Customer Services Group UK Annual Conference 2018

"I want it all, and I want it now!" – Managing changing user expectations of customer services

Conference Biographies & Abstracts

Conference Welcome

Professor Phil Cardew, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)

Professor Phil Cardew joined Leeds Beckett University in April 2015 from London South Bank University, and holds a PhD from the University of Leeds. Phil's academic life started as a mature student, gaining his first degree at Southampton aged 27, having spent most of his 20s working in a music shop on the Isle of Wight and playing in several local bands.

Phil has always had an interest in the routes students take and the many and varied backgrounds they bring to their studies. He is a firm believer in the development of partnership models with students and Students' Unions, and would always rather manage difficulties than manage disagreements.

Carol Sadlowski – Royal Holloway, University of London

Carol Sadlowski has worked at Royal Holloway University of London (RHUL) for 29 years and for the last 10 years has held the role of Head of Customer Services. Carol has taken an active role in the development of Customer Services at RHUL, striving for innovative services following changing students' needs. She was leading the restructuring of the Customer Service team in 2017 when the Library moved to the new Library building (Emily Wilding Davison building) and her vision resulted in a dedicated Customer Service team including the extended hours (weekend and evening) team.

Amy O'Donohoe – Royal Holloway, University of London

Amy O'Donohoe attended Brunel University and graduated with joint honours in English Literature and Music. She went on to complete her Master's degree in Library and Information Science from Robert Gordon University part time while working in France. Amy has over five years of experience working in a variety of library and archive settings and she is actively involved with the Special Libraries Association. She is currently working at Royal Holloway University library as the Customer Care Collections Coordinator, where she focuses on managing and innovating collection processes with a customer focus.

Striving for excellence: managing user expectations and innovating customer services through a library move

With the increase in student fees and the ever changing landscape and competitive nature of Higher Education, student expectations have become increasingly demanding when compared with previous years. As a library service, developing customer services is key to ensuring that we meet these growing expectations and remain relevant while managing user expectations at the same time. In taking part in a long term project to build and move into a new state of the art Library, the Royal Holloway University Library team needed to juggle service disruption and managing user expectations, alongside developing a new service during a library move.

Throughout the planning stages for the building, during the service disruptions in the move, and since moving into the new building we have managed user expectations by taking a user focused approach throughout the process. We have achieved this by actively engaging the users in the changes, using methods such as UX, creating a thorough communications programme, and engaging with user feedback throughout. A year following the move, we have continued this work, building on what we've learned through this process to continue to develop innovative user centric services, staff and approaches to customer services, with the aim of meeting and exceeding growing student expectations. This presentation explores how the Royal Holloway library team managed user expectations and designed an innovative customer service during this long term project and beyond.

Rosi Jelfs, Durham University

Rosi Jelfs is the Senior Customer Services Coordinator at Durham University Library, where she has worked since 2014. In this role she oversees the day-to-day running of frontline services and manages the evening and weekend team. She is also involved in other areas such as staff development, and a current building refurbishment project. She is interested in innovative space design and the ways it can be used to influence user behaviour and improve the library experience.

Rosi has a BA and MA (Research) in Modern Languages and completed an MSc in Information Science (Library Management) at Northumbria University in summer 2018.

Food for thought: managing a changing food and drink policy

In April 2017 Durham University Library launched a pilot to allow the consumption of food and drink in part of the building. This was in response to student demand for a location on campus where they could eat their own food, and a more flexible study environment. Previously the policy had been a complete ban on food and drink with the exception of cold bottled drinks, and the library had housed a small café at the entrance which was too small to cope with demand. Initially there were very mixed reactions to this policy from both staff and students. In the 18 months since then the policy has been through a number of changes which have each meant re-educating users and repeatedly securing support from staff, while providing a service that the layout of the library building can facilitate.

This paper will present the challenges and lessons learnt in managing an evolving service against the backdrop of changing (and higher) user expectations of what the 'library' is and should be, an ambitious university expansion strategy, as well as the Office for Student guidelines and recent TEF results. It will also consider results of student consultation, and the communications strategy used to manage the frequent changes in policy, as well as exploring the challenges of working with other stakeholders such as catering, housekeeping and the Students' Union.

David Clover, University of East London

David Clover is Head of User Engagement, Library and Learning Services at the University of East London (UEL). As part of that role David leads the UEL Library and Learning Services customer insight programme and led the service's successful application for the Customer Service Excellence standard received in November2017.

His professional interests include user experience, diversity and inclusion, the experiences of reading print and digital formats, open textbooks, the provision of learning spaces, customer service, professional development for LIS staff, and managing change.

