

Innovation Fund Projects

You can see all the projects ALN has funded since the Innovation Fund began below:

Innovation Fund Projects 2025-26

In May 2025, we funded 4 projects:

- **Calm Spaces. Aim:** To evaluate and develop calm spaces at the University of Huddersfield and Sheffield Hallam University. It is hoped that the results of the project will have a positive impact on student wellbeing. (Huddersfield and Sheffield Hallam)
- **Inclusive Academic Reading Project. Aim:** To investigate the habits, preferences, and motives of undergraduate and postgraduate students regarding university reading lists and academic reading preferences; and to develop an evidence base to enhance retention, progression, and completion rates, with a particular focus on students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. (Manchester Met and Sheffield Hallam)
- **Accessible Library Induction Guides. Aim:** To investigate offering basic library services guides in different formats: print, large print, audio, video, and online to make library guidance more accessible to students. The project teams will work with students in the creation of the guides and students will review the content of library induction sessions and create a list of “library essential facts”. (Chester)
Outputs: [Best practice in accessible library guides](#) and [Dos and don'ts accessibility checklist](#) and [Print accessibility checklist](#)
- **Reducing barriers and supporting people seeking sanctuary in realising their academic potential. Aim:** To evaluate, expand and evolve the University of Hull's Sanctuary Associate Membership scheme, utilising UX research methods, for example, customer journey mapping, card sorting, creating user personas and user benchmarking to evaluate the use of our current provision and identify user challenges. (Hull)

Innovation Fund Projects 2024-25

In April 2024, we funded 5 projects:

- **Evaluating university family study rooms. Aim:** To evaluate the family study rooms at the University of Hull & the University of Bradford and to discover possibilities to expand our resources to meet the needs of families within the constraints of limited library space. (Bradford and Hull)
Outputs: [Family Room Toolkit](#) and [Library Family Rooms Project Summary](#)
- **Breaking the Mold – Tackling Preconceptions and Unconscious Bias. Aim:** To investigate biases and preconceptions and how these can be analysed to enhance our interactions with others. (Teesside and Sunderland)
Outputs: [Building a Positive Campus Environment Workshop Outline](#)
- **Student Engagement with Disability Support in the Library: Are we doing enough? Aim:** To ensure the Library Disability Support service effectively assists all students with disabilities. Investigate the lack of engagement and whether there is more that can be done to encourage students to exploit the support that is on offer and thereby have a better, more equitable experience. (Huddersfield and York St John)
Outputs: [Student Engagement with Disability Support in the Library](#) and [Are we doing enough Top Tips](#)
- **Menopause Meetups. Aim:** To support the running of future Menopause Meetups between April 2024 and December 2024. Using these as a springboard to open up communication between current and potential meetup and/or cafe hosts across the ALN network to share ideas and experiences, helping menopause support events grow and thrive. (Hull and Lancaster)
Outputs: [Menopause Meetups Report – Menopause Support](#)
- **Developing Zine Collections with Students. Aim:** To evaluate our collections with students and consider if our current collections reflect a diverse range of creators, narratives, and lived experiences. Opening the collection development process and sharing decision-making powers would be part of the project work to diversify collections. (Special Collections Museum MMU and Salford)
Outputs: to follow

Innovation Fund Projects 2022-23

This was the pilot year and the deadline for bids was 31st October 2022, with an aim for the projects to start in January 2023, running for 6-9 months.

In January 2023, we funded 6 projects:

- **Neurodiverse Library Leaders: strengthening ALN leadership through neurodiversity.** **Aim:** To champion neurodiverse library leaders and potential leaders, strengthening library leadership by inclusion of under-utilised talent. (Lancaster and Huddersfield)
[Outputs](#)
- **Library access and support for local refugee & asylum seeker groups.** **Aim:** To support Asylum seekers and Refugees (AS&R) in the Lancaster & Morecambe District, working with three groups that interact with AS&R in the local area. These include Global Link, East meets West: a cross-cultural group of women; and the Ukrainian Hub. (Lancaster and Cumbria) [Report](#)
- **Inclusive Imaginations.** **Aim:** To use the range of the collections of the UoL Special Collections & Archives and Museums & Galleries, and LJMU Special Collections & Archives to develop and deliver a series of student-focussed, creative workshops linked to EDI events throughout February – April 2023. Working with an artist, the project will reference significant dates, including (but not exclusively) Race Equality Week, LGBTQ+ History Month, International Women’s Day and Autism Awareness Day. (Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores) [Review of the workshops](#)
- **Living while black – anti racism talk for student-facing teams.** **Aim:** The aim of the project is to provide an informed and different view of anti-racism from speaker Marsha Garrett, an advocate for anti-racism who uses her own personal experience to share her story. Sharing this insight with Library and student facing teams, as part of an ongoing professional development programme, will help with understanding of what it is like for a person of colour living in today’s society. (Teesside).
Output: Staff at Teesside worked with Marsha to develop a set of modified slides for staff working with students to be able to go back and consult/review. These slides were then developed into a libguide [Beginning to understand racism and anti-racism – Living While Black – LibGuides at Teesside University](#).
- **Library services for international students in ALN member institutions.** **Aim:** To research how many library services follow the ‘key concepts’ recommended in the SCONUL report of 2007, *Library Services for International Students*. The project teams plan to conduct some focus groups with researchers and PGT students on their experiences of studying in HE. At the end of the project, we will make some recommendations for good practice in ALN libraries. (Bradford and York)
- **Human Library Joint Initiative.** **Aim:** to work together to create two separate in-person Human Library events at each of the institutions, both project teams meeting regularly to share learnings and best practice and to develop [a toolkit](#) for ALN staff who would like to

create and/or host Human Library related content and events in the future. Hull plans to host their event in the spring, using both staff and students as “books”. The Huddersfield event will run in the summer for staff only. (Huddersfield and Hull) The [Human Library Toolkit](#) is now available.