Setting up a Clinical Librarian Service
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How to set up a clinical librarian service
Your circumstances and the needs of your clinical users may be different to ours, but based on our experience, we have come up with the following tips for setting up a clinical librarian service. Please feel free to contribute tips based on your own experience - we will add to this page over time.

The essence of our service is that the clinical librarian becomes part of the multidisciplinary clinical team, being proactive and present in the clinical setting to respond to information needs. Things that worked for us were:

1. Dedicated time
Fewer library-based responsibilities meant that we could be responsive to the needs and working patterns of the clinical teams.

2. Additional funding
Necessary to allow 1. Once the value of the service was established, further funding was forthcoming.

3. Start small
We were unable to do any other because of funding limitations. It is however, a good idea to start small, offering a limited service to selected clinical teams and become established before expanding to other teams.

4. Champions
Engaging the support of champions, not only clinicians but other groups such as Clinical Governance leads, Audit department etc.   The health professionals who use the service also become champions.

5. Offering the service to all members of the multidiciplinary team
Offering the service to other professional groups i.e. nurses and PAMs was important. Often at guidelines development meetings, shared governance and ward staff meetings where clinical issues are discussed.

6. Being adaptable and alert to opportunities
Even when the service is established, being proactive in identifying new ways of working e.g. providing current bibliographies to support audit meetings.

7. Responding to information needs that have the patient at the centre
Being very clear about the remit of the service, referring staff to other services provided by the library as appropriate (e.g.training, research support).

8. Practicing evidence-based librarianship
Being explicit about the resources and search strategies used. Providing a commentary on the quality of the evidence available to answer the question. Keeping copies of these

9. Evaluating the service
A simple user feedback form is used as a basis to evaluate the service. It can identify critical incidents where information has had an impact on clinical care.

10. Persevering
Health professionals don't have information needs at every meeting.   The clinical librarian presence is still valuable as a reminder of the availability of the service when they do have an information need.