"The Dancing Floor": developing inclusive services for "non-traditional" students

The presentation will discuss how the University of East London library is working to offer an inclusive service to a diverse student body, including so-called "non-traditional" students. At UEL we've reviewed ideas about customer segmentation as we engaged with the Customer Service Excellence standard; moving beyond simplistic groupings such as undergraduate/postgraduate or part-time/fulltime to consider students' lives and identities outside as well as within the institution, and the impact of this on student needs and behaviours in and outside library (physical and digital) spaces. This presentation will discuss the importance of a focus on specific groups of students who may otherwise be marginalised or silenced in user experience measures and how inclusive services that are therefore developed can meet the needs of all students.

UEL Library and Learning Services' customer insight strategy will be discussed as well as an overview of approaches and methods used to gain insight into the needs and behaviours of specific groups of students. Case studies from research undertaken will include looking at students who are parents and carers, students with disabilities, BAME and international students. Case studies will discuss methods used, results and actions taken or planned as a result of these insight projects.

Nanci Ali, Sheffield Hallam University

Nancy Ali, is a doctoral researcher at the centre of health and social care research at Sheffield Hallam University. Over the past couple of years, she has had different research roles that focused on exploring and voicing students' needs, experiences, engagement and satisfaction at Hallam. To achieve these aims her research practices incorporate a variety of qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods research approaches.

Kerry Gregory, Sheffield Hallam University

Kerry Gregory, is a Digital Technologies Specialist in Library & Student Support Services at Sheffield Hallam University. She began her career as a Researcher into widening participation and engagement and is now supporting the development of online learning materials allowing Hallam to become more inclusive to all students.

Using the JISC Co-design Playdeck for Service Design

Sheffield Hallam Library recently undertook a service design project to find out how we could develop a sustainable digital skills service within the library environment, providing digital skills to students, helping them to work, research and study more effectively and to support continuing professional development.

To support this work the project team used the JISC Co-design Playdeck; a toolkit which places collaborative innovation at the centre of its approach. The project team chose the co-design method to support the management of the project as it "involves a range of different stakeholders working together to create innovative, practical and effective products and services for HE" (JISC, 2017). Students, Professional services and Academic staff were directly involved in the creation and evaluation of the pilot Digital Service design. This approach also provided students with an opportunity to get involved in shaping their own experience of a Digital Skills Service at SHU.

This presentation will provide an overview of the project and describe how we used the JISC Playdeck to support our work and the findings of using this method.

Michelle Sharples, University of Manchester

Michelle is the Marketing and Communications Manager at the University of Manchester Library. She made the shift from libraries to marketing in 2003, beginning her marketing career in student recruitment. In 2009 she took the opportunity to develop and lead a new marketing team at The University of Manchester Library. She has a healthy obsession with objective centred marketing and communications strategy and working collaboratively with teams across the Library to develop and deliver customer focused Library services and products. She is currently leading on the Library's Strategic Learning and Development Plan.

Michael Douglas, University of Manchester

Michael joined the University of Manchester Library in 2016 as Data and Research Coordinator, his first role in HE, and is passionate about using data in an effective and meaningful way to really make a difference. Using his insight and experience from previous work in the third and private sectors, he is driven to delve into the stories behind the numbers, and communicate these insights into student, customer and staff experience in a clear and open way.
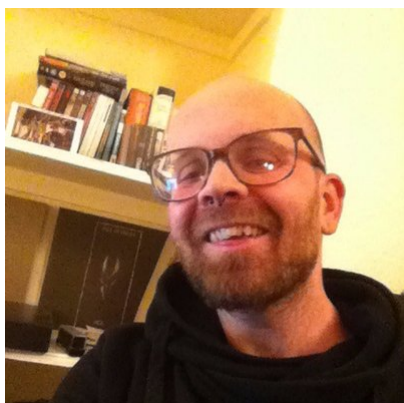
Everything you always wanted to know about Library Life Pulse but were afraid to ask

What do you want to know about your students? How do you know if you're meeting their expectations? What's the best way to engage with them to encourage a response? And how do you convince staff to do something with the results?

We'll take you on a whistle-stop tour of our five years of experience running The University of Manchester Library's student satisfaction and experience survey. From getting buy in from senior leaders to delivering the results (and everything in between) we'll share our experience of Library Life Pulse and how we've used it to help inform Library strategy and prioritise activity and service development.

Specifically, we'll focus on working with an external research agency, the tender process, research activity options and getting senior leadership on board. We'll follow this with hints and tips on engaging Library staff with the survey when it's live, when the results are in and when you're translating the results in to an action plan. And then hitting repeat.

Rowan Williamson and Jayne Batch, Central St Martins

Rowan Williamson (Learning Resources Manager) and Jayne Batch (Assistant Learning Resources Manager) make up the management team at Central Saint Martins (CSM) library and learning zone, at University of the Arts London. They have responsibility for managing the largest and busiest of the six UAL libraries, which is based in Kings Cross, north London. Central Saint Martins library also has the longest opening hours of the UAL libraries, running 24 hour opening for 20 weeks a year.

