

Exploring the research experiences, skills and confidence of LIK practitioners – a methodological reflection

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Abstract: This paper describes and analyses the mixed methods approach used to explore the research confidence, skills and experiences of library, information and knowledge (LIK) practitioners in the UK. The rationale behind the deployment of the mixed methods and approach is discussed in relation to the research project requirement. The discussion also contributes to wider understanding of mixed methods research and its implications for LIK practitioners conducting workplace research across all LIK sectors.

Keywords: Library, information and knowledge practitioners; practitioner research; practitioner-led research

1. Introduction to the “Library, Information and Knowledge Practitioners’ Experiences of Research” project

Evidence-based practice is one of the values of the library, information and knowledge (LIK) profession (CILIP, no date), and research is a key element of evidence-based practice. Conducting research allows LIK practitioners to explore service success and understand user needs, essential when practitioners are increasingly asked to justify the spending and existence of their service. However, LIK practitioners are rarely viewed as researchers or research leaders (Evidence Base, 2021) and there is limited evidence exploring their confidence and skills to conduct research. Therefore, this project sought to establish a baseline from which LIK practitioners in the UK can be supported in developing key research skills.

The research project described in this paper was carried out by members of the Library and Information Research Group (LIRG), a member network within the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). LIRG’s focus is the encouragement and enablement of LIK practitioner research. The project was titled “Library, Information and Knowledge Practitioners’ Experiences of Research”. The project team was comprised of two LIK academics and eight LIK practitioners, engaged in a variety of LIK roles at different library services. Five of the practitioners were based in university libraries, two in NHS healthcare libraries and one in an information service within a research institute. Between the 10 members, a wealth of LIK practice and research experience from novice to expert was represented. The research was not funded and was undertaken solely through interest in the subject theme and the requirement from LIRG to understand better how LIK practitioners are motivated to conduct research. The meta-research focus (i.e. research on research), cross institutional team approach and the use of multiple methods give particular nuance to the project’s methodological approach, which will provide the focus of this paper.

2. Conceptual framing

Mixed methods in library, information and knowledge research

Mixed methods research is common within the library, information, and knowledge academic disciplines largely because as an approach, it sits at the intersection of hard data (e.g. systems, metrics, metadata) and human experience (e.g. learning, seeking, and sharing) and aligns to pragmatic philosophical approaches (Robson, 2002). This extends to practitioner researchers within LIK, both in the context of conducting research and evaluation into their own services, but also in contributing to the wider disciplinary research agenda.

Convergent design is often a feature of mixed methods research, where both qualitative and quantitative data are collected at the same time and compared to see if they confirm or contradict each other. Cresswell and Plano Clark (2017) define the convergent design as a 'one-phase' approach: quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed separately but during the same timeframe, after which the results are merged to see if they confirm or disconfirm each other. In effect, this approach allows for triangulation across the two methods. In this regard and in the context of LIK Ngulube (2022) champions this design as a pragmatic way for practitioners to validate system-generated data against user narratives simultaneously.

In the discourse of mixed methods research, explanatory sequential design is often also discussed alongside convergent design (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2017). Explanatory sequential design involves using quantitative data to identify trends, then using qualitative methods to explain those trends in depth (there is also a version which operates from qualitative to quantitative (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2017). Explanatory sequential design (Quantitative → Qualitative) is arguably a natural fit for the LIK practitioner's workflow. It appears most frequently when there is a need to socialise, humanise or investigate a statistical trend. Connaway and Radford (2021) highlight this design as essential for LIK practitioner research and evaluation, where initial survey scores provide a baseline, but follow-up interviews reveal the nuances of the user-librarian interaction. However, an explanatory sequential approach using surveys and interviews can just as easily be applied to LIK practitioners conducting disciplinary research.

Practitioner-led research

Practitioner-led research is often referred to as 'practice-based research'. Instead of an outside 'expert' observing a community, the people working within the field conduct the research themselves to solve immediate problems within their practice or workplace. Action research is one approach that can be used. As an established research method, action research uses a spiral approach to identify a problem in practice, implement a change or intervention, observe the impact through data collection and analysis and then reflect to make changes before repeating the research cycle (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988). Other features of practitioner-led research are self-reflection and reflexivity, and having an 'insider' expertise, which impacts the way the research is carried out (Wilson, 2016). Reflexivity occurs when the 'insider' researcher situates themselves within the problem or context under scrutiny through the practitioner-led research. In traditional research, being an 'insider' is often seen as a risk for bias. In practitioner-led research however, it can be seen as an advantage, in that the researcher already understands the environment, and therefore has a tacit

knowledge, allowing them to sense nuances in behaviour that an outside observer might miss (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010; McNiff, 2013).

