

NHS Scotland libraries value and impact report 2024/25

Introduction

This report presents an overview of the value and impact of NHS Scotland Knowledge and Library Services, with a particular focus on the contribution of literature searches and evidence summaries to health and social care organisations.

This report includes a range of impact case studies that showcase how library services have directly influenced outcomes in areas such direct patient care, CPD & education, policy development and research support.

In addition, the report includes annual data from April 2024 to March 2025, detailing activity across both physical and digital library services.

Library activity

Physical library services

The figures presented below summarises data collected from all participating NHS Boards with library services across Scotland. **Note:** the data below came from 15 health boards as not all services are currently collecting this data.

In 2024-25:

- In 2024-25 over 1300 literature searches, evidence summaries or evidence synthesis were provided.
- 160 current awareness bulletins were created, many for a national audience.
- 749 training and outreach activities were undertaken.

Digital library services

In March 2025 the number of eligible users with an OpenAthens account totalled 37,186.

In the past 12 months, OpenAthens account holders conducted:

- 572,504 evidence summary page views
- 1,333,559 journal article downloads
- 698,939 database searches
- 1,128,465 medicines information section downloads
- 84,187 ebook chapter downloads

Use of The Knowledge Network Library Search between April 2024-March 2025:

- Number of sessions – 246,396*
- Number of searches – 363,036**

*Sessions are a period of time in which a user interacts with Library Search

**Searches of the basic, advanced search and basic search with pre-filter

Impact case studies

The variety of search requests and work that the library services delivered demonstrates the possible ways that the services can support the NHS in Scotland.

The impact case studies generally fall into four broad themes, although some span more than one.

1. **Direct patient care:** these studies examined a clinical related question that would address practice within a clinical area and possibly a change in policy.
2. **Continuing professional development and education:** this included how a service assisted a journal club or how a literature search impacted on a career framework.
3. **Policy development:** This covered national and local organisations and was looking at reviewing policy and guidelines in a subject area. It included public health questions, national reviews for emergency medicine and improvement in prescribing.
4. **Research support:** this consisted of a background search to allow for future research to take place.

Originally developed by NHS England, the case study templates have been adapted with their permission.

Each case study is presented as a short vignette below, with more visually formatted versions available in the appendix.

Public Health Scotland: Vaccine preventable diseases:

Question: The vaccinations and immunisations team wanted to set up a monthly literature search for peer reviewed papers for topics related to vaccine preventable diseases (VPDs).

What was done: The Knowledge and Library service helped the team to form and refine a search and assisted them to effectively manage how they accessed materials.

Outcomes: The VPD team can now quickly access up to date knowledge helping them to horizon scan for possible future developments in the field.

What was said:

Through horizon scanning our group can keep up to date with scientific developments in our area. The knowledge, learning and awareness will help the team address potential outbreaks related to VPDs and inform our professional work."

Ariadni Kouzeli and Allan James. Healthcare Scientists, Public Health Scotland

NES: Nursing and midwifery career framework

Question: NHS Education for Scotland was creating a national clinical supervision framework for nurses and midwives.

What was done: A literature search established the best current evidence as well as confirming existing evidence. It highlighted how current frameworks do not apply to education and development needs.

Outcomes: The search results led to a stakeholder consultation and ensured the framework highlighted the need for clinical supervision to be culturally responsive.

What was said:

We've included a reflection cycle toolkit for people to be able to discuss their results in a way that's more meaningful and that probes a bit deeper and that gives people an opportunity to have that 'supportive challenge' of the answers that they've provided.

Amy Smith, Practice Educator. NHS Education for Scotland

NHS State Hospital for Scotland: Outcome measures: clinician-reported and patient-reported

Question: There was a request to look at the range of outcome measures that could be used within forensic mental health in order to review the process currently used.

What was done: A literature search was undertaken to examine the range of prevalent measures used in forensic settings, including specific tools and measures that can be used, both clinician- and patient-reported. This would support other ongoing work involving the feedback from other disciplines and patients about the tools currently used to find out what outcome measures are important for them.

Outcomes: The literature search identified specific forensic mental health outcomes measures including a specific forensic tool that is not currently used. The search results informed the enquirers to determine which measures to use going forward.

NHS Highland: Planning Medical Support Facilities for Diving in Remote Locations

Question: A rural GP requested help in sourcing material on planning medical support facilities for diving in remote locations with or without hyperbaric stretcher or recompression chamber, in order to gain further qualifications in this field. Reference documents relating to UK and international was of particular interest.

