I have recently returned to health libraries after a six year break. I had left my job when taking maternity leave and found it difficult to get back in again, ending up in public libraries instead. I enjoyed the various roles I had but still felt that I had lost my way slightly. A key moment came when I attended the CILIP Umbrella conference in 2013 and saw Victoria Treadway's presentation, it sparked a chain of thought about the direction I wanted my career to go in and made me take decisive action. I quit my job managing a small rural public library and took a very junior maternity cover post at a hospital library, just so I could get my foot back in the door. I am now an Assistant Clinical Librarian and love my job. I feel at home in health libraries and am excited about the potential and possibilities they offer.

I have always been interested in research, both conducting it and supporting it. I can see the value that research in health libraries adds to the field and believe that we should adopt a culture that nurtures and encourages it. As we are increasingly required to put a value on the work we do research is crucial in demonstrating our worth. This conference would give me the opportunity to learn about the essential skills I need to begin the research process. I am realistic in my ambitions – I realise that I won’t be able to return to work and embark on a full scale project, but the background knowledge will be there and will help me shape my ideas when the opportunity for research arises.

The conference also covers supporting research, something that would be very useful for me to learn more about in relation to my current role. Our Information Service has a good relationship with the Trust research department, but it’s something that we feel we can improve on. As an assistant clinical librarian the majority of my work is literature searching, some of which is for research projects, but there are other ways in which we can support research and I would like to explore these. Attending the conference would benefit my employing organisation as well as myself.

I will be sharing what I learn with my colleagues, in particular my line manager, as I am sure it will help shape the service we provide and enable us to form closer links with our own research department. I would also report back to the LIHNN Clinical Librarians group, as our meetings are a great platform for exchanging information and best practice. I am happy to provide a report for the HLG website and / or newsletter.

I have recently started on the Chartership journey and this conference would be an ideal opportunity for me to fully explore an area that I am keenly interested in yet have little practical experience of.