Whilst practitioner-led research is a conceptual framing for this study, and a mixed method design was used, elements of action research were deployed in that, at the heart of the study, is a profession-wide problem (or challenge), which the research sought to address. Throughout the process, the team came together to discuss and reflect on the approach and adjust or continue accordingly. For example, at the outset of the project the team committed to undertaking a survey, however on initial analysis of the survey results, the team confirmed that conducting interviews would be beneficial to further understand the survey results. The positionality of the research team as ‘insiders’ certainly provided local knowledge, which allowed for a pragmatic approach to the research, ensuring that the outcomes would be applicable to the local (UK) LIK practice-based research environment.

Collaborative research teams

In the social sciences, collaborative practitioner research teams operate differently than a traditional top-down research project (i.e. a project with funding and assigned principal investigators). The focus shifts from studying a specific subject or research question to learning together through a shared professional lens. In effect there is a deliberate breakdown of the traditional hierarchy between ‘the academic’ and ‘the practitioner’, with the practical expertise of the practitioner being valued as much as the methodological expertise of the academic, and where all members contribute to the development of the research approach, research method and data analysis (Eikland, 2012). Essentially, discourse around collaborative teams focuses on practitioners and academics working together, whilst maintaining representation of their side of the partnership. This scenario assumes that the respective partners are either academics or practitioners, yet those boundaries are not necessarily as clearcut for this project. In their work on communities of practice, Wenger-Traynor et al. (2017) focus on the concept of a ‘boundary partnership’ in which a third space is created through people coming from different disciplinary and professional backgrounds and cultures. Much of the discussion around collaborative research teams also focuses on the ‘community of practice’ element (Wenger, 1999) and how individuals within such a research team come together through a shared interest and a desire to learn more the interest, and from each other. This is certainly the case with the collaborative research team involved in this project in that their ‘community of practice’ is afforded by their positionality within and membership of the CILIP Library and Information Research Group.

3. Context: The “Library, Information and Knowledge Practitioners’ Experiences of Research” project

Aims and objectives

Whilst this paper focuses exclusively on a discussion of the methodological approach of the project, it is important to understand the context of the overall project in which the methodology was used. The overall aims of the “LIK Practitioners’ Experience of Research” project were to gain a baseline understanding of UK library, information and knowledge practitioners’ experiences, skills and confidence in taking part in research; and to provide an opportunity for a group of LIK practitioners to gain research skills through participation in the project.

The research team achieved these aims by working collaboratively via the following objectives:

- a literature review to establish the context of the project;
- an online survey exploring the experiences, confidence and skills of UK LIK practitioners to undertake research;
- semi-structured interviews for establishing a more in-depth understanding of LIK practitioners’ experience.

4. Design and approach of the project

The overall “LIK Practitioners’ Experience of Research” project was conceived by the LIRG Committee (who also became the research team) to ascertain a base line understanding of research awareness, preparedness and experience in LIK professionals in the UK. The idea for the project and collaborative approach was pitched by one of the academic members of the team as a means of giving team members an opportunity to gain experience in research and also learn from and support one another (in line with Wenger, 1999). Team members were encouraged to take part in elements which suited them (either because they had the skills or wanted to learn them, and where they had enough available capacity to participate). Once this approach had been established subteams met separately to take forward each element (literature review, survey, interviews) with regular full team meetings to share progress, reflect and collectively decide next steps. A project in Australia (Partridge et al., 2024), provided inspiration for the initial aim and data collection method. The Australian project sought to identify the existing knowledge base and confidence of library and information practitioners to engage with research (Partridge, Given and Murphy, 2024) by using a survey to explore the experience of library and information science practitioners’ experience in research. The findings from this study acknowledge a recognition of the importance of research to the library and information sector in Australia, but a gap in the ability to support and conduct research (Partridge et al., 2024). The LIRG committee became curious as to whether the UK LIK landscape would be

similar and conducted the research project described in this paper, which ran from 2023 to 2025. Further details of the project, including the findings and outcomes from the survey element can be found in the research report published by the group at the conclusion of the project (Ramsted et al., 2025). Initial findings were also disseminated through conferences and seminars during the research project (Dishman, 2024; Brettle and Appleton, 2024; Brettle et al., 2024; Siddall and Brettle, 2024; Brettle, 2025).