What was done: The unique collection of print diving resources was searched relevant sections were provided. Further searching also located pertinent material from statutory bodies overseeing this type of emergency. A literature search with accessible links was provided along with details of possible other sources.

Outcomes: The unique collection of diving medicine resources provided key materials and the requestor received certification in this field.

What was said:

“You were a huge help, and I’m delighted to advise that I was awarded an MBA (with distinction)... Many thanks - I suspected it would be tricky, hence enlisted your expertise. Many thanks indeed for all your work in this. Really appreciated.”

NHS Forth Valley: Bilateral traumatic shoulder dislocation vs unilateral shoulder dislocation

Question: An orthopaedic medical team were investigating the incidence, management and complication rates of simultaneous bilateral anterior shoulder dislocations verses unilateral dislocations. The aim was to identify published case reports and reviews to determine if bilateral injuries carry a higher risk of complications. The results would also support the discussion section of a case report and literature review.

What was done: The library service undertook a literature search on behalf of the team and provided relevant case studies/series regarding simultaneous bilateral shoulder dislocations.

Outcomes: The results allowed the team to create a treatment algorithm and write a case report. It highlighted potential gaps in the recognition and diagnosis of complications of simultaneous bilateral anterior shoulder dislocations and supported recommendations on care, contributing to improved patient outcomes and future research in this under-reported area.

NHS Borders: Support for interprofessional simulation presentation

Question: Evidence was required for a seminar presentation on interprofessional simulation.

What was done: The Clinical Librarian undertook a literature search. The staff member was able to quickly access relevant papers from The Knowledge Network.

Outcomes: The seminar presentation was presented and positively received.

What was said:

...they were instrumental in helping me source high-quality evidence for a presentation to NES on interprofessional simulation. Their expertise and responsiveness made a real difference. Over the years, the library has been a constant source of support ... Whether it was finding resources, navigating databases, or simply offering a calm and welcoming space to study, the team has always gone above and beyond.

Nurse, NHS Borders

NHS Lanarkshire: Social media messaging

Question: The team wanted to know if using social media was an effective platform for encouraging women aged 45-50 to attend breast screening appointments.

What was done: The librarian undertook a review of the recent research evidence, and the results highlighted the useful nature of social media for this type of health messaging.

Outcomes: The team were able to plan a campaign along with focus groups using this evidence, knowing they were using their time and resources effectively.

What was said:

“...used the summary to create focus group questions and the evidence provided confirmed that social media was a good option for targeting this group.”

Jane Paton. Health Improvement Team Leader, NHS Lanarkshire

NHS Western Isles: Risks to female staff administering antineoplastic and cytotoxic drugs

Question: The team wanted to know if there was any recent evidence on the risks to female staff who administering antineoplastic and cytotoxic drugs.

What was done: A literature search was undertaken to look for the most recent evidence on this topic.

Outcomes: Reassured staff that the present advice they were following safe practice currently. They will be able to update risk assessments evidence considering the evidence supplied.

What was said:

“Very useful and good to see more articles available on this subject. Due to work pressures I usually have to do this in my own time.

Thank you for helping me and I'll be recommending this service to other SCNs and colleagues in the organisation.”

NHS Highland: A Case of Pleural Effusion Secondary to Listeria Monocytogenes

Question: Prevalence of cases and underlying factors such as cirrhosis in pleural effusion secondary to Listeria monocytogenes.

What was done: This condition is uncommon, so a literature search was undertaken, and several relevant articles were retrieved.

Outcomes: The medical team were able to use the information as part of their treatment plan. It was highlighted to the medical team that this case could be a possible topic for a BMJ Case Reports, and the resident medic is now looking at preparing a case report for submission.

What was said:

Thank you very much for your help!

NHS Borders: New Diagnostic Pathway

Question: A GP wanted the latest information about the effect of prostaglandins in the pain of endometriosis

What was done: A literature review was undertaken to find recent research evidence into this

Outcomes: The GP decided on a different diagnostic pathway for the patient.

What was said:

“Thank you very much, you were amazing”

Maude Donkers, GP, NHS Borders

NHS Ayrshire and Arran: Review of national Emergency Department performance

Question: The medical director requested a literature search to support a national review into Emergency Department performance since 2020.

What was done: A literature search was undertaken and results provided within 2 days of the request being placed.

Outcomes: The search provided quick and easy access to the materials and was shared outside of the NHS Ayrshire and Arran to others involved in the review.

What was said:

“The service is outstanding, and agile and supports access to wider knowledge and understanding.... Access to the original articles are linked from the search results and, overall, it is a massive additionality to clinical problem solving.”

