

Information Specialist support in the Research Design Service

Judy Wright and Natalie King, Research Design Service Yorkshire and the Humber
 Mary Edmunds Otter, Research Design Service East Midlands

In August 2016 the 10 RDS Regions were contacted to identify all the Information Specialists (IS) to establish:

- How many Information Specialists are employed as advisers
- The typical activities of RDS Information Specialists
- Search methods and resources used

Results

- 8 out of 10 regions responded
- 4 regions have Information Specialists
 - EM, NE, WM, YH (YH in more than one local centre)
- Funding varies from 0.6 – 1 FTE
- In the 4 regions without IS other RDS advisers provide literature searching advice

Method

An online survey was sent to:

- Known Information Specialists in 4 regions (EM, WM, NE, YH)
- Information or administrative managers in the remaining 6 regions

Literature search activities of IS and RDS advisers

- All 8 regions provide search advice
- 7 provide search strategies and results
- 5 advise on and can supply text describing search methods (4 are IS)
- Most advisers search for ongoing research
- All spend from 1-2 hrs to several days on an enquiry depending on complexity

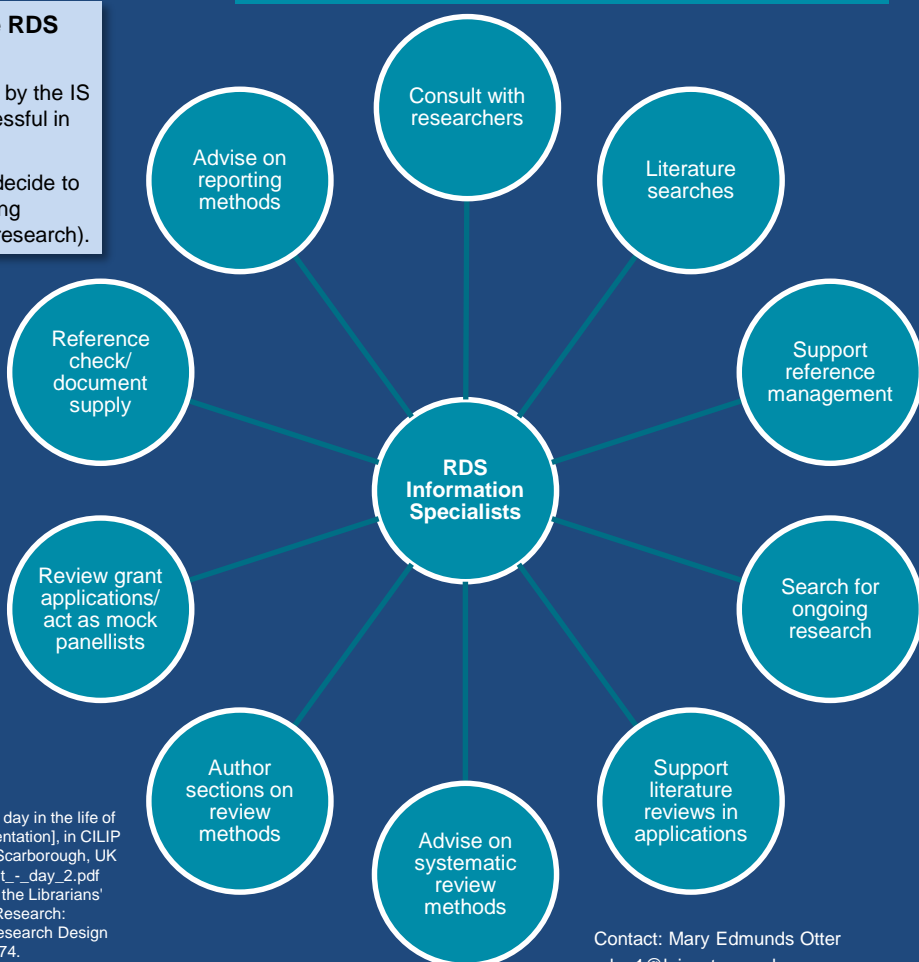
What IS do that other advisers may not

- Spend longer on the average query
- Search a wider range of resources
- use more sophisticated search methods
- Search for research priorities / known evidence uncertainties

Impact of Information Specialists in the RDS

- Improving quality of applications submitted in 2015/16 half the 50 proposals supported by the IS in RDS East Midlands or Leeds were successful in moving to 2nd stage or being funded.
- Information provided may mean researchers decide to drop or change their original question (saving researchers' time and preventing waste in research).

Activities undertaken by RDS Information Specialists include:



RDS Regions with Information Specialists



References

Wright, J. and N. King, Supporting health research proposals; a day in the life of an NIHR Research Design Service information specialist [Presentation], in CILIP Health Libraries Group Conference. 2016: 15-16th Sept 2016; Scarborough, UK https://www.cilip.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/judy_wright_-_day_2.pdf
 Edmunds Otter, ML, Wright, J. and N. King (2017). Developing the Librarians' Role in Supporting Grant Applications and Reducing Waste in Research: Outcomes From a Literature Review and Survey in the NIHR Research Design Service. *New Review of Academic Librarianship*: 23(2-3):258-274. DOI:10.1080/13614533.2017.1330219

Contact: Mary Edmunds Otter
 mleo1@leicester.ac.uk