Project methods

The research took a pragmatic approach (Robson, 2002) and used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design (Cresswell and Plano Clarke, 2017) to explore the research experience of LIK practitioners. An exploration of the literature suggested there was little published on the research experience of United Kingdom LIK practitioners, nor had this been systematically examined on a national scale across the whole sector. This study therefore is unique in providing a UK baseline for the sector and its use of a community of practice approach to develop research capability amongst library practitioners across different sectors.

The research involved two main data collection techniques: an online survey and follow up semi-structured interviews. These two methods will be described and evaluated in detail below. A separate piece of work is underway to evaluate the community of practice approach and the experiences of the project team.

Ethics

The project was given full ethical approval from the University of Salford, UK. All survey and interview participants provided voluntary informed consent to take part in the research (BERA, 2018). All data was anonymised to remove potential for identification of individuals within the datasets (BERA, 2018; CILIP, 2018).

Sample

The survey was targeted at any LIK practitioner currently working in the UK, regardless of sector or membership of a professional body. The survey was promoted across the UK LIK sector in the summer and autumn of 2023, via UK library and information science email lists, the newsletters of relevant professional bodies, social media (twitter and LinkedIn), in person at a national conference (Brettle et al., 2023), and on LIRG's website.

The survey generated 278 individual responses. The self-selecting participants broadly reflected the demographics of CILIP members.

The survey was completed anonymously, but there was no obvious evidence of response distorters, responses from bots, or other types of fraudulent response

(Johnson, Adams and Byrne, 2024: 149), and therefore no completed surveys needed to be removed from the pool at this stage.

Survey respondents needed to indicate consent at the beginning of the survey, followed by a question regarding eligibility as a working LIK practitioner in the UK. However, on analysis of the survey data, it was noted that the eligibility question had not worked as anticipated, with five respondents not meeting the eligibility criteria. These responses were manually removed from the dataset during the analysis and write up phase of the project. Demographic data was collected at the end of the survey allowed comparison with CILIP membership, and comparison between sectors.

A total of 105 participants indicated a willingness to be interviewed, which needed to be filtered to a manageable number, whilst maintaining the integrity of the research. Therefore, purposive sampling (Emmel, 2013) was used at this stage to ensure a variety of library and information sectors, research experience and seniority were represented. Twenty-five participants were subsequently invited to interview and 12 accepted. Interviewees were asked to read a participant information sheet and complete a consent form prior to being interviewed.

Phase one: survey

The survey used in this research project focused on LIK practitioners' experiences and insights of research, and was adapted with permission (Partridge, 2022) from an unpublished survey used in an Australian study (Partridge et al., 2024; Partridge, Given and Murphy, 2024; Given et al., 2025). Questions from the original Australian survey were amended by a subgroup of the research team to reflect the UK educational, geographical, and organisational context. The adapted survey had 49 questions, many with subparts designed to gather granular information from respondents. The survey was then added to Jisc Online Surveys (Jisc, no date), which is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) requirements in the UK, in line with ethics approval. It was then piloted amongst the wider LIRG research team and with two external academic colleagues, who both had extensive experience of LIK research and survey approaches. This pilot enabled the 'fine tuning' and minor revisions to the survey regarding clarity and consistency of questions, question order and the elimination of some repetitive questions. The final version of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

Phase two: interviews

Survey respondents were invited to share their contact details if they were interested in taking part in a follow-up interview. (These contact details were removed whilst data analysis was underway, maintaining the anonymity of the

participants.) To develop topics for the interviews, survey responses were analysed, and key themes were identified for further deeper investigation. The main themes were:

- experience of academic and practitioner research;
- challenges, barriers and opportunities for involvement in workplace research;
- support for workplace research;
- research culture;
- dissemination of research outputs and outcomes;
- LIK research ambition.

