ALN Event Planning Checklist

Academic Libraries NORTH

Thank you for organising an event in the ALN Staff Development programme for this year. Your input into the programme is what makes it so successful and is really appreciated.

The ALN Development Managers, **Nicky Freeman & Andy Walsh**, coordinate the overall ALN Staff Development programme, as well as evaluate events to inform future ALN planning, and will provide support to you where needed.

This checklist is aimed at supporting you when organising your event and should go together with the **ALN Staff Development Event Outline Form** which should be completed as soon as possible so that we can begin to advertise and publicise your event. As soon as it is ready, please send it to **Nicky & Andy**.

Organising the Event
Online Events

If your event is being run online there are several things to consider:
   o **Platform:** Zoom or MS Teams or another platform of your choice (knowing in advance which platform is being used for an event is helpful to attendees). You can choose to use ALN MS Teams or your own institutional Teams – you will be prompted to specify your preference on the event outline form.
   o **Duration:** the length of time that the event will run is important to participants. They may struggle to maintain engagement online for an extended period. ALN online events tend to be around 90-120 minutes on average, providing time for presentations and discussion.
   o **Contributions:** will you need input from other institutions, inside or outside ALN? The Development Managers can help you to put out a call for contributions to all ALN member libraries.
   o **Format:** if you would like to include small group discussions, you need to check if there is the facility to use breakout rooms on your preferred platform.
   o **Number of Participants:** the maximum number at which you would prefer to cap participants (this may be pertinent if you are planning on breakout groups)

In-person Events

Find a Suitable Venue
When locating a room on campus, please consider the suitability of the room for the style of event you want to run and bear the following in mind:
   o **Accessibility of Room & Building:** would they accommodate a wheelchair? Are there seating options in the room i.e. some chairs with arms and gaps at tables if wheelchair users are attending? Are there accessible or gender-neutral toilets close by? If not, try to direct attendees to other places on campus which can accommodate them.
   o **Room Layout** – for example, boardroom style, lecture theatre or cabaret-style; are break-out rooms / spaces also needed? *NB the preferred set up is cabaret style for most events to allow for group work and discussion.*
 	
Format of the Event
Consider the input required by participants and the format of the session:
   o if the session is an Exchange of Experience, consider setting expectations from the outset by including a standard sentence such as *"As the session is an exchange of experience, please bring along your ideas and enthusiasm and be ready to share your thoughts and feedback"*
   o what often works well at ALN sharing of experience events is 3 (maximum 4) speakers presenting for a maximum of 15-20 minutes each. In a three-hour event, this then allows for plenty of time for roundtable and group discussion, which is often cited as one of the best things about an ALN event, and means that all attendees can contribute

Partner Organisations

If you would like to work with any partner institution(s) or external bodies, the Development Managers can assist and help make the connections - for example, they can put out a 'Call for Contributions' to all ALN member libraries. It would be helpful if you could put together a form of words which can be used for this, with details of what you would ideally like from the speakers – for example, particular topics you would like to cover, specific services you would like to hear about, duration of each contribution etc.

For in-person events, please consider budgeting for travel expenses, if external speakers are involved and require reimbursement, and check with the Development Managers first whether funds are available.

Whether your event is online or in-person, to make it a success, it is useful to have a broad range of speakers on your topic so that attendees get to hear about several different initiatives.

Liaison with Presenters

Once you have found speakers/presenters for your event, it is your responsibility to discuss your requirements with them so they can plan their contributions to suit your programme. It is useful to discuss the length of time given to each speaker, time for questions etc to ensure the event is balanced and that equal priority is given to everyone.

If possible, obtain presentations in advance of the event. It is helpful if these can be saved by the host of an online event in case of any issues with screen sharing during the event or preloaded on to the PC at the venue for an in-person event.
  o **Please Note:** Most attendees/participants find it helpful to have copies of any slides used during the event – please ensure permission to share them has been granted by the owners first and then send them to the Development Managers to be shared.

For in-person events, discuss the venue/facilities with your presenters, and specify what equipment will be available, whether they would like to bring their own laptop (including Apple Macs etc).

Arrange Refreshments

For in-person events, the host institution usually covers the cost of one set of refreshments (tea/coffee/water - and biscuits if possible). Costs should hopefully be minimal. Participants could be invited to bring their own lunch to any pre- or post-event networking element.
  o **Please Note:** if you are providing food and refreshments, ensure it caters for all dietary, cultural and religious needs

Promoting the Event

The Development Managers will set up bookings on **Eventbrite** to promote your event (once your completed **event outline form** has been received). This will then link to the **ALN webpage**.

They will promote your event via the ALN website, relevant ALN JISCMail lists, Twitter and communication channels local to ALN members, e.g. regular electronic newsletters and updates.

Most events can be opened to external attendees at the discretion of the host, particularly for online events where a cap on numbers is not required. If you decide that spare places can be offered externally, agree where you will advertise them. If external staff will be present, it might be worth discussing with any staff who are new to presenting (e.g. who may be using the event as a training opportunity and to develop their own presentation skills) whether they would be happy to present to external participants.

Joining Instructions

The joining instructions should be sent by the host/facilitator of the event. The Development Managers will provide you with a list of names and email addresses registered on Eventbrite.

For **online events**, please send the joining instructions well ahead of time, either in a calendar appointment (preferred) or by email, so that participants have an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the platform you intend to use. Please ensure the instructions are clear and straightforward.

For **in-person events**, please send the joining instructions email to your attendees at least a week before the event, to allow for staff to make appropriate travel arrangements. Please include local directions to the venue, the exact details of the building & room, including the postcode and website link or campus map. Ensure you detail all public transport options and provide parking advice, especially those with accessibility requirements.

On the Day (in-person)

Name Badges:
- if you plan to make use of name badges, consider providing a section for attendees to add in their preferred pronouns
- take care to spell complex names correctly or ask people to write their own when they check-in

Housekeeping:
- please ensure arrangements for housekeeping/health & safety/fire alarms are dealt with on the day

Directions to the Room:
- please ensure you provide directional signs to the room, especially if the building is difficult to negotiate. Signs on doors and stairways help attendees to find the room.

Feedback

The Development Managers will create an online feedback form which will include standard questions about the event and how the attendees have benefitted or will benefit from attending. Additional tailored questions can also be added as required - please send these to the **Development Managers** before the event.

The Development Managers usually email the form to attendees on the day of the event and send a follow-up reminder a week later. For online events, it can also be useful to include a link to the form in the Chat so that attendees can complete the form during the event if they choose to. If this is done, it might also be useful to allow time at the end of the event for attendees to complete the form.

The form remains open for two weeks for most events, though this can be extended if required.

Role of the ALN Development Managers

The Development Managers will support you as follows:

- helping choose a suitable date for the event based on other events already planned
- putting you in touch with other ALN members and requesting contributions to your event
- suggesting potential presenters or themes
- attending any initial planning meetings, if required
- creating the Eventbrite entry and assisting with event promotion
- providing a list of names and email addresses before the event for you to use when sending out the joining instructions
- attending the events where possible

- o sending out the online feedback form (and reminder) after the event
- o consolidating and anonymising the feedback from participants (this can then be used in any feedback you provide to your institution or with any of the speakers)
- o evaluating the events, in liaison with the host institution, focusing on content and what participants got from the event
- o arranging for the slides to be saved and shared after the event