



Room 9, 45 Ropergate, Pontefract,
West Yorkshire, WF8 1JY

Press Release

HELEN HALL, UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL, WINS THE 2021 NAG AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

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This year's National Acquisitions Group (NAG) Award for Excellence has been won by Helen Hall, Inter Library Loan Principal Library Assistance in the Acquisitions and Document Delivery Department, at the University of Liverpool. This award recognised the enormous impact on national inter-Library loan (ILL) practices by introducing HE Libraries to a new subscription model that challenged the traditional transactional form of interlending.

Helen investigated RapidILL back in 2019. Her knowledge and expertise allowed her to quickly identify the benefits of the RapidILL model. After a thorough cost analysis, RapidILL was trialled and adopted by the University of Liverpool by early 2020, making them the first UK institution to launch RapidILL. This was two months before Covid-19. Needless to say, this decision provided University staff and students a lifeline, allowing them a continued access to online resources not-owned by the Library. This service was crucial, particularly in the first months of the pandemic when the Library's doors were closed and access to print material was unavailable.

The decision to adopt RapidILL proved to be a sensible decision on an Institutional level, cutting the costs of an average ILL request by 50%. It allowed the University to offer free ILL to all our users without introducing caps or impacting budgets. Since RapidILL, the library is supplying more ILL requests but our overall costs per request has dropped. Helen's understanding of the model, its benefits to students and the importance of joining a resource sharing community has been fundamental in transforming ILL services.

However, Helen's efforts go beyond the University of Liverpool. Helen delivered several high-profiled webinars and nationally reaching online presentations, alongside Phil Sykes the Director of Libraries, Museums and Galleries at the University of Liverpool, to share our experience of RapidILL. It is on the back of her so called virtual tour that the UK Pod in RapidILL was possible, allowing HE Libraries across the country to share their resources in a fast and cost-effective way. In a time when the publishing industry is being called upon and challenged for its pricing model by various bodies and campaigns such as the #ebookSOS, Helen's work to promote Rapid and consequently establish a UK pod is timely and responsive to the budgetary pressures faced by the HE sector.

Her work allowed the establishment of a new invigorated spirit of collaboration. Her efforts have made possible new strategies and co-operative approaches between institutions, which make it possible to

substantially mitigate the effect of a journal Big Deal cancellation. This is exemplified in the N8+ venture and will strengthen JISC's hand in the current Elsevier and subsequent negotiations. Helen is the co-project lead for ILL aspects of the N8+ project. She has contributed to the report generated by Research Consulting, commissioned by JISC on the ILL aspects of preparation for cancellation of a big deal. Helen's knowledge of ILL practices and systems is well respected by her peers and she has taken on the role of the new Chair for the Northern Collaboration ILL Group.

In her nomination, Phil Sykes, Director of Libraries, Museums and Galleries, commented *"in her pioneering work with RapidILL, Helen certainly transformed both the speed and the cost of our ILL delivery at Liverpool. As the influence of her work spread it is providing us with strengthened peer-to-peer ILL networks across the country. As quick delivery ILL develops in UK libraries it will strengthen our ability to resist the exploitative demands of some publishers. This shows the transformational effect one member of staff can have; and I believe Helen richly deserves the award for which we are nominating her."*



Helen said, *"I'm delighted to have won the NAG Award for Excellence! I have always loved the sense of goodwill in Interlibrary Loan with ILL colleagues going the extra mile to help each other out. RapidILL has expanded that amazing community for us and allowed us to collaborate with over 500 national and international partners. The UK Pod goes from strength to strength and I am thrilled that my colleagues are finding RapidILL as revolutionary as we do at Liverpool."*

Helen will produce a written paper for NAG for *Taking Stock* in 2022 detailing her work.

About this Award:

Designed to promote excellence, original thinking and innovation by a library or individual within the field of Bibliographic Services and Acquisitions, the NAG Excellence Award is in its ninth year. The previous winners are Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Public Library Service (2011), Graham Stone, Dave Pattern and Briony Heyhoe-Pullar representing the University of Huddersfield (2012), Derbyshire County Council Libraries and Heritage Division (2013), Guildhall Library (2014), Nottingham Trent University (2015), the University of Kent (2016), the eBook Accessibility Audit Team (2017), University of Derby (2019), Bradford Libraries (2020).

For further information contact:

Jennie Hillyard, Business Development Manager, NAG

Email: nag.office@nag.org.uk

About NAG

NAG is a voice for everyone from all sectors associated with library and information resources: Chief Officers, librarians, publishers and service suppliers – providing leadership and a source of shared expertise for its membership in the public, academic and private sectors.

NAG produces industry standards and impartial good practice guidelines relating to its core purpose. It offers opportunities for education and training, knowledge sharing and networking through its series of regional seminars and workshops.