

Evidence Searching Service Policy

Aim and Scope of Policy

To define the Policy underlying the Evidence Searching Service offered by PHU Library & eLearning with regard to who can use the service, who should deliver the service and the quality controls that apply to it.

Key Staff Responsibilities

Post	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library Services Managers (LSM) 	Overall responsibility. To ensure consistent excellent standard of service. To ensure analysis of statistical and qualitative information related to the service is undertaken & acted upon where necessary. To undertake or cascade searches in Clinical Librarian's absence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All professionally qualified staff 	Responsibility for performing Evidence searches or cascading to others if required. Develop and maintain statistics. Develop and monitor quality controls. Keep up to date with latest resource developments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All paraprofessional staff 	To receive Evidence Search requests from requesters; to gather the appropriate information, to pass on to an appropriate member of staff. To liaise with the requester if necessary. To adhere to the relevant procedures.

Who can use the service?

1.1 PHU Library & eLearning (PHUL) offer a free Evidence Searching Service to all staff who are members of our partner organisations.

1.2 PHUL will not undertake evidence searches which will count towards work for any undergraduate course. Any user who requests a search for this purpose will be offered a search skills session to support and empower them to carry out their own search.

1.3 PHUL will undertake scoping searches, by librarian discretion, alongside those undertaking post-graduate and research studies and will support these users by collaborating with the search or offering information skills training.

A scoping search is defined as “fairly brief searches of existing literature designed to help you gain an overview of the range and depth of research that exists for a particular research idea. It can cover published work and discover on-going studies”. <https://www.rds-yh.nihr.ac.uk/scoping-searchesfunding-update/>

1.4 Members of the public requesting information should be directed to quality-assessed sources of information and advised that they should seek advice from a health professional if they have not already done so.

Who undertakes the searches?

2.1 All evidence search requests should be directed to the Clinical Librarians in the first instance. All staff to check that a CL is available before forwarding requests.

2.3 The CL can forward a request to any professional staff member if they are unable to fulfil the request within the set performance indicators (see Quality assurance below) due to work load.

2.4 In the absence of the CL the search should go to the LSM.

Quality Assurance

3.1 Searches will be undertaken guided by the principles found in *LKSS Regional Searching guidance 2021*. [Kent, Surrey and Sussex NHS Libraries Searching & Training Forum - Search guidance \(google.com\)](#)

3.2 The number of relevant high quality and relevant resources used for a search will be according to the scope, focus and purpose of the request.

3.3 Searches will normally be conducted by the CL. These are qualified members of staff with specific expertise in literature searching. This is defined by specific role and training and updates in searching and health resources. This will be monitored within Personal Development Records.

3.4 Deadlines for the search turnaround will be defined between requestor and CL.

3.5 Performance Indicators will be defined by:

- PI1 95% of all requests to be **completed within the requested time frame**.
- PI2 User satisfaction rates with results is **above 95%**

This information is collected from post-search satisfaction surveys which are sent to all requestors on completion of the search. Performance Indicator Exception Reports are completed annually and contain an action plan for those which have not been maintained.

3.6 NHS Evidence-based resources including the major healthcare databases are used as the first instance for searches. Other resources are searched as deemed appropriate for the type, depth, and complexity of the search.

3.7 There is no critical appraisal of search findings by PHUL staff. A summary of results will be included when possible.

3.8 All literature searches are saved for a minimum of 2 years for statistical analysis.

3.9 All search requests are recorded by CL team in a spreadsheet with time recordings and every quarter collated and examined by the team and LSM.

3.10 All search results are sent by email and contain disclaimer information, request for recognition in the event of publication. In addition, survey completion requests for feedback and impact are made when necessary for the compilation of annual reports and the NHS LKS Quality and Impact Outcomes Framework.

3.11 The results of the surveys and/or statistics will be published in Annual reports and are used as evidence for NHS LKS Quality and Impact Outcomes Framework or as deemed appropriate by the Library Services Manager.

3.12 All staff are to keep up to date with the use of health resources.

Additional information

4.1 Search requests are performed in the order related to the “required by” date indicated by the Requester. **However, in instances of coinciding requests priority will always be given to urgent search requests related to direct patient care.**

4.2 Although PHUL aims to fulfil urgent search requests within the agreed time frame, extending deadlines will be negotiated with the Requester and will depend on the volume of work involved and the current capacity and circumstances (e.g. staffing levels) of PHUL.

4.3 Complex and exceptionally time demanding searches, i.e. research projects support or systematic reviews must be assigned a realistic “required by” date by the Requester who may need regular updates as to progress.

4.4 If search results are used for publication, research, teaching or presentation the Library’s (or the individual librarians) assistance should be acknowledged either as a co-author or within the teaching materials/presentation.

4.5 The evidence search service will not retrieve any requested materials incurring additional fees from any third-party providers. If the Requester wishes to receive the search results in a printed format, (s)he might be asked to reimburse PHUL for the costs of printing.

4.6 PHUL reserves the right to re-use individual search results and search strategies if relevant to other search requests.

4.7 PHUL reserves the right to refuse to conduct search requests which could be seen as inappropriate, unfeasible, offensive or discriminatory, or if the current workload exceeds the Library's capacity.

4.8 PHUL will not be held liable for any actions or events arising from any change of practice/publications/teaching updates/etc. that the search evidence results might have influenced. It is the Requester's responsibility to apply medical expertise and knowledge to assess validity and potential applications of the search results delivered by PHUL.

4.9 It is the Requester's responsibility to observe and adhere to the copyright legislation in relation to the obtained literature. For further information on copyright regulations see the Copyright Licensing Agency at <https://www.cla.co.uk/>

Policy to be reviewed - March 2025