

## Librarian's Observations on the 2013 Survey Results

- As part of the strategic review of library services currently being conducted by the Library Committee a survey was carried out via the Library's website from 24th January to 10th February 2013. A link to the online questionnaire was included in an email which was sent out to members of the Inner Temple, to chambers in the Inner and Middle Temple, and to chambers in the vicinity of Temple (excluding Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn).
- The survey questions aimed to find out how collections and services are being used within the Library and remotely, how the services are rated, what additional services or facilities may be required in future, and what other print and online resources (e.g. chambers' library) are available to users.
- A total of 795 responses were received to the online survey. (A similar survey in 2011 received 231 responses.) In addition a two-day survey of those coming into the Library in person was carried out on 5th and 6th February 2013. On the survey days 194 people visited the Library and 67 of these made second visits. 100 questionnaires were handed out and 88 were returned. 38 Library users had already completed the survey online, and the remaining users said they were too busy to complete the questionnaire.
- The results of the two 2013 surveys are complementary and broadly consistent. The 2013 online survey has a much higher response rate from members based outside the Inns than a similar survey carried out in 2011. The response rate is as follows: other London (32.1%), outside London (28.6%) and overseas (6.3%). Many of these respondents, who do not have regular access to the Library in person, feel that they cannot benefit from its collections and services. Of the 795 respondents, 157 indicate that they never use the Library in person.
- 49.3% of the respondents to the online survey are barristers in private practice and of these 38.1% (149 respondents) have practices that are predominantly publicly funded. 76.1% of respondents to the in-house survey are barristers in private practice and of these 34.3% (23 respondents) have practices that are publicly funded.
- 77.1% of respondents to the online survey are members of the Inner Temple. 18.6% of respondents are located in chambers in the Inner Temple. 51.1% of respondents to the in-house survey are members of the Inner Temple and 41.7% of respondents are in chambers within the Inner Temple.
- 39.5% of respondents to the online survey and 60.2% of respondents to the in-house survey say they regularly need to use additional hard copy resources as well as personal copies or copies provided by chambers, BPTC providers or employers. 25.2% of respondents to the online survey and 35.6% of respondents to the in-house survey say they regularly need to use additional online resources. The figure is higher in the in-house survey for those with publicly funded practices. 65.2% of these respondents say they regularly need to use additional hard copy sources and 52.2% need additional online resources. The main additional hard copy resources needed are law reports, current textbooks, journals and looseleaves. Responses and comments show that the Inner Temple Library or one of the Inn Libraries is where most respondents in London expect to find these additional hard copy and online resources.
- Responses show that more hard copy titles have been cancelled, or are likely to be cancelled, in chambers than was indicated in an earlier survey carried out in 2009. 48.2% of respondents to the in-house survey say that cancellations have been made or are likely to be made. In some cases chambers have moved to equivalent online sources. Other comments mention more

reliance on an Inn Library, and point out that even if books are retained in chambers, they are often missing when required or out-of-date. Sharing of textbooks in chambers is also mentioned. Respondents from chambers doing publicly funded work indicate that a higher level of hard copy cancellations (61.2% online survey; 77.3% in-house survey) has been made or is likely. Some responses say that publicly funded chambers can no longer afford a library.

- There is less likelihood of online subscriptions being cancelled; however, some respondents indicate that their chambers do not have any online subscriptions or that they do not subscribe to one of the two major services. Others say that the cost of personal and chambers' subscriptions to databases is too high and that they rely on the range of online services provided by the Inn Library. Respondents also complain about publishers who bundle hard copy and online resources together and then charge subscribers a much higher rate for a format they do not wish to use.
- Apart from using the resources of the Inn Libraries, barrister respondents have recourse to their own books, free Internet services, chambers' libraries, chambers' subscriptions to electronic services and employers' resources. Usage of most of these resources is similar in both the 2011 and 2013 surveys, apart from use of chambers' libraries, for which the result in the online survey was 65.8% in 2011 and 51.1% in 2013, and use of personal subscriptions to electronic services, which had similarly dropped from 37.8% to 17.5% (online survey) and from 35.2% to 17.4% (in-house survey).
- The main reasons given in the online survey for **not** using the Library regularly are that it is located too far away (58.3%) or that personal/chambers/employer's/BPTC provider's library is sufficient (34.2%).
- The main reasons given for visiting the Library are to research for a case or opinion, followed by the need to use hard copy resources and to copy specific material. The number of respondents who value the Library as a 'quiet and convenient place to work or study' has increased from 12.2% in a 2002 survey to 51.9% (online survey) and 55.3% (in-house survey) in 2013. Interestingly it is the most important factor for BPTC students answering this question, in both surveys.
- Responses show that the Library's print collections continue to be as well used as they were in 2011, if not more so. The in-house survey responses show an increase in the use of some materials. The most popular categories of material are law reports, textbooks, journals and looseleaves, which are the main categories of material identified as the additional resources not available in chambers. Survey responses from pupils and barristers in the in-house survey show a very high level of use of current textbooks.
- The categories of material (both current and non-current) which are most frequently used for research are English law, EU law, human rights and Commonwealth law. The majority of users consult the current print collections but the availability of non-current material, most of which is not available online, is also much valued. In the online survey use of non-current English law material shows an increase from 41.9% in 2011 to 89.5% in 2013 and in the in-house survey from 88.2% to 95.5%.
- The increasing use of online subscription databases within the Library (and in chambers) is evident. The relative usage of each of the individual services has not changed very much since 2011. Westlaw continues to be the most popular service and in chambers this seems to have taken over from Lawtel as the most popular subscription service.