Semi-structured interview questions were developed based on this analysis by a separate subgroup of the research team, with peer training provided for those with no previous experience and the questions were piloted with a member of the research team who was not involved in the qualitative analysis. The interview questions are shared in Appendix B.

All interviews were carried out online by the interview subteam using Microsoft Teams (Microsoft, no date b), which automatically transcribed the discussion. Interviews were scheduled for an hour and a half, although the actual length of the interviews varied. A member of the research team checked the transcripts and then sent them to interviewees, asking for confirmation that they were an accurate record. Interviewees had two weeks to respond with amendments or redactions and could withdraw their consent up to this stage: no participants asked to do so.

5. Analysis

Quantitative analysis of survey results

The survey aimed to gather LIK practitioners' experiences and insights. The survey was long with multiple components, so the survey team met to determine the focus of the analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to identify patterns within this sample, but inferential statistical analysis was not used to extrapolate these patterns out to a wider population (de Vaus, 2014: 207 - 208).

Initial quantitative analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel (Microsoft, no date a). Some answer categories were amalgamated to allow for meaningful analysis of the survey. For example, different areas of LIK employment were condensed to "university library", "health library" (the two largest groups of respondents), and "other" (see Appendix C). Similarly, the granular time periods ("within the last year" etc) were combined using Excel formulae to create three new categories of "recent" (five or fewer years ago), "not recent" (six or more years ago) and "never".

Qualitative analysis of the survey results

Qualitative questions were analysed separately from quantitative questions. The qualitative responses were auto coded using NVivo 14 software (Lumivero, no date) and frequent themes (more than three references across the responses) were then analysed by two members of the research team, allowing for a more detailed thematic analysis (King and Brooks, 2018) of these key findings. A summary of this analysis was produced for each major theme and subtheme, highlighting the similarities and differences across participants' responses. The major theme headings of evidence, research, and practice were then cross queried using the matrix coding function in the NVivo 14 software by sector, for example "evidence" and "health", "evidence" and "university". This matrix approach allowed for the identification of potential differences across the different sectors.

Analysis of interviews

The interview transcripts were anonymised and then coded into themes using NVivo 14 software. After initial coding, thematic analysis was carried out across the whole of the coded data (King and Brooks, 2018) focussing on the most commonly occurring themes. Participants were coded by sector, management responsibility and leadership role, making it possible to identify any differences in responses by sector and position held. Findings were aggregated by both theme and sector, allowing for customised and dispersed dissemination of the findings (e.g. the research findings for the academic library sector; the research findings for the health library sector, etc.).

6. Discussion: considerations for using a mixed methods approach in collaborative practitioner-led research

Methodological approach

From the outset the research project was practitioner led, with a view to discovering more about the research preparedness and experience of the UK LIK sector. The interest of the practitioners involved was the driving force of the project and naturally led to a pragmatic approach being developed, in keeping with the 'real world' and workplace situation of the research problem (Robson, 2002; Costley, Elliot & Gibbs, 2010). Due to the professional background of the researchers involved, a mixed method approach with a (Quantitative → Qualitative) explanatory sequential design was a natural choice of methodological approach as it aligned with the pragmatic real world problem (Robson, 2002), the research team were familiar with this method and it is appropriate for LIK research (Pickard, 2013; Connaway and Radford 2021). In

addition, the research team openly acknowledge the influence of the Australian study (Partridge, Given & Murphy, 2024).

Survey design: lessons learnt

Data was successfully collected using the mixed method approach described in this paper, but, on reflection, there are lessons to be learnt around the research design.

Having a large cross-sectorial and cross-institutional team did lead to the adaptation of a complex survey, which was then potentially made even more complex. The final survey (see Appendix A) was very detailed, consisting of 49 questions, many with multiple subparts, and/or gave many options for answers. For example, question 11 asked about years of experience in library, information or knowledge work, and gave seven possible time frames to choose from. These multiple option questions provided very granular data, but some answers had to be aggregated into broader groups for analysis. When designing or adapting surveys, future researchers may wish to consider whether they want to gather granular data that may need combining, or whether they should create a simpler survey with fewer categories. A simpler survey would reduce the time required of participants and simplify analysis, but may lead to a narrower focus, impacting the research findings and the conclusions that can be drawn. In this case, despite the complexity, retaining similarity with the original survey allowed findings to be compared with the Australian study, contributing to an international evidence base on this topic.