Crawford McGuffie, Medical Director, NHS Ayrshire & Arran.

NHS Borders: Staff burnout and impact of Covid19 on Patient Centred Care

Question: Staff burnout and the impact of Covid19 on Patient Centred Care.

What was done: The service provided a rapid appraisal of evidence and provided access to the relevant literature papers and books to assist a staff member in their training and research.

Outcomes: The staff member was able to access the most up to date and relevant literature rapidly, which was a benefit to their academic studies and research.

What was said:

NHS Borders Library service is incredibly helpful, approachable, and knowledgeable.

I am very grateful for this service and will no doubt use the service throughout my course and dissertation.

NHS Lanarkshire: Efficacy of prescribing incentive schemes for General Practitioners

Question: NHS Lanarkshire were examining ways of improving prescribing practices and prescribing costs. The requestor wanted to find out if there were incentive schemes and the ways they impacted, particularly around inequality, and if there was evidence of long-term, sustained gains from the use of incentive schemes.

What was done: The Library and Knowledge Service undertook an initial search of the literature. Further work was undertaken to provide a summary of the information based on key papers chosen by the requestor.

Outcomes: The immediate impact was that the results were used to underpin a paper. In the longer term it may help decisions on incentive schemes within the board. The search and summary has informed the information given the board is an informed decision.

What was said:

..one of the immediate impacts was to reassure me that there wasn't a wealth of evidence that I wasn't aware of and that was really important...It helped consolidate my knowledge around the current evidence...Another impact that it had was it helped me manage my workload"

Veronica Rainey, Associate Medical Director, GP staff. NHS Lanarkshire

NHS Borders: Emergency department full capacity protocol (FCP) and the effect of overcrowding on nursing staff

Question: What is the use of the Full Capacity Protocol (FCP) and how does the impact of emergency department (ED) overcrowding on nursing staff, and why staff may not use the FCP.

What was done: The Clinical Librarian and staff member discussed the question and identified a base line of current knowledge and the gaps. Literature searches of several databases and grey literature were completed on the topic.

Outcomes: The search gave access to relevant and useful documents on the topics of ED overcrowding. The review assisted the staff member to complete an MSc as well as have useful further information for ongoing review of ED.

What was said:

Throughout my MSc I sought advice from the Library service, particularly for literature searching and referencing. Without their guidance I would have found the process extremely challenging. The expertise and professionalism of the staff, was outstanding, ... I would not hesitate to contact them again for future advise and coaching.

Nurse, Clinical Governance/ Patient Safety, NHS Borders

NHS Tayside: Supporting NMAHP professional and practice development

Question: The Library and Knowledge Service was involved in projects to help NMAHP staff get quick and easy access to professional and practice support.

What was done:

1. To assist nursing staff stay ahead of developments in clinical and care situations the Librarian helped the teams identify Clinicalskills.net as a learning resource to support their learning and practice. The Librarian also facilitated the implementation of a Single-Sign-On process.
2. To support the implementation of NMC Future Nurse Standards the Librarians assisted the teams to develop an educational support tool and facilitated editorial access.

3. The Librarian contributes to a Professional & Practice Development course assisting staff to highlighting evidence-based practice, and tools to improve decision making.

Outcomes: NMAHP staff have better access to resources supporting their professional and clinical skills development. By streamlining access to resources, the staff have saved valuable time. Highlighting evidence-based resources and supporting the development of learning tools has enabled teams to ensure that the best evidence is used in clinical support decisions.

Public Health Scotland: HIA impact on commercial determinants of health and the wellbeing economy

Question: The requestor was writing a paper on whether a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) could help tackle commercial determinants of health and support a wellbeing economy? The paper would also be used to inform HIA guidance.

What was done: A literature search was undertaken for the requestor.

Outcomes: The search has informed thinking about the topic and resulted in amendments to Public Health Scotland HIA guidance. It has also led to Public Health Wales revising their HIA guidance based on the findings.

The academic paper based on this work was accepted for publication and will form part of a special issue, which is intended to contribute to the evidence base for the development of the WHO's first Global Report on the Commercial Determinants of Health report.

What was said:

"This all saved me some time, enabled a robust review process and helped to ensure a higher quality paper that met best practice standards for this kind of review."

"Through the search I identified papers and a research programme that I was previously unaware of and is relevant to my work."

NHS Borders: Prescribing in Advanced Nurse Practitioners

Question: Decision making in advanced nurse practitioners (ANP) prescribing. With particular focus on prescribing antibiotics, review of how the ANP make prescribing decisions, and if there are differences prescribing decisions of medical staff compared to ANPs.