- The Library's collections and services (online databases, enquiry service, web services, research PCs, free Wi-Fi access, word processing facilities, document supply service, opening hours) continue to be rated highly by the majority of those who use them. One facility in which there has been a marked increase in usage since 2011 is access to Wi-Fi. A number of respondents have made comments on how services could be improved and these, together with any criticisms, will be looked at very carefully by Library staff and by the Strategic Review Group.
- Responses to the question which asked if certain services (subscription databases, free Wi-Fi, PCs for research, librarians' assistance with research, Current Awareness blog, AccessToLaw, Library website) would make it more likely for a respondent to use the Library indicate that for the majority of respondents who have easy access to the Library, librarians' assistance, the subscription databases, free Wi-Fi and PCs for research (in that order) are the most important factors in using the Library. BPTC students rate librarians' assistance and the range of web services available more highly than do other categories of respondent.
- Use of the online catalogue (in-house and remotely) remains high and readership of the Current Awareness blog has increased since the last survey. There are also some very favourable comments on the blog. Responses from pupils and students in the online survey show a higher level of use of web-based services, such as the blog and AccessToLaw, than those from other user groups.
- A very large number of respondents to both surveys are still not aware of the document supply service. Others say that they have not needed to request documents (online survey: 34.6% in 2013; 63.6% in 2011). This charged-for service can be used by barristers who require photocopies by email, fax or post, whatever their location. The minority who use the service do seem to value it. Since the last survey this service has been publicised in the Library's and the Inn's newsletters and on the website but it is apparent that other ways need to be found to increase awareness.
- 50.3% of respondents to the online survey and 16.0% respondents to the in-house survey say that they read the quarterly electronic newsletter, a link to which is emailed to all members and tenants. This should be a good way of publicising Library services. However, we need to find a way to persuade recipients to read the newsletter and to check the website to keep up to date on developments in the Library. Some of the respondents who indicate that they are not aware of our web services, for example, would certainly have been alerted to them by these means.

## **Remote Access**

- There are numerous requests in the online survey for remote access to subscription services, such as Westlaw or Lexis, from respondents located outside the Inns and outside London. Respondents suggest this could be provided free of charge, or pay-as-you-go, or for a small subscription charge. This issue has been raised by respondents to previous surveys. The matter has been discussed with the service providers many times. The position is that the only licence which they will allow is for use of the databases within the Library. They are not willing to agree to a remote access arrangement for what could be thousands of members of the Inn at a lower rate than subscribers currently pay, and the Library could not afford to finance such an arrangement. The major suppliers have said that they prefer to negotiate chambers/individual subscription rates with users directly.

## **Respondents' Suggested Changes to Current Services / Arrangements**

- Do away with the booking system and login access for PCs at Gallery level. \*
- Make word processing and email available on the PCs on the Main Floor (in Rooms C, E and F). \*
- Consider extending Wi-Fi access to some or all of the other rooms in the Library v. do not turn the Library into an internet café. (*Access is currently set up in Rooms E, F and G and was extended to Room C after Easter.*)
- Have the Wi-Fi password available in the Wi-Fi enabled rooms rather than having to ask at the Enquiry Point. \*
- Improve the heating arrangements in the Library. (*The heating problems in the Treasury Building were investigated. As a result, the radiators in the rooms on the main floor of the Library were replaced during the summer.*)
- Change the rule on mobile phones to allow for use on silent for texting. \*
- Change 'barrister only use' rule in Room D. (*Some students object to this rule and some barristers are keen to retain it.*)
- Reduce the cost of the document supply service and of in-house copying.
- Provide training sessions on how to carry out legal research and on online resources. (*This is already being done on a one-to-one or small group basis for pupils.*)
- Provide documentation on how to use the primary sources (e.g. law reports) more efficiently. (*We do have Legal Research FAQs on UK and EU case law and legislation, on treaty research, and on Parliamentary Publications available in printed form in the Library and on the website.*)
- Provide a guide on services for out of London members. (*We already have one guide which is for out of London student members and we will look at producing a general guide.*)
- Have a shelf of non-law books available for browsing/borrowing near the Library entrance. (*We now have a small selection of books available for browsing in Room A.*)

\* We are always seeking ways of improving facilities and services for our users and these suggested changes were introduced in April 2013.

## **Additional Facilities / Services**

- Extend opening hours in the morning, evening and at weekends.
- Consider allowing an overnight loans services for all members.
- Add a scanning facility to the in-house copiers. (*This is already being investigated.*)
- Create a Library app for iPad, iPhones. (*We are looking at the issue of mobile compatibility and investigating measures we can take to make all our websites responsive.*)
- Extend subscriptions to online databases to include textbooks, looseleaves, court forms, precedents and more journals.
- Wherever there is an online equivalent for a hard copy source, the Library should have both.
- Provide more affordable refreshments/meals for students in the Pegasus Bar.
- Provide tea, coffee, water v. do not allow any liquids in the Library because of the likely damage to books, computers and furnishings.

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