **BMJ Best Practice**, which many teams depend on to support clinical decision-making.

Our small team of eight—most of whom work part-time—covers the Littlemore, Warneford and Whiteleaf libraries. Like all teams in the Trust, we are continually striving to use our resources wisely while prioritising the wellbeing of our staff. This has become even more challenging with the rapid evolution of technologies that influence how healthcare professionals learn, practise and collaborate. In such a landscape, the role of a healthcare library is not static: it must evolve alongside the organisation it serves.

This is where reflection becomes more than a professional requirement; it becomes an essential practice. We cannot cling to old ways of working in a world that is continuously shifting around us. Nor can we sustain "business as usual" when resources tighten and expectations grow. Reflection provides the space to question, adapt and innovate. Crucially, it is an active process—far removed from the stereotype of passive contemplation. Our team mobilises knowledge constantly, and we do so with intention and purpose.

Reflecting as a Team: What It Looks Like in Practice

Reflection is woven into the daily rhythm of our work. Whole-team meetings, outreach librarian discussions, critical appraisal sessions and communities of practice all provide opportunities to surface challenges and share expertise. We record CPD in a shared spreadsheet to highlight areas of growing expertise within the team, and we maintain an MS Teams channel dedicated to developments in AI—an area rapidly reshaping healthcare information practice.

Reflection also happens in our 1:1 meetings, which form an important part of both PDR and collaborative project work. And, importantly, reflection happens through play. Board games such as ***The Stress Game*** have become valuable tools for exploring communication, teamwork and resilience. At our most recent in-person meeting, this approach prompted meaningful discussion and connection—proving that reflective practice does not need to be solemn to be effective.



Book Clubs: Building Connection Through Learning

Our **book clubs** are another way we foster reflection and connection, bringing together staff who might never meet in their day-to-day roles. These sessions create space for shared learning and personal insight. One participant recently reflected:

"I think the 30-minute time slot is perfect to be able to attend in our lunch break. It is a great opportunity to have a book to focus on (in the digitalised world we live in nowadays). I like the fact that we can choose to read and/or listen via audiobooks. I like feeling connected within a group—to be able to listen to different views, share our own reflections, and feel that sense of connectedness."

This kind of feedback captures precisely why reflective spaces matter: not just for learning, but for human connection.

Supporting Reflection Across the Trust

As a team committed to learning, we want to extend these opportunities across Oxford Health. Many teams tell us they value time to think, learn and reflect together—and we are here to help support that.

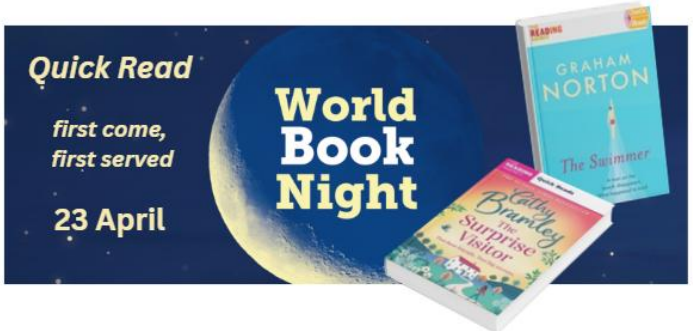
You are warmly encouraged to make full use of the services we offer:

- Invite an **Outreach Librarian** to join your team meeting
- Borrow a **board game** to spark conversation and reflection
- Request a **library induction** for new or existing staff
- Include librarians in your **conferences and events**
- Ask for support to set up a **book club** for your team or area of interest
- Explore **knowledge mobilisation tools** tailored to your directorate, department or team—no matter its size

Our purpose is simple: to help people learn, reflect and work more effectively together. In a dynamic healthcare environment, these practices are not optional—they are essential. And we are proud to play our part in supporting them. Contact us if you want to find more about how we can help you.

World Book Night 2026 – Free Books for Patients!

World Book Night takes place on 23rd April and this year we have once again received funding from Oxford Health Charity to enable us to provide books for patients across the Trust. We have a limited number of the following "Quick Read" titles available on a first-come, first-served basis:



In order to help you decide on suitability for your patients, you can find out further information about each title here:
The Swimmer
The Surprise Visitor

Please note: These titles are suitable for young adults / adults only.

If you would like some copies to give to service users (particularly those who don't read for pleasure and who may have difficulty accessing reading materials), please email us at library.enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk.

You can request either title, or multiple copies of the same title if you will be using the books for a patient reading group.

Your help is required to build understanding of needs for access to evidence in the NHS

The **national team for Knowledge and Library Services** are researching how NHS staff currently access and use evidence. We have completed interviews with people from all parts of the team and in all settings across the NHS in England. The next phase of the research will seek to validate the needs that have been identified as a result.

We want to understand the picture for clinical and non-clinical staff, students and apprentices, those in regular contact with their Knowledge and Library Service and those who are not.

You can read about previous user research that informed the creation of the Knowledge and Library Hub and be assured that your input can make the difference.

If you can help, please complete this brief survey

Contact us

Require an article or a book? Want to learn how to perform a quicker and more effective search on specific topics? Need a literature search for guidelines, case studies, research papers or a quality improvement project? Want to keep up to date with the latest information in your field of interest? Contact us