

London Health Libraries

Guidance for Producing a Library Strategy,
Implementation Plan and Annual Report

LHL Quality & Standards Group
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Introduction

Libraries serving healthcare are in a period of unprecedented change and turbulence. Some of this turbulence derives from the wider environment through technological change, some from the continuing reform of the NHS structures and services and some from within the library community through the emergence of new partners and policies.

This change creates both opportunities and risks. The range of arenas where libraries can/should contribute continues to escalate, adding to the daily challenges already faced by library staff. If we are to meet these challenges then thoughtful and clear planning will be increasingly essential in order to focus our efforts and prioritise use of available resources to achieve the best possible service for our users and the best possible return on investment for our organisations.

This document provides guidance on three of the key processes necessary to plan and deliver our services. The table below outlines the differing purposes of the strategy, implementation plan and annual report and how they support each other. Producing these documents should not be seen as an end in itself. The process of development is as important as the outcome. If they are to be effective and credible, strategies and implementation plans must be developed in consultation with users and stakeholders. The Annual Report is an important tool in informing and engaging users and employers with our contribution and achievements.

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	ANNUAL REPORT
Timescale: 3 – 5 years	Timescale: 1- 3 years; reviewed annually	Timescale: produced at the end of each annual cycle
Purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maps out the likely future • Provides a high level analysis of actions needed to get to the desired future • Ensures that day-to-day decisions are consistent with longer term plans • Encourages everyone to work together to meet common goals 	Purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritises action needed to deliver strategic goals and objectives • Provides detailed plans, including tasks to be completed, projected costs, risks, lead responsibility for delivery • Relates to activity during a specified time period. • Is measurable 	Purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a review of how the service has performed against its annual objectives • To identify major service developments and/or changes • To identify objectives for the coming year

NOTE 1: Depending on usage in your organisation, the Implementation Plan may be called the Business Plan, Annual Plan or Operational Plan.

NOTE 2: The Library Strategy may also include the initial Implementation Plan as appendices – check organisational preference.

General Guidance on Writing Your Documents

Target audience

These documents are written for a variety of audiences. Because health libraries operate across a range of sectors (NHS, HE, independent sector etc) and have a variety of reporting arrangements, it is important to start this process by understanding organisational requirements and processes. Ensure you are clear about the process you will need to go through to obtain approval of your Strategy and Implementation Plan and the timing for this. For example, if your Implementation Plan includes a bid for additional resources, you will need to present it at the appropriate point in your organisation's financial planning cycle. Check the decision-making route for approval of your Strategy. Take the Strategy to the highest point in the management hierarchy possible, as this will increase the visibility of your service within the organisation.

House style guides

Most organisations have a house style for their written and electronic documents. Look into this before you go ahead and follow the guidance.

Organisational identity guidelines

You must be aware of your organisation's identity guidelines. If you are part of the NHS these guidelines can be found at <http://www.nhsidentity.nhs.uk>

Style and format

The style you choose depends on a number of factors e.g. skills, money, time, audience, values, and organisational house style. Documents vary in length and it is important to include a summary page or paragraph. Decide on the format and distribution early- this will have an impact on the resources you need to produce the report. Remember that there are many formats apart from print.

Visual appeal and readability

Do

- Where helpful, include a selection of graphs, charts, tables and photographs interspersed among the text. They break up the page, increase visual interest and save words. Make sure there is an explanation underneath or alongside.
- Produce your documents in an easy to read font like Arial, Univers or Frutiger
- Use a 11 to 14 point font size
- Use bullet points, sub-headings and numbering to chunk the information for better comprehension

Don't

- Overprint: printing over pictures is difficult to read for almost everyone
- Use glossy paper

Plain English and accessibility

Library and information services are at the forefront of creating and promoting accessible services and information. Writing for a general audience could help the writer produce a clear and jargon-free document. For additional guidance see:

Plain English Campaign

www.plainenglish.co.uk/plainenglishguide.html

Royal National Institute for the Blind (sections on good design, advice and consultancy services)

www.rnib.org.uk

The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries

www.mla.gov.uk/information/publications/00pubs.asp

The Disability Portfolio (Inclusive Information)

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

PRINCIPLES

Creating a strategy means clarifying, creating and refining the following elements:

- strategic vision: a blueprint for change, expressing:
 - the desired future for your service
 - its desired position in relation to its business environment
 - the outcomes you wish to bring about - both within the organisation and in your dealing with customers.
- strategic issues: the challenges facing the service
- strategic themes: the areas of business activity in which the service needs to engage to meet the challenges posed by strategic issues
- candidates for action: possible ways forward

Without a strategy, any organisation faces the risk of:

- failing to deliver products/services
- unclear aims and objectives, making it hard, or impossible, to demonstrate whether you have been successful
- fragmented decision-making: different areas working in different ways; conflicting decisions; difficulty in prioritising and reviewing projects and programmes
- fragmented IT and communications (ICT) provision
- people issues: staff question the value of their work, in the absence of an understanding of how it contributes to the 'big picture'
- lack of organisational learning: failures are repeated, lessons are not learnt.

