

# NHS Knowledge and Library Services in England

## Emotional support for embedded knowledge specialists working in clinical settings:

### Policy recommendations to NHS Employers

Increasingly, NHS organisations are deploying knowledge specialists within clinical settings to bring evidence to bear in the ward, and in primary and community care. This aligns to our vision of Knowledge for Healthcare that: “NHS bodies, their staff, learners, patients and the public use the right knowledge and evidence, at the right time, in the right place, enabling high quality decision-making, learning, research and innovation to achieve excellent healthcare and health improvement.”<sup>1</sup>

Health Education England’s (2020) recommendations to take incremental steps to improve the staff ratio between qualified librarians and knowledge managers per member of the NHS workforce identifies the need for more clinical librarian roles to drive improvements in both the quality of care and productivity.<sup>2</sup>

### RATIONALE

Our expectation is that the number of embedded roles for knowledge specialists will grow. Therefore, it is timely for NHS organisations to review and put in place appropriate mechanisms for psychological support for this specialist workforce to ensure their health and wellbeing.

Librarians working in clinical settings report that some situations they witness are distressing. It is a challenge for them to know who to approach to talk about what they have encountered. They report that inclusion in team debriefs within the clinical department is rare but helpful.

The benefits of team debriefing<sup>[\*]</sup> and clinical supervision are well understood as support mechanisms to aid reflection and provide a confidential space to discuss work, with a focus on improving practice and patient care.<sup>3</sup> Debriefing in the clinical environment enables a whole team perspective, supporting both personal and professional needs.<sup>4</sup>

A case study of a Schwartz Round for Clinical Librarians illustrates that the emotional impact of working with patients should not be overlooked for embedded knowledge and library specialists and similar arrangements should be made as those already established for clinical colleagues.<sup>5</sup>

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to approve the following recommendations to NHS provider organisations:

1. NHS organisations ensure that the psychological well-being of librarians and knowledge specialists working in clinical environments is considered.
2. NHS organisations extend existing arrangements for the multi-disciplinary team to include clinical librarians and knowledge specialists.
3. Access to psychological wellbeing services provided within the organisation is highlighted to embedded librarians and knowledge specialists working in clinical environments.

### REFERENCES

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[\*] Medical team debriefing, distinct from individual psychological debriefing of stress casualties.

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