

Requirement: for a horizon scanning piece of work to inform future Information Management in the Research and Information Team (House of Commons Library)

Organisational profile

The Research and Information team at the House of Commons, more commonly known as the House of Commons Library, provides MPs and their staff with information and research to support them in their Parliamentary duties. Parliamentary duties include: being informed on public policy issues, chamber work relating to legislation and scrutiny of Government and constituency issues. It employs around 200 staff with a budget of £13 million.

The Library provides a range of hard copy and online resources for its customers. Online resources are provided through the Parliamentary intranet and include electronic journals and a wide range of subscription based online reference and specialist information sources. Primary users of these resources are both MPs and their staff as well as House staff (predominantly in the Research Teams and the Committee Office). Services are delivered onsite as well as remotely to constituency offices across the UK.

Around half of the staff overall are research staff. Research teams offer a confidential enquiry service to MPs and [publish briefings relevant to MPs on the internet](#). Around 30,000 confidential subject based enquiries are answered per year.

Both MPs and the Research teams are supported by professional librarians who provide advice, expertise and training on the use of information resources. A front of house team runs the traditional Library suite, manages the inflow of customer enquiries, disseminates Library research and provides a loans service. The Indexing and Data Management team adds value to parliamentary information: adding subject tags and other metadata to parliamentary business data and managing the [UK Parliament thesaurus](#).

The [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal programme](#) will present challenges, including relocation, a likely reduction in the space available to provide our services, and we may also see changes in customer behaviour.

Context

The Research and Information team is reviewing its capacity to deliver services within the context of a three-year strategy. Reflecting on capacity, skills, structure, and changing user needs and expectations requires an analysis of the challenges and opportunities presented by technological change and trends in information delivery.

Requirement

To provide an assessment of developments in technology and information management to support the continuing development and delivery of the House of Commons Library's services, including the likely impact of developing technology on customer behaviour and expectations. This will concentrate on issues likely to impact the Library and Information Management functions of the service rather than the Research function. This analysis should seek to include (listed in order of priority):

- Professional development and skills for information professionals: what are candidates looking for in new information management roles? How do organisations ensure staff remain engaged with current and emerging trends in the information profession? What skills will information professionals working in services like the House of Commons Library need in five years? How can remote working be best utilised with information professionals?

- What best practice examples are there of training and supporting end users in library and information services? What techniques are used to help users adapt as technology evolves?
- Managing a transition to a smaller service space effectively: how have services been developed or improved? How do institutional libraries compensate for the decreased visibility of the physical library as a showcase for their resources and expertise?
- Provision of information and services to a geographically dispersed audience: particularly how authentication of services, including third party subscription services, can best be managed for users. How do other organisations manage this to ensure seamless access for both customers and staff? How might remote services be developed to support changing customer demands and reduced physical space?
- Technologies that are likely to support staff providing subject based research services, including: staying aware of developments, researching public policy issues and answering reference queries using resources such as Parliamentary data and social media;
- Trends in user behaviour in terms of consumption of information for example by age or other demographics. How will researchers want to use data from external organisations, and what will their skills and desktop look like? Is there best practice for keeping pace with emerging behaviours in information consumption by customers and staff?

Notes

Research should provide greater depth and context than is available from reviewing the standard press and internet sources to which we already have access. It should draw on developments in and experiences of other professional information organisations. It would be helpful if the research identified organisations with which it would be useful to engage, to develop a deeper understanding of best practice.

We have a budget of around £8,000.

Reporting to

An individual contact, someone who has a good overview of the Research and Information team, will be provided. The work will be presented to the Research and Information Leadership team and be made available for reading by all staff.

Deliverables and deadline

A written report in a document format (such as Microsoft Word) covering the six bullet points in the requirement; a summary; suggestions for further information and contacts. An oral presentation of key findings with question and answer session.

We expect to award this contract by 22 February 2019 and for the final report to be submitted by 31 March 2019.

Submission requirements and assessment

Submit a one-page summary of the proposed approach, including deadlines, client requirements, availability and any other dependency. Bids will be assessed against the requirements outlined in this document and value for money. Bids should be submitted by email to lesterp@parliament.uk by 11am 18 February 2019.

Further information

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