The survey used sector-related terminology such as ‘practitioner’ and ‘research’. This is generally seen as good practice within practitioner-led research, where the researchers are themselves professional participants (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, McNiff, 2013), but when qualitative questions were analysed, it became apparent that participants had differing definitions for these terms. For example, question 16 (an open question) asked participants what they understood the term research to mean and respondents gave many different answers. However, elsewhere survey participants, participants were asked about their research experience. Each participant’s unique understanding of the definition of research would have influenced their answer to the research experience question. These issues were debated during the development of the survey, and definitions were deliberately not included to capture an understanding of practitioners’ views of the term. In hindsight, it may have been helpful to restructure the questions to allow the inclusion of definitions of some of the terminology.

Although the survey was piloted during development, the research team and critical friends who participated in the pilot did not record the route taken through the questions. This is counter to ‘tried and tested’ mixed methods approaches for similar social science research studies (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2017). The use of personas when piloting the survey would have

explored the questions from different perspectives (beyond the perspectives of the research team). This technique would also have allowed the tracing of different paths through the questions to test the integrity of the structure. As the pilot testers were from similar backgrounds and experience, the use of personas would have identified any lack of clarity in the questions for those in different sectors and/or with differing experiences. Using personas may also have established whether later questions made sense based on earlier answers - for example, a participant who answered “no” to the question “Do you hold or are you studying towards a library and information science or knowledge management professional qualification?” should not then get asked “what year did you/or will you complete your first professional LIS/KM qualification?” These are important take-aways from the design stage of the research, particularly regarding the survey. As a key data collection instrument, it is important to get this as ‘fine-tuned’ as possible through vigorous testing and piloting, particularly when targeting participants from across all LIK sectors (Pickard, 2013; Connaway & Radford, 2021).

Participant recruitment and selection

The purposive and self-selecting sampling, and the recruitment and selection of participants, was generally successful, and reflected best practice in research methods (Emmel, 2013). Having a large research team was an enabler in this respect as the 10 team members were able to use their own professional and academic networks to promote participation in the project. The project was promoted in a number of ways and through a variety of platforms, including through the research team’s various networks within the health and higher education sectors, social media, CILIP special interest groups, and conferences, but respondents from some sectors were very limited, particularly from school libraries and public libraries. This could be related to the professional networks of the research team (which overlapped and largely covered academic or health libraries) or a lack of interest in research across the broader LIK profession.

The ‘insider’ perspective

The under representation of some LIK sectors in the survey phase was mitigated during the follow-up interviews. The research team, with their ‘insider’ perspective, and using the responses from the survey, were able to purposively select interview participants to ensure a more even balance of representation from the different LIK sectors (Robson, 2002). For example, one of the few school librarians who had indicated that they would like to be interviewed was automatically selected, so that this sector could be represented. This approach also ensured that there was not an uneven balance towards academic and university LIK practitioners chosen for interview, even though many of them had volunteered.

The 'insider' researcher perspective was beneficial during the semi-structured interviews, in that the three team members who conducted the interviews were able to do so on a 'peer' basis with their interviewees. This is widely acknowledged as one of the main advantages of conducting workplace and practitioner-led research (Costley, Elliot & Gibbs, 2010; McNiff, 2013) and allowed for comfortable dialogue and conversation to take place during the interviews whilst maintaining structure and consistency (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2017).

Cross sector collaboration

Overall, the breadth in numbers on the research team was an advantage, and the shared experiential learning to come from the project was well received by team members. Wenger et al. (2014) suggest that the collective desire for learning that occurs in a research community of practice can be a significant driving force for collaborative research. This was certainly the case with this project in that there was a strong appetite for conducting the research and deepening the comprehension and understanding of the current situation across the whole research team. However, such a dynamic is not without its complications. The research team had members from multiple institutions, so it was important to have a strategy to store and share documentation. General documentation relating to the project, and the development of the questions for the survey and interviews were stored and edited in a shared Google Drive. This was easily accessible to all members of the research team. Using a shared repository for project documentation aids with record keeping and understanding the context of decisions made. Using a shared research journal, with records of actions and decisions, can also help with analysis of findings and dissemination of results and can also support individuals who are not able to attend every meeting.