Before you begin read your parent organisation's key strategic documents – to discover aims and objectives and determine how the service fits into the broad picture – and other key documents to determine the fit into wider sector/networks.

Debate and agree the strategic vision/mission statement for the service. Remember: the Strategic Vision of where you want to get to leads to the Mission Statement, and then to the definition of key service aims and objectives. The statement should avoid the extremes of:

- a bland high level 'vision' that could apply to almost any organisation
- a detailed catalogue of specific planned developments, which become invalidated as circumstances and plans change.

Stages of Strategy & Implementation Plan Development

STAGES	GUIDANCE	TASKS
<p><i>STAGE 1: HORIZON SCANNING AND UNDERSTANDING THE WIDER ENVIRONMENT</i></p> <p>Looking in detail at the issues facing the organisation and your service, how things are currently done, what is changing and what may need to be done in the future</p> <p>The objectives of this stage are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to understand the current and future business and the policies of the organisation and the service • to understand the scope for change • to agree the future objectives and priorities of the service • to think in a divergent and radical way about how things could be done. 	<p>Preliminary information gathering provides an initial view of your environment, describing the following aspects of the organisation and your service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the issues facing the organisation and service, and other external areas of constraint or pressure ○ structure and management ○ products and services provided ○ service functions and processes, and how they relate to each other ○ relationships – with partners, customers and suppliers ○ assumptions regarding future direction ○ an initial view of the options and potential for change <p>DO SWOT or PEST Analysis.</p> <p><i>NB: SWOT = Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)</i> <i>PEST = Political, Environmental, Social and Technical)</i></p>	<p>ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is on the horizon in terms of national and local policy which will/might affect who we serve and how we deliver services • What are the problems – and opportunities – facing us? • How could we improve our services to our customers, businesses we deal with, or other end users? • What new directions do IT and e-business open up for us? • Do we manage our information as well as we could? Does information help management make informed decisions? • Could communication – within and beyond the organisation – be improved? • What needs to change in our culture and attitudes? • Are we going to need new skills? • If we stay on our current course, where will we end up?

<p>STAGE 2: IDENTIFYING THE DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE</p> <p>Deciding the future that the library service should move towards and identifying strategic themes.</p> <p>For the strategy, themes may be expressed in terms of significant changes or developments required in various areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ high level results (policy outcomes) ○ working with others ○ new ways of working ○ better services. 	<p>It should be possible to express the essence of the strategy in no more than four to six broad themes. The description of each theme will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the reason why it is strategically important ○ the main changes or developments which the library service will expect to achieve within the theme, and the direction in which this theme will take the library service. 	<p>What are the practical options for addressing this theme?</p> <p>What are the barriers to realising the options, and how might we overcome them?</p> <p>What major actions with existing staff and resources (as the starting point) must be taken within the next year or so to make essential progress on this theme?</p> <p>What resources are required?</p>
<p>STAGE 3: HIGH LEVEL PLANNING</p> <p>Involves translating strategic themes into tasks for action, deciding which tasks should be progressed and building an implementation plan.</p> <p>An implementation plan combines selected tasks and developments into a proposed programme of work that will realise strategic aims.</p>	<p>Identify tasks to achieve each strategic theme</p> <p>Prioritise the selected tasks, perhaps holding some over for later attention</p> <p>Construct an implementation plan for the chosen set of tasks, detailing issues such as timescales, resources, and risk</p> <p>Finalise the strategy</p> <p>Construct businesses cases for high-level plans</p>	

Note: based on guidance available at <http://www.ogc.gov.uk/sdtoolkit/deliveryteam/strategy/index.html>

SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR A STRATEGY

Remember: Copies of the Strategy will be distributed to major stakeholders, investors/funders, etc. Therefore, you should organize the format of the Strategy such that the body of the Strategy can be sent outside the organisation and the appendices can include the more confidential and detail-oriented documents - documents which also tend to change a lot. The format of the Strategy should also fit the culture and preferences of the organisation.