What was done: The Clinical Librarian discussed what was needed with the staff member to review search strategies that had been developed and advise on any suitable improvements.

Outcomes: The staff member found the review to the developed strategies were very thorough and improved the overall piece of work they contributed to.

What was said:

An essential service to NHS employees who are out of practice in research and keen to learn. The service the library provided even warrants a mention in my dissertation as the robust literature search ensures my systematic literature review is thorough and answers my research question.

Advanced Nurse Practitioner, NHS Borders

Public Health Scotland: Dog bites

Question: The requestors were investigating dog bites, focusing on incidence and epidemiology of dog bites and/or dog-related injuries in the UK, including costs to the NHS; and interventions that prevent dog bites.

What was done: The service provided a rapid appraisal of evidence for a strategic injury issue and to support a funding application to conduct further research into the subject.

An initial search was followed up by an evidence summary of the relevant materials identified by the team. Access to a reference management tool was facilitated.

Outcomes: The search and summary supports a funding application to allow further research to look at ways of preventing future injuries of this nature.

What was said:

"[The summary] saved a load of consultant time and really helped focus our work by

providing the best evidence rapidly...Great work, a pleasure to work with and an essential service that I highly value. Thank you so much!"

Stephen Bridgman, Consultant in Public Health Medicine. Public Health Scotland

NHS Forth Valley: Food status and the milk supply in breastfeeding women

Question: A search was requested to assist national and international groups looking at maternal and infant food insecurity and if these aspects affected the milk supply in breastfeeding women. The groups needed an evidence base and to know where the gaps were so they could develop policies and guidelines on this topic.

What was done: A literature search was undertaken.

Outcomes: The requestor indicated that the impact so far were that the issues raised by the search have been recognised in NICE guidelines and in a Scottish Government toolkit. A possible future impact is the search results will support the writing an academic series for a leading journal.

NHS Borders: Literature searches to inform care plans for CAMHS staff

Question: There are ongoing requests for literature searches on topics related to rare client presentations in a rural CAMHS service. Some of the case presentations are

complex and severe. Help is requested to find the best, most current evidence to support care planning in these cases.

What was done: A number of literature searches have been provided.

Outcomes: The clinician is assisted in ensuring management of young people is in line with best practice, as well as being tailored to individual need.

What was said:

I not infrequently ask our Library service for their help;.. The sources have been relevant, found quickly, and hugely helpful to ensure management of young people is in line with best practice, as well as being tailored to individual need. I am always recommending our local librarian!

Psychiatrist, CAMHS Services, NHS Borders

NHS Lanarkshire: PiCC line flushing best practice

Question: An update to the current NHS Lanarkshire practice on PiCC line flushing required updated in order to bring it in line with NIVAS (National Infusion and Vascular Access Society) guidance and best practice. The search also included tunnelled central venous catheter flushing and saline flushing off central venous catheters.

What was done: The Library and Knowledge Service staff undertook a literature search and summary which provided the evidence to support policy development.

Outcomes: The search and summary provided the evidence to support a practice change and a new board guideline is being developed. The change will also lead to cost savings across the board and reduce variation.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde: GGC Digital Skills and Literacy

Programme - Training sessions on M365 and Teams

Question: The Digital Skills and Literacy Programme identified the need to offer further support for staff using Microsoft apps as part of the NHS Scotland provision.

What was done: Knowledge Services developed 60-minute sessions on An Introduction to MS Teams and an Introduction to M365. These ran one a month each between Sept 2024 and March 2025.

Recordings were made available to staff who were unable to attend, and useful supplementary resources to support skills development were signposted.

Outcomes: At present 159 people have attended the training and feedback has indicated that attendees found the sessions improved their knowledge as a result of the sessions.

What was said:

"I can experiment with it and not be afraid to click on certain areas for a more in-depth look"

"I feel I understand the use of each app a bit better and how they work in conjunction"

Session attendees

NHS Fife: Adrenaline versus Noradrenaline in post cardiac arrest

Question: A survey suggested a mixed split in the use of each drug post cardiac arrest. The Emergency Medicine team (EMT) wanted to conduct a systematic review to define the preference for one drug over the other.

What was done? The librarian collaborated with the team to scope out the requirements for a literature search, including gaps in evidence. A search strategy was developed and applied to relevant databases. The large number of results were collated in an easily accessible format to allow the research team to review them in a systematic way.