All research data was held securely at the University of Salford and only accessible to individuals who needed access, for example to analyse the survey data. Similarly, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in the institutional Microsoft Teams, where the interview data was also securely stored and analysed. This was all designed to meet ethics requirements in relation to GDPR but did require setting up network accounts to allow access to secured information on the institutional server for those outside the lead organisation. Whilst practical and achievable, further consideration could be given to the logistics of having multiple practitioners (i.e. not on research contracts) from different types of organisations needing to access systems. Working across multiple institutions can, and indeed did, create logistical issues. Therefore, at the outset of the project, it is helpful to confirm which specialist software will be used and ensure that all who need this have access. Converting data and files between different versions of software or different operating systems should also be considered.

7. Conclusion

This paper sets out the rationale and methods used to undertake a project designed to gain a baseline understanding of UK LIK practitioners' experiences, skills and confidence in undertaking research. The project is unique in two ways: firstly, it is the first to examine this issue across the UK LIK sector at a national level; and secondly, from a methodological perspective it provided a group of LIK practitioners, with varying degrees of research experience, an opportunity to undertake a research project through experiential learning.

The explanatory sequential mixed methods approach allowed wide scale data collection using an adapted pre-existing survey. Following the survey with semi-structured interviews provided a richer picture of the responses and a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the situation.

Using a mixed methods approach also enabled the research team to develop and experience a broader set of research skills. All stages of the research were undertaken as a group endeavour, with a mixture of experience in the subgroups responsible for different stages and elements of the research. Whilst large multi-disciplinary teams and teams are common within formal academic contexts, this is not so common in LIK practitioner environments. This paper has sought to present some of the advantages and challenges that occur when using a mixed method research approach in collaborative practitioner-led research projects. Through reflecting on the methodological experiences of those involved in this research project, this paper has provided significant insight into the complexities and practicalities of such collaborations. Subsequently this paper can be used to inform methodological considerations and decisions for future similar research.

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Appendix A – Final survey

Q1	I confirm that I have read and understand the Participant and Consent information sheet (Dated: 04/07/23) for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions (further information available from the LIRG web pages)
Q2	I understand that my name will remain confidential
Q3	I understand that the information I provide could be used as part of the final evaluation report or journal publication, but I will not be identifiable if any of my comments are include
Q4	Are you currently employed in library, information or knowledge work in the UK?
Q5	In what area of library, information or knowledge work are you employed?
Q5_a	If you selected Other, please specify:
Q6	What is your current library, information or knowledge job title?
Q7	Do you have a leadership role?
Q8	Do you have a management role?
Q9	Do you have line management responsibility?
Q10	What is the status of your current library, information or knowledge employment?

Q10_a	If you selected Other, please specify:
Q11	How many years' experience do you have in library, information or knowledge work?
Q12	Do you hold or are you studying toward a library and information science (LIS) or knowledge management (KM) professional qualification?
Q12_a	What type of LIS/KM qualification do you hold/are studying? (Select all that apply)
Q12_a_i	If you selected Other, please specify:
Q12_b	What year did you/or will you complete your first professional LIS/KM qualification?
Q13	What is your highest level qualification (LIS/KM or non-LIS/KM)?
Q13_a	If you selected Other, please specify:
Q14	Are you a chartered member or fellow of CILIP?
Q15	Do you hold or are you studying towards a research qualification?
Q15_a	What type of research qualification is it?
Q15_a_i	If you selected Other, please specify:
Q15_b	What year did you or will you complete your research qualification?
Q15_c	What discipline was/is it in?
Q15_d	Why did you undertake a research qualification?
Q16	What do you understand the term 'research' to mean?
Q17	What do you understand the term 'evidence based practice' to mean?
Q18	What do you understand the term 'practitioner-researcher' to mean?
Q19	During your professional LIS/KM qualification did you undertake a research project?
Q20	If you have a different or another higher-level qualification (degree or higher), did you undertake a research project?
Q21	To what extent do you agree that your LIS/KM higher-level qualification(s) (degree or higher) prepared you to read and understand research-based literature?
Q22	To what extent do you agree that your non-LIS/KM higher-level qualification(s) (degree or higher) prepared you to read and understand research-based literature?
Q23	To what extent do you agree that your LIS/KM higher-level qualification(s) (degree or higher) adequately prepared you to conduct original research?

