

KINGS FUND VISIT – 6 April 2011

Six of us arrived at the grand premises of The King's Fund for an introduction to their Information and Library Service (ILS). The King's Fund is a charity that "seeks to understand how the health system in England can be improved" and the ILS is a free service available to anyone working in the areas of health and social policy and health management.

TKF's Customer Services Development Librarian Deena Maggs introduced us to the ILS website, talking us through the Current Awareness service with an RSS feed, the 'Got a Question' form, the bank of reading lists and the Live Chat button. Of course, the website links to the ILS database which details over 90,000 items, including government documents, books and journals and broad collection of 'grey' literature.

Deena and her team then demonstrated the online *NHS Evidence* Specialist Collections for which TKF has responsibility. For use by both clinicians and patients, these bring together the current relevant information on Commissioning, Health Management and Innovation and improvement, and again e-mail updates are available for users. Additionally, from May this year, *NHS Evidence* will be moving over to the improved service which will provide broader types of information and clearer signposting to resources.

We were then introduced to the ILS Enquiry Database, which documents every enquiry received, and responses given. This provides for consistent (and unduplicated) responses to subsequent similar enquiries, and also for progress updates on complex enquiries (useful for staff handovers).

Possibly even more impressive was TKF Positions Database, for internal staff use only, which documents all formal TKF responses to current health issues and news stories. This of course allows consistency, and provides a record of TKF staff responsible for the responses.

Deena explained that the library space itself had shrunk since its shift within the building, and that purchasing decisions had to take account of this. Also, pre 2001/2002 stock remained in storage.

All in all, the visit was enjoyable and enlightening, thanks to Deena and her colleagues who managed to impart a great deal in a short time. Perhaps the icing on the cake was the stunning premises, which included the sunny "Orangery", often hired out for weddings and parties, and yes, housing real orange trees! Between the library areas is the "Friends' Lounge", free to use for anyone who signs up. And even the very sophisticated space which houses part of the library collection is available for private hire.

Who said libraries weren't cool...

Anne Kenefeck
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