Outcomes: The impact was the establishment of a clinical equipoise for this question. It was concluded that this is a beneficial research area. The process enabled the research team to link with colleagues in their organisation and nationally, as well as

providing medical students the opportunity to gain research skills. The Emergency Medical team will present their paper at a national conference and have succeeded in raising the profile of their work.

What was said:

“Thank you for your skills and expertise and how easy you made the process for us. The results were so much more accessible for busy staff who are stretched for time.”

Rajendra Raman, Emergency Medicine Consultant, NHS Fife

Appendix

Public Health Scotland: Vaccine preventable diseases:



NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care

Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPD's)

The vaccinations and immunisations team wanted to set up a monthly literature search for peer reviewed papers for topics related to vaccine preventable diseases (VPDs).

The Knowledge and Library service helped the team to form and refine a search, and assisted them to effectively manage how they accessed materials.

The VPD team can now quickly access up to date knowledge helping them to horizon scan for possible future developments in the field.



Through horizon scanning our group can keep up to date with scientific developments in our area. The knowledge, learning and awareness will help the team address potential outbreaks related to VPDs and inform our professional work."

Ariadni Kouzeli and Allan James. Healthcare Scientists, Public Health Scotland

NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care



Clinical supervision framework for nursing and midwifery staff

NHS Education for Scotland was creating a national clinical supervision framework for nurses and midwives.

A literature search established the best current evidence as well as confirming existing evidence. It highlighted how current frameworks do not apply to education and development needs.

The search results led to a stakeholder consultation and ensured the framework highlighted the need for clinical supervision to be culturally responsive.

We've included a reflection cycle toolkit for people to be able to discuss their results in a way that's more meaningful and that probes a bit deeper and that gives people an opportunity to have that 'supportive challenge' of the answers that they've provided.

Amy Smith, Practice Educator. NHS Education for Scotland

NHS State Hospital for Scotland: Outcome measures: clinician-reported and patient-reported

**The State
Hospital**

**NHS Scotland Librarians
Adding value & impacting care**

Outcome measures: clinician-reported and patient-reported

There was a request to look at the range of outcome measures that could be used within forensic mental health in order to review the process currently used.

A literature search was undertaken to examine the range of prevalent measures used in forensic settings, including specific tools and measures that can be used, both clinician- and patient-reported. This would support other ongoing work involving the feedback from other disciplines and patients about the tools currently used to find out what outcome measures are important for them.

The literature search identified specific forensic mental health outcomes measures including a specific forensic tool that is not currently used. The search results informed the enquirers to determine which measures to use going forward.



NHS Highland: Planning Medical Support Facilities for Diving in Remote Locations

NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care



Planning Medical Support Facilities for Diving in Remote Locations

A rural GP requested help in sourcing material on planning medical support facilities for diving in remote locations with or without hyperbaric stretcher or recompression chamber, in order to gain further qualifications in this field.

The collection of print diving resources held by the library was searched and relevant sections provided along with pertinent material from statutory bodies overseeing this type of emergency. A literature search with accessible links was provided along with details of possible other sources. The unique collection of diving medicine resources provided key materials and the requestor received certification in this field.

"You were a huge help, and I'm delighted to advise that I was awarded an MBA (with distinction)... Many thanks - I suspected it would be tricky, hence enlisted your expertise. Many thanks indeed for all your work in this. Really appreciated."

NHS Forth Valley: Bilateral traumatic shoulder dislocation vs unilateral shoulder dislocation



NHS Scotland Librarians
Adding value & impacting care

Bilateral traumatic shoulder dislocation vs unilateral shoulder dislocation

An orthopaedic medical team were investigating the incidence, management and complication rates of simultaneous bilateral anterior shoulder dislocations verses unilateral dislocations. The aim was to identify published case reports and reviews to determine if bilateral injuries carry a higher risk of complications. The results would also support the discussion section of a case report and literature review.

The library service undertook a literature search on behalf of the team and provided relevant case studies/series regarding simultaneous bilateral shoulder dislocations.

The results allowed the team to create a treatment algorithm and write a case report. It highlighted potential gaps in the recognition and diagnosis of complications of simultaneous bilateral anterior shoulder dislocations and supported recommendations on care, contributing to improved patient outcomes and future research in this under-reported area.