Q24	To what extent do you agree that your non-LIS/KM higher-level qualification(s) (degree or higher) adequately prepared you to conduct original research?
Q25	What support options does your employer provide to enable you to conduct research? (Select all that apply)
Q25_a	If you selected Other, please specify:
Q26	Do you include research in your annual performance review and planning process?
Q27	Thinking about the past 5 years, please select any research related educational or training activities that you have participated in. (Select all that apply)
Q27_a	If you selected Other, please specify:
Q28	How much experience do you have in the following areas? (Where 1 is none and 5 is significant amount)
Q28_1	Generating research ideas
Q28_2	Developing a research question
Q28_3	Finding relevant literature
Q28_4	Critically reviewing literature
Q28_5	Writing a literature review
Q28_6	Writing a research proposal
Q28_7	Applying for research funding
Q28_8	Writing an ethics application
Q28_9	Using qualitative research methods
Q28_10	Using quantitative research methods
Q28_11	Analysing results
Q28_12	Interpreting results
Q28_13	Writing a research report
Q28_14	Presenting research at meetings, conferences, etc.
Q28_15	Publishing research
Q28_16	Applying research to professional context and practice
Q29	For the same areas, how much support do you need to develop proficiency in the following research activities? (Where 1 is none and 5 is significant amount)
Q29_1	Generating research ideas
Q29_2	Developing a research question
Q29_3	Finding relevant literature
Q29_4	Critically reviewing literature

Q29_5	Writing a literature review
Q29_6	Writing a research proposal
Q29_7	Applying for research funding
Q29_8	Writing an ethics application
Q29_9	Using qualitative research methods
Q29_10	Using quantitative research methods
Q29_11	Analysing results
Q29_12	Interpreting results
Q29_13	Writing a research report
Q29_14	Presenting research at meetings, conferences, etc.
Q29_15	Publishing research
Q29_16	Applying research to professional context and practice
Q30	Do you have any suggestions as to the type of support you would need to develop your proficiency in these areas?
Q31	Do you support research as part of your LIS/KM role?
Q31_a	Is providing research support something that you would like to do?
Q31_b	Which of the following activities do you support? (Where 1 is not at all and 5 is a significant amount)
Q31_b_1	Generating research ideas
Q31_b_2	Developing a research question
Q31_b_3	Finding relevant literature
Q31_b_4	Critically reviewing literature
Q31_b_5	Writing a literature review
Q31_b_6	Writing a research proposal
Q31_b_7	Applying for research funding
Q31_b_8	Writing an ethics application
Q31_b_9	Using qualitative research methods
Q31_b_10	Using quantitative research methods
Q31_b_11	Analysing results
Q31_b_12	Interpreting results
Q31_b_13	Writing a research report
Q31_b_14	Presenting research at meetings, conferences, etc.

Q31_b_15	Publishing research
Q31_b_16	Applying research to professional context and practice
Q32	How important do you believe research is to each of the following? (Where 1 is not important and 5 is very important)
Q32_1	Your professional practice
Q32_2	Your sector
Q32_3	The profession
Q32_4	CILIP
Q33	Please respond to the following statements about research design
Q33_1	I feel comfortable doing quantitative research
Q33_2	I am comfortable with statistical analysis
Q33_3	I feel comfortable doing qualitative research
Q33_4	I am comfortable with qualitative data analysis
Q34	Please respond to the following statements about your ability to engage in research
Q34_1	My line manager is supportive of me engaging in research
Q34_2	Currently there is too little time in my working day to do research
Q34_3	Funding is available to conduct research if I want to
Q34_4	I would like to engage in research but there is not enough support
Q34_5	Engaging in research is relevant to my job
Q34_6	I struggle with identifying topics for research
Q34_7	Research is part of my work unit's plans
Q34_8	I would like to engage in research, but we are too short staffed
Q34_9	My work colleagues are supportive of me engaging in research
Q34_10	The thought of doing research makes me anxious
Q34_11	I avoid engaging in research because I am not a confident researcher
Q34_12	I do not want to engage in research
Q35	What would help you to apply existing (e.g. published) research results in your professional practice?
Q36	When was the last time you did any of the following?
Q36_1	Conducted research related to your employment
Q36_2	Conducted research related to the LIS/KM profession
Q36_3	Applied published research findings to your professional practice or employment