<p>CONTENTS</p> <p>Executive Summary</p> <p>Authorisation</p> <p>Organisational Description</p> <p>Mission, Vision and Values Statements</p> <p>Goals and Strategies</p>	<p>This is written to the scope and level of content so that an “outsider” can read the summary and grasp the mission of the oservice, its overall major issues and goals, and key strategies to reach the goals.</p> <p>This page may include all of the necessary signatures of the Stakeholders showing that they approve the contents of, and support implementation of, the plan. Alternatively it may simply include a statement about when the Strategy was approved and by whom.</p> <p>This section describes the service, its major products and services, highlights and accomplishments during the history of oservice, etc.</p> <p>These statements describe the strategic "philosophy" of the service.</p> <p>Lists all of the major strategic goals and associated strategies identified during the strategic planning process</p>
<p>APPENDICES</p> <p>Implementation Plan</p> <p>Description of Strategic Planning Process Used</p>	<p>Specifies objectives, responsibilities and timelines for completion of objectives. over the coming 1-3 years. Describes in more detail the major goals and activities to be accomplished over the coming financial year. For an example see www.londonlinks.ac.uk/lhlsdg_business_plan_2005-6.pdf</p> <p>Describes the process used to develop the plan, who was involved, the number of meetings, any major lessons learned to improve planning the next time around, etc</p>

Strategic Analysis Data	Includes information generated during the external analysis (for example, benchmark data) and internal analysis (for example, SWOT/PEST analysis), and includes listing of strategic issues identified during the these analyses
Financial Planning	Includes income and expenditure statements for the immediate past year and identifies any relevant trends. Identifies the resources and funding needed to achieve the strategic goals. If possible, a forward projection showing income needed for each year of the Strategy should be included.
Monitoring and Evaluation of Plan	Include criteria for monitoring and evaluation, and the responsibilities and frequencies of monitoring the implementation of the plan
Communication of Plan	Describe the actions that will be taken to communicate the plan and/or portions of it, and to whom.

Examples:

Anglia Polytechnic University:

<http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/about/libstrat.htm>

Homerton School of Health Studies:

http://www.health-homerton.ac.uk/learning/pdfs/lib_strat.pdf

University of Sheffield

<http://www.shf.ac.uk/library/libdocs/strategicplan0306.pdf>

Scottish Electronic Library

<http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk>

GAINING APPROVAL FOR YOUR STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Early in the development process, you will want to check the process and route for gaining organisational approval of your Strategy and Implementation Plan. It will not necessarily be the same for both documents.

There are benefits to the Strategy being approved at the highest possible level in the organisation. Whilst this may be more complex and more time consuming it will raise the library service's profile in the organisation. It is sometimes possible to give a short presentation to the Board to introduce the Strategy and answer any questions which Board members may have. Alternatively you may be able to identify a supportive Director who will do this on your behalf.

You will also wish to consider who in the organisation will act as your champion(s) – particularly if approval will be required at senior management level. It is particularly helpful to have support at Director Level – this may be your Manager or your Manager's manager. Consider as well the possibility of briefing one or more of the Non-executive Directors (or equivalent in higher education).

If your Implementation Plan does not require additional resources, it may need to go no further than your immediate Manager for approval. However, if further investment is needed, particularly if this is relatively large scale, then it may be necessary to provide a more detailed business case. You should seek advice from within your organisation as to how this should be presented, and if there are particular times of year when the Board consider such bids .

ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The annual reporting process is an important tool in the overall management and development of a library and information service.

1. It provides managers with a framework for demonstrating achievements, investment and finance, progress on objectives and much more.
2. It can help link the goals of the strategy, business plan and accreditation to support the continuous improvement of the service.
3. It can facilitate the development of a learning organisation through planning, monitoring and guiding development.

The aim of this guidance is to recommend areas you may want to include in an annual report. It isn't meant to be prescriptive but more a pick and mix of ideas.

It was written with the aims of the current HeLicon accreditation and LKDN statistics in mind so you may find it offers options but also takes a particular view. This will be made explicit wherever possible. We will continue to update this guidance with advice from colleagues involved in QAA, HeLicon and other quality programmes. HeLicon information can be found at www.nelh.nhs.uk/librarian/accreditation.asp

CONTENT

The annual report will contain several themes considered essential by your parent organisation and your local library lead. Essentials for one service may not be essential for another so there is still an element of choice here. Some themes may present as more important strategically, politically or topically so you may want to emphasise them in the report. The list of flexible topics can provide year-to-year variety. The following lists were developed with HeLicon, London Health Libraries Strategy "*Better libraries, better health, better healthcare*" and LKDN statistics in mind.

Interpreting information for the audience

There are several areas where you will want to add an explicit interpretation of the information and why it's important. Key areas could include statistical information (including tables and graphs), objectives and library-related jargon.

Example: The table shows that inter-library loans increased from the previous year adding an additional cost to the service. Without interpretation, the parent organisation could interpret that as a failure of their investment in electronic resources. In fact, the library knew the increase was linked to the success of the electronic databases resulting a wider body of evidence being applied to improved patient care.

Essential themes (not in order)

- Contents page

Background information

- Who are we?
- Executive summary (one page or less using bullet points)
- Mission statement or purpose (should be taken from your own Strategy)

Report on achievement of objectives

- Objectives: a re-statement of the previous year's objectives and progress made, progress made on Pan-London objectives, obstacles and facilitators.