NHS Borders: Support for interprofessional simulation presentation

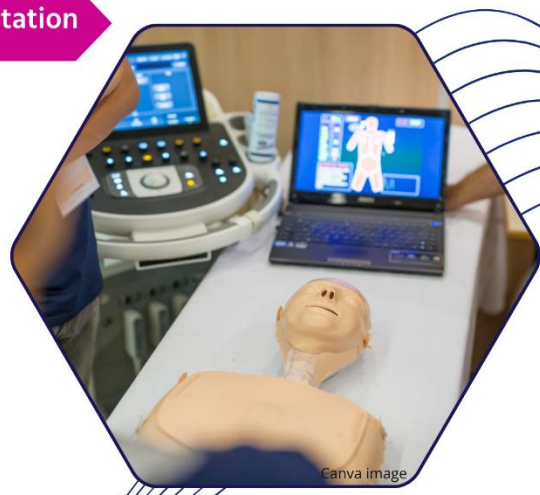


NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care

Support for interprofessional simulation presentation

Evidence was required for a presentation on the topic of interprofessional simulation. The Clinical Librarian held a reference interview and then undertook a literature search on the topic.

The results were sent to the staff member who was able to quickly access relevant papers from The Knowledge Network. The presentation was for a seminar session at a national organisation and was positively received by the audience.



"Their expertise and responsiveness made a real difference. Over the years, the library has been a constant source of support ... Whether it was finding resources, navigating databases, or simply offering a calm and welcoming space to study, the team has always gone above and beyond."

Nurse, NHS Borders

NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care



Social media messaging in breast screening

The team wanted to know if using social media was an effective platform for encouraging women aged 45-50 to attend breast screening appointments.

The librarian undertook a review of the recent research evidence and the results highlighted the useful nature of social media for this type of health messaging.

The team were able to plan a campaign along with focus groups using this evidence, knowing they were using their time and resources effectively.

"The summary gave me a good insight into the available evidence base which I then used to inform my project work...used the summary to create focus group questions and the evidence provided confirmed that social media was a good option for targeting this group."

Jane Paton. Health Improvement Team Leader, NHS Lanarkshire

NHS Western Isles: Risks to female staff administering antineoplastic and cytotoxic drugs

NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care



Risks to female staff administering antineoplastic and cytotoxic drugs?

The team wanted to know if there was any recent evidence on the risks to female staff who administering antineoplastic and cytotoxic drugs.

A literature search was undertaken to look for the most recent evidence on this topic.

The results of the search reassured staff that the present advice they were following safe practice currently. They will be able to update risk assessments evidence considering the evidence supplied.

"Very useful and good to see more articles available on this subject. Due to work pressures I usually have to do this in my own time. Thank you for helping me and I'll be recommending this service to other SCNs and colleagues in the organisation."

NHS Highland: A Case of Pleural Effusion Secondary to Listeria Monocytogenes



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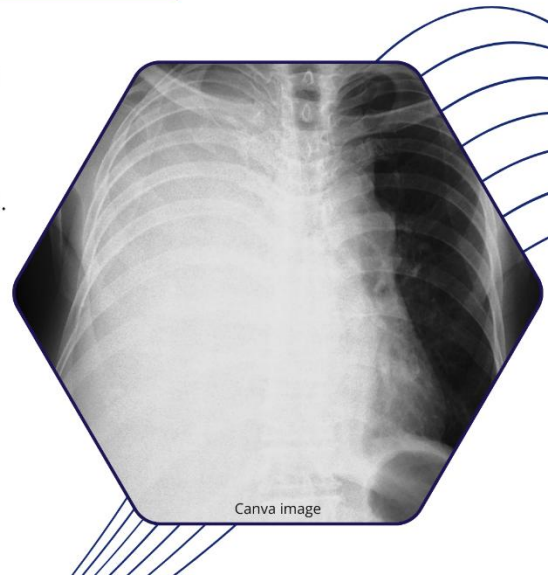
A Case of Pleural Effusion Secondary to Listeria Monocytogenes

Library support was requested on the prevalence of cases and underlying factors such as cirrhosis in pleural effusion secondary to Listeria monocytogenes.

The condition is uncommon, so a literature search was undertaken, and several relevant articles were retrieved.

The medical team were able to use the information as part of their treatment planning going forward.

It was highlighted to the medical team that this case could be a possible topic for a future BMJ Case Report. One of the staff is now looking at preparing a case report for submission.



NHS Borders: New Diagnostic Pathway



NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care

New Diagnostic Pathway

A General Practitioner wanted the latest information about the effect of prostaglandins in the pain of endometriosis.

The library service undertook a literature review to find the most recent research evidence into this topic. Following the literature search findings the General Practitioner decided on a different diagnostic pathway for the patient.



"Thank you very much, you were amazing" "
Maude Donkers, GP, NHS Borders

NHS Ayrshire and Arran: Review of national Emergency Department performance

NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care



A review of the emergency department performance since 2020

A literature search was requested by the Medical Director to help in a national review into Emergency Department performance since 2020.