Q37	Have you ever applied for a research grant for LIS/KM research? (Select all that apply)
Q38	In the last three years, how have you disseminated the results of your LIS/KM research? (Select all that apply)
Q38_a	If you selected Other, please specify:
Q39	To what extent are you interested in doing LIS/KM related research in the future? (Where 1 is not at all and 5 is extremely interested)
Q40	What type of approach would you prefer when undertaking LIS/KM research?
Q40_a	If you selected Other, please specify:
Q41	Do you have any suggestions for making research more relevant / useful for the LIS/KM practitioner?
Q42	Is there anything else that you would like to add in connection with any of the questions – or do you have any further comments?
Q43	How would you describe your ethnic group?
Q43_a	If you selected Prefer to self-describe, please specify:
Q44	How would you describe your sexual orientation?
Q44_a	If you selected Prefer to self-describe, please specify:
Q45	How would you describe your gender?
Q45_a	If you selected Prefer to self-describe, please specify:
Q46	Do you identify as transgender?
Q47	Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?
Q48	Age range
Q49	If you are interested in participating in the interview component of the project please leave your email address. We will be selecting interview participants based on a range of demographic characteristics and a variety of research experiences. If you are selected for interview you will be contacted by email by one of the project team. Once we have selected interview participants we will delete your contact details from our records.

10. Appendix B – Final Interview Questions

Library, Information and Knowledge Practitioners Experience of Research' research project - Interview Questions

Welcome to this interview for the 'Library, Information and Knowledge Practitioners Experience of Research' research project, which is being conducted by the Library and Information Research Group. You have read the participant information sheet and signed the informed consent statement, and are happy to proceed with the interview. The interview is being recorded as per the information sheet, and please do let me know if you would like to pause the interview at any point. The interview will take about an hour, during which I will ask you a series of questions about library, information and knowledge services workplace research. What we mean by 'research' in this instance is a planned investigation into an area of your work, with an intended outcome. This could take the form of an empirical research project with a well-defined methodological approach, or it could be a planned evaluation of a service or aspect of your working practice which you have undertaken in order to improve services. Please feel free to draw upon as wide a research experience as you have.

1. Can you describe the research culture at your place of work? What factors contribute to the research culture in your organisation?
2. What do you think enables LIK research in the workplace? What are the barriers?
3. Are there initiatives in the workplace to facilitate research? How does this work?
4. When did you last do some research? Was it part of a qualification? Have you done research as a library practitioner
5. Tell me about your research experience and how that's prepared you to engage in LIKS research
How has your education experience prepared you for workplace research?
Can you tell us more about where you feel confident or competent in the various elements of research? And where you don't feel confident or competent? Why is this? What are the barriers?
6. Assuming that part of the role / remit of your library/information/knowledge service is to support research in your organisation, how does this impact on the library's research culture and expectation for LIS research? (follow up: Is there an appetite to do more? Do they see it as part of their role to engage in other parts of research tasks/cycle – do they have the opportunity to do more? Is their experience mainly literature searching? Barriers?)
7. How important do you think practice-based research is and why?
8. How do you regard leadership and management roles impacting on your ability to do research? (i.e. Don't need to be a leader - but does leadership/management roles generally impact you)

9. Where you have conducted workplace LIS research what have the outputs and outcomes been? How and where was your research disseminated? (follow up with questions about whether this is the right approach)
10. What research would you, your organisation, your sector and/or the profession would benefit from being conducted?
11. What is your understanding of the opportunities for research, in terms of the wider sector or profession as a whole?
12. How do you keep aware of these opportunities? (prompts for interviewers some of the things out there)
13. What is your LIKS research ambition? What will help you achieve it?

11. Appendix C – Sectors of Research Participants

Consolidated LIK practitioner sectors	LIK practitioner sectors from survey
University library	University library
Health library	Health library
Other: Sector with 10 or fewer responses were grouped under 'other'	Public library; School library; University research centre; National library; Non-traditional library and information work (e.g. consulting, vendor, consortium); Independent research organisation; Commercial; Museum; Government library; Legal / Law; Business.