Jayne Batch

Jayne leads a team of up to 40 staff at CSM library, ensuring the day to day running and operation of the service. Although Jayne has worked at several academic institutions Central Saint Martins was Jayne's first experience working in arts libraries.

Rowan Williamson

Rowan, in addition to heading up CSM library, is also responsible for leading on Customer and frontline services across all UAL libraries, ensuring a high quality and responsive service is consistently delivered across all sites. Rowan came to UAL with significant experience in a range of different libraries including art institutions.

Falling between the cracks: managing student expectations with different service models

We are in our third year of night opening, a service provided by an outsourced team of customer focused security staff. This model was largely determined by financial and management constraints, and the immediate demand for 24 hour opening. The impact of the night opening on the day service was instant and marked. Staff time and morale was acutely effected in the mornings. Having spent a couple of years 'firefighting' we wanted to take a more considered approach. Do our different service models influence student activity and behaviour? To what extent do our services models align with our student expectations? Having previously run user experience projects at UAL we were aware of the wealth of data it is uniquely positioned to provide and felt it would give us the insight we were looking for.

The project helped us to find out more about how our students worked during the day and night, and the different expectations they have of the service models that have evolved. What we discovered was that whilst we were setting out to students the different service models they could expect from us, we were not taking into account the different student expectations we were in fact creating. Instead of focusing on maintaining consistent rules and standards we decided to embrace the difference. We decided to revisit the rules and refocus our attention. Instead of managing the activity, we manage the transition.

Arthur Robbins, Roche Products Limited

Arthur Robbins is the Library, Information & Knowledge Services Manager working at a pharmaceutical company, in Hertfordshire, a post he has held for four years. His role focuses on ensuring every colleague has access to the information and knowledge they need to do their jobs, or prepare for their next steps. This has fostered an interest in what Arthur's colleagues actually need and the best way to get it to them.

Managing users' communication behaviour in a corporate library setting

The Library & Information Centre was part of a restructure late 2017. The emphasis was to become more 'agile' as a company and to focus on business priorities. This led to a 50% reduction in library staff, with no reduction in the number of enquiries coming in to the service.

To meet this need and to ensure our colleagues received information support when they required it, we looked at new ways of communicating with our colleagues. We did this by gathering evidence on how colleagues already communicated with the library service, and to ask them how they preferred to be contacted. It was felt this was a priority, as the library would be un-staffed for longer periods of time due to the headcount reduction. This led to the implementation of different communication channels. Some of these new channels were enabled by technology, others were tried and tested methods we had used before.

However, the implementation raised new challenges which we are still addressing, through managing our colleagues' expectations of both the service and the technology. This presentation will focus on what channels were implemented, how we implemented them and why, and also where we could have improved.

Alison Craig, University of Hull

Alison has over 20 years' experience of working in Customer Services, previously in the high-pressured emergency services, with responsibility for 500 staff, dealing with a million enquires each year. Four years ago Alison took the role of Head of Customer Services at the University of Hull, Brynmor Jones Library. Alison is a member of the Senior Management Team with responsibility for the overall management of Customer Services and Collections Administrations. Her professional interest is in delivering business improvements, effective change management and leadership, this role has provided the opportunity to use her extensive knowledge to ensure that customers receive an inspirational experience.

David Moore, University of Hull

David has over 20 years' experience of working in Customer Services, including more than 15 years in retail management before becoming Customer Services Operations Manager at the University of Hull, Brynmor Jones Library in May 2014, leading a team of 5 Team Leaders and 40 library assistants. David has worked extensively in the fast paced sector of mobile phone retail for major UK retailers, establishing an ability to react to new technology, leading teams through pressurised working situations and reacting to change in the workplace.

How we met increasing customer expectations with no additional budget!

Following a restructure undertaken by the University Library in 2015, an initial internal evaluation of our new structure was undertaken to assess its impact and fitness for purpose following the first year of operation. The conclusions of this evaluation highlighted a need to develop the flexibility and resilience of the Customer Services team to sustain the transformative user experience and meet customer expectations

The vision of the Library at the time was to be at the heart of the success of the University. To achieve this in the context of ongoing financial and public policy challenges for the University, we had a responsibility to ensure that we deployed our resources according to strategic priorities and as efficiently as possible. The way to do this was with a contractual change, that had the following objectives:

- Align the team better to strategic priorities
- Strengthen service areas that are strategically important
- Deliver efficiencies through new ways of working
- One team that is equitable and flexible to meet the business needs

This presentation will describe how we did this and the journey we took, which had some challenges, alongside lessons learnt on the way.