A search was undertaken and results provided within 2 days of the request being placed.

The results provided quick and easy access to the materials and was shared outside of the NHS Ayrshire and Arran to others involved in the review.

The service is outstanding, and agile and supports access to wider knowledge and understanding. The searches are intuitive and incredibly well-presented. Access to the original articles are linked from the search results and, overall, it is a massive additionality to clinical problem solving."

Crawford McGuffie, Medical Director, NHS Ayrshire & Arran.

NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care



Staff burnout and impact of Covid19 on Patient Centred Care.

A literature search on staff burnout and the impact of Covid19 on Patient Centred Care was requested.

Library services provided a rapid appraisal of evidence as well as easy access to the relevant research articles and books. This assisted the staff member in their continued professional development.

The support from the library services allowed the staff member to access the most up to date and relevant literature rapidly, benefitting their academic studies and research.

"NHS Borders Library service is incredibly helpful, approachable, and knowledgeable.

I am very grateful for this service and will no doubt use the service throughout my course and dissertation. "

NHS Lanarkshire: Efficacy of prescribing incentive schemes for General Practitioners

NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care



NHS Scotland photo library

Efficacy of prescribing incentive schemes for General Practitioners

NHS Lanarkshire were examining ways of improving prescribing practices and prescribing costs. The requestor wanted to find out if there were incentive schemes, and the ways they impacted. Particular emphasis was on inequality, and evidence of long-term, sustained gains from the use of incentive schemes.

The results were used to underpin a board paper, assisting them to make informed decisions based on evidence. In the longer term it may help decisions on incentive schemes within the board.

"It helped consolidate my knowledge around the current evidence, raised awareness about the lack of evidence... it helped me manage my workload because [library services] took out quite a big piece of work that I don't really have time to do and summarised it really well."

Veronica Rainey, Associate Medical Director, GP staff, NHS Lanarkshire

NHS Borders: Emergency department full capacity protocol (FCP) and the effect of overcrowding on nursing staff

NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care



Emergency department full capacity protocol (FCP) & the effect of overcrowding on nursing staff

A staff member was researching the use of the Full Capacity Protocol and how overcrowding in Emergency Departments affect FCP usage among nursing staff. The Clinical Librarian and staff member discussed the question and identified a base line of current knowledge and the gaps. Literature searches of several databases and grey literature were completed on the topic.

The search gave access to relevant and useful documents on the topics of ED overcrowding. The review assisted the staff member to complete an MSc as well as have useful further information for ongoing review of ED.

"Without their guidance I would have found the process extremely challenging. The expertise and professionalism of the staff, was outstanding, ... I would not hesitate to contact them again for future advise and coaching."

Nurse, Clinical Governance/ Patient Safety, NHS Borders

NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care



Supporting NMAHP professional and practice development

The Library and Knowledge Service was involved in projects to help NMAHP staff get quick and easy access to professional and practice support. The Library Service:

- Assisted the implementation of Clinicalskills.net to support NMAHP learning and practice.
- Facilitated the development and access to an educational support tools for the team overseeing the NMC Future Nurse Standards.
- Contributes to a Professional & Practice Development course which highlights evidence-based practice, and tools to improve decision making.

NMAHP staff have better access to resources supporting their professional and clinical skills development. By streamlining access to resources, the staff have saved valuable time. Highlighting evidence-based resources and supporting the development of learning tools has enabled teams to ensure that the best evidence is used in clinical support decisions.

Public Health Scotland: HIA impact on commercial determinants of health and the wellbeing economy



NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care

Health Impact Assessments to support a wellbeing economy

A paper was being written for publication, and the paper would be used to inform Health Impact Assessment (HIA) guidance in Public Health Scotland (PHS).

A literature search was provided and has informed the development of guidance, resulting in the amendment of PHS HIA guidance and that in Public Health Wales.

The paper based on this work has been accepted in part thanks to the robust search strategy. It will form part of a special issue, which will contribute to the evidence base for the development of the World Health Organisations Commercial Determinants of Health report.



"It gave me confidence that the search was systematic and would identify the relevant papers saved me some time...I identified papers and a research programme that I was previously unaware of..."