- Year's highlights
- Recently accredited services: report on accreditation and implications.
- Previously accredited services: report on progress towards meeting the recommendations of the report including obstacles and facilitators.

Activity data

- Summary of LKDN statistics and/or relevant local statistics
- Stock and services (loans, photocopies, inter-library loans, visitors) see www.nelh.nhs.uk/librarian/accreditation.asp (section 3)
- Network membership (professional, organisational, topical)
- Co-operation and partnership working
- Selection of outreach, marketing and events attended
- Resource acquisition and availability

User/community satisfaction

- User consultation e.g. surveys, focus groups
- Positive outcomes and impact of service provision e.g. user achievements, self-esteem building, inspired community involvement, patient care, lifelong learning

Staff development

- Staff development and achievement and the impact on service provision (NHS libraries can link this to the Knowledge and Skills Framework)

Financial report

- Financial information and investment: ideally based on LKDN requirements with room for local variations. For example:
 - a. Pay/non pay budget
 - b. Savings made
 - c. Source of income
 - d. Spending breakdown
 - e. New income and project funding
 - f. Training and development
 - g. Equipment
 - h. Resources
 - i. Running costs

Forward look

- Future objectives and the resources and capabilities you need to achieve them.
- Contact details

Flexible themes

Some of the flexible areas may need to be essential depending on a variety of internal and external targets, policies, pressures, people and funding. Your stakeholders will have some interest in your objectives. They could be from any of the groups listed or from a wider audience e.g. patients, staff, social care, students or residents. It can be difficult to target all your stakeholders with one report. Devoting a section of the report to a different set of stakeholders every year could fit neatly with the library strategy. Example: If the library has opened access to a new set of users make sure this is highlighted and that they are aware of the report.

- Widening access and participation
- New collections and collection development

- Developments in information that have or could impact services (local, national and global policies and strategies e.g. Freedom of Information, copyright, terrorist legislation, public libraries and the health agenda)
- Changes in the service (positive and negative and the implications)
- “Blue skying” and the potential positive impact of improvements, changes and innovation on patients, students, volunteers, users, the organisation, staff etc.
- Comments from staff and users
- Introductory message from a high level library champion
- New resources produced
- Leaflet and poster distribution figures
- Staff news
- Information technology: changes, uptake, improvements, problems, website

Hints and tips

1. Explain to your reader why you are highlighting the things you write about. Make those connections explicit to increase their understanding of how the service works, why you do what you do and the impact it has (see section 4.1 for an example).
2. Get a variety of people (internal and external) to read the report before you print or put it on the website. This is particularly useful for picking up jargon or unclear items.
3. Decide on the format and distribution early- this will have an impact on the resources you need to produce the report.
4. Have a look at other annual reports for inspiration. Examples:
Health Promotion Library National Assembly for Wales:
www.cmo.wales.gov.uk
Leeds University Library:
<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/library/strategic/>
Berkshire Health Promotion:
www.bhps.org.uk/resources/annreports.htm

SUBMITTING YOUR STRATEGY, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORT

Strategy

You should aim to have a current and agreed Strategy in place at all times. There is no specified time when this should be done. The key determinant will be that the production of your Strategy fits in with the strategic planning cycle in your organisation. You will need to ensure that you have a current Strategy in place for each library accreditation visit. Please submit your Strategy to your SHA Library Lead once it has been approved within your organisation.

Implementation Plan/Annual Report

If your organisation prefers a 3 year Implementation Plan then this will probably consist of a detailed plan for the coming year with outline plans for the following two years. Alternatively you may only need to produce an annual Implementation Plan during the Spring of each year for the coming year. The detailed annual Plan should be forwarded to your SHA Library Lead with your Annual Report by 30th September each year. There may be local agreements for some higher education managed libraries to provide their implementation plan/annual report at a different time of year.

QUALITY MONITORING

The Strategic Vision and key objectives are operationalised by the annual Implementation Plan. Quality monitoring is achieved through Annual Reports and through the library accreditation process. You may wish to refer to guidance on developing a local Quality Management Framework, which will be available from the LHL Quality & Standards Group during 2006

YOUR COMMENTS

The Quality & Standards Group welcome your comments on the usefulness of this guidance document. If you have any comments/suggestions, please complete the sections below

Your name:

Your organisation:

Your comments relate to the guidance on:

Planning a Strategy	YES/NO
Developing an Implementation Plan	YES/NO
Producing and Annual Report	YES/NO

Did you find the document useful: YES//NO

If No, what would improve it?

Is the guidance clear YES/NO

If NO – how could it be improved

Are there any OMISSIONS from the document:: YES/NO

If YES, please describe:

Please return the completed sheet to:

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