Dr Maragret Douglas, Consultant in Public Health Medicine. Public Health Scotland

NHS Borders: Prescribing in Advanced Nurse Practitioners



NHS Scotland Librarians Adding value & impacting care

Prescribing in Advanced Nurse Practitioners

Decision making in advanced nurse practitioners (ANP) prescribing. With particular focus on prescribing antibiotics, review of how the ANP make prescribing decisions, and if there are differences prescribing decisions of medical staff compared to ANPs. The Clinical Librarian discussed what was needed with the staff member to review search strategies that had been developed and advise on any suitable improvements.

The staff member found the review to the developed strategies very thorough and improved the overall piece of work they contributed to.



NHS Scotland Photo Library

"An essential service to NHS employees who are out of practice in research and keen to learn. The service the library provided even warrants a mention in my dissertation as the robust literature search ensures my systematic literature review is thorough and answers my research question."

Advanced Nurse Practitioner, NHS Borders

Incidence and epidemiology of dog bites and dog-related injuries

Public Health Scotland library services were asked to provide a rapid appraisal of evidence for a strategic injury issue on dog bites. Focusing on incidence and epidemiology of dog bites and, or dog-related injuries in the UK.

The appraisal would be used to support a funding application to conduct further research into the subject.

An initial search was followed up by an evidence summary of the relevant materials identified by the team. Access to a reference management tool was facilitated.



“The summary saved a load of consultant time and really helped focus our work by providing the best evidence rapidly. It will contribute to preventing future injuries of this nature.”

Stephen Bridgman, Consultant in Public Health Medicine. Public Health Scotland

NHS Forth Valley: Food status and the milk supply in breastfeeding women



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Impact of food status on breastfeeding women's milk supply

A search was requested to assist NHS Lanarkshire in their role as part of national and international groups looking at maternal and infant food insecurity. The specific topic examined if food insecurity affected the milk supply in breastfeeding women.

The groups needed an evidence base and to know where the gaps were so they could develop policies and guidelines on this topic.

The library service provided a literature search which gave an evidence base and highlighted evidence gaps.

Issues raised by the literature search have been recognised in NICE guidelines and in a Scottish Government toolkit.



NHS Borders: Literature searches to inform care plans for CAMHS staff

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Literature searches to inform care plans for CAMHS staff

There were numerous requests for literature searches on topics related to rare client presentations in a rural CAMHS service. Some of the case presentations were complex and severe in nature. Help was requested to find the best, most current evidence to support care planning in these cases.

A number of literature searches were provided. The clinician was assisted in ensuring management of young people was in line with best practice, as well as being tailored to individual needs of the client.

"I not infrequently ask our Library service for their help;... The sources have been relevant, found quickly, and hugely helpful to ensure management of young people is in line with best practice, as well as being tailored to individual need. I am always recommending our local librarian!"

Psychiatrist, CAMHS Services, NHS Borders

NHS Lanarkshire: PiCC line flushing best practice



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Evidence on PiCC line flushing best practice

The manager of the service requested an update to the current NHS Lanarkshire practice in order to bring it in line with NIVAS (National Infusion and Vascular Access Society) guidance.

The search and summary provided the evidence to support this practice change and the new NHSL guideline is currently being written as a result.

The primary care patient group directive (PCGD) will also be updated within the community once guideline has been updated.

The use of saline rather than heparin will be more cost effective for NHS Lanarkshire.



NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde: GGC Digital Skills and Literacy Programme - Training sessions on M365 and Teams

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NHS GG&C Digital Skills and Literacy Programme training

The Digital Skills and Literacy Programme identified the need to offer further support for staff using Microsoft apps as part of the NHS Scotland provision.

The Knowledge Services team developed sessions and continue to refine them in light of feedback from participants. Staff appear to have found the training helped them build their skills in this area.

At present 159 people have attended the sessions and attendee feedback suggests that the sessions improved knowledge and confidence.

"I can experiment with it and not be afraid to click on certain areas for a more in-depth look"

"I feel I understand the use of each app a bit better and how they work in conjunction"

NHS Fife: Adrenaline versus Noradrenaline in post cardiac arrest



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Adrenaline versus Noradrenaline in post cardiac arrest

A survey suggested a mixed split in the use of each drug post cardiac arrest. The Emergency Medicine team (EMT) wanted to conduct a systematic review to define the preference for one drug over the other.

The librarian collaborated with the team to scope out the requirements for a literature search, including gaps in evidence. The impact was the establishment of a clinical equipoise for this question. The process enabled the research team to link with colleagues in their organisation and nationally, as well as providing medical students the opportunity to gain research skills.



“Thank you for your skills and expertise and how easy you made the process for us. The results were so much more accessible for busy staff who are stretched for time.”

Rajendra Raman, Emergency Medicine Consultant, NHS Fife