Helpsheets
Grey Literature: Health

What is Grey Literature?
“Grey literature is material which is not issued through normal commercial publication channels” (Auger, 1994).

“Grey literature includes: government reports, committee reports, academic papers, theses, bibliographies, conference papers and abstracts, discussion papers, newsletters, PowerPoint presentations, conference proceedings, program evaluation reports, standards/best practice documents, technical specifications and standards, and working papers” (Alberani, Pietrangeli and Mazza, 1990).

The majority of grey literature is ‘primary’ literature (the original writings on a subject) and usually has not been peer-reviewed. Therefore, you will need to use your own judgement as to the literature’s validity.

Conference Papers and Proceedings
- **Online Databases**
  Some conference papers and proceedings are available from online databases such as CINAHL and MEDLINE.

  These databases can be accessed via the A-Z Databases link on the S&LS web site. A CINAHL search for ‘conference papers’ maps to the subject heading ‘Congresses and Conferences’. Select this subject heading and combine it with the search results for your topic using the AND operator. In MEDLINE, the same search maps to the subject heading ‘Congresses as Topic’. Select this subject heading and combine it with the search results for your topic using the AND operator.

- **Other Sources**
  Conference proceedings can often be found on the Internet using a search engine such as Google [http://www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk)

Government Reports
These can be accessed on the Internet via whichever Government Department has commissioned the report.

- **Department of Health** reports are available from: [https://www.gov.uk/search/all](https://www.gov.uk/search/all)
- **Official Documents, Command Papers and House of Commons Papers**, as well as Key Departmental Papers, from 2010 (plus many earlier ones) are also available from: [https://www.gov.uk/search/all](https://www.gov.uk/search/all)
Many older Official Government Documents are in the UK Government Web Archive, which is available at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive

Dissertations/Theses

**British Library EThOS (Electronic Theses Online Service)** http://EThOS.bl.uk
This service is provided by the British Library. Digitised copies of theses are available to download from participating universities. All users need to register and login before they can use the service. A thesis that has not yet been digitised can be ordered and the British Library will digitise it and make it available for download.

NHS Policy and Management

**Health Management Information Consortium (HMIC)** is a compilation of two databases: **DH Data** and the **King's Fund** Information and Library Service database. Coverage of grey literature goes back as far as 1979 and includes:
- Health service policy, management and administration
- Quality of health services including hospitals, nursing, primary care and public health
- The planning, design, construction and maintenance of health service buildings
- Occupational health
- Control and regulation of medicines
- Medical equipment and supplies
- Social care and personal social services
- Social care
- Service development
- NHS organisation and development.

Access via http://libguides.tees.ac.uk/az.php?a=hm Click on the link to HMIC, then click the continue button, scroll down the resources list and click on Health Management Information Consortium.

Current NHS Research

**National Institute for Health Research Be Part of Research (formerly UK Clinical Trials Gateway (UKCGT))**
https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/
The Be Part of Research site is still in BETA phase. It aims to make it easier to find out about health and social care research taking place across the UK. Be Part of Research is designed to help members of the public make informed choices about taking part in clinical trials, while helping to link them to researchers running trials they might be interested in. Researchers can use Be Part of Research to find suitable participants for the trials they are running. It is searchable by study name, condition and location.

**Involve Research Project Database**
http://www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/research-project-database/
A database of published and unpublished research projects in the field of health, public health and social care that have or plan to actively involve members of the public as partners in the research process. Database entries have been written by researchers and contact details of the projects are available to facilitate shared knowledge and learning.
Other Sources of Grey Literature

- **Nice Evidence Search**  
  [http://www.evidence.nhs.uk](http://www.evidence.nhs.uk)  
  Nice Evidence Search is an information gateway providing access to a comprehensive evidence base for everyone in the health and social care professions. It gives access to high quality clinical and non-clinical information about health and social care. Types of information supplied include; grey literature, primary research, statistics, guidelines and health technology assessments.

- **Nice Journals and Databases**  
  This section of NHS Evidence provides a library and information service to all NHS staff giving easy access to best current knowledge to improve health and healthcare, clinical practice and patient choice. It provides access to a wide range of NHS resources including grey literature in the form of; factsheets, protocols, and clinical guidelines.

- **Social Care Online**  
  [http://www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk](http://www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk)  
  Social Care Online provides access to the UK's most complete range of information and research on all aspects of social care. It includes primary information on; research briefings, reports, government documents and case studies.

- **Childlink**  
  [https://members.childlink.co.uk/](https://members.childlink.co.uk/)  
  Childlink is an online database focusing on legislation, policies and practices regarding children, young people and families who live in the UK and Ireland. Primary information sources include; government papers, statistics, research and legislation.

- **OpenGrey: System for Information on Grey Literature in Europe.**  
  [http://www.opengrey.eu](http://www.opengrey.eu)  
  OpenGrey (previously known as OpenSIGLE) was created in 1980 to collect and make available grey literature produced in the European Community. The records include bibliographic data and occasionally an abstract in English. Examples of grey literature included in OpenSIGLE are: technical or research reports, doctoral dissertations, conference papers and official publications.

- **National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (Nice)**  
  [http://www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)  
  NICE is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health. NICE produces guidelines under the sections conditions and diseases; health protection; lifestyle and wellbeing; population groups; service delivery, organisation and staffing; settings.

- **Public Health England Index of Grey Literature and Alternative Sources and Resources**  
  [http://libwww.essex.ac.uk/Subject_Guides/PHE_s_Index_of_Grey_Literature.pdf](http://libwww.essex.ac.uk/Subject_Guides/PHE_s_Index_of_Grey_Literature.pdf)  
  An extensive list of online sources of grey literature that focusses on, but is not limited to, public health topics.
References

For more information please ask a member of staff for help.
W: http://www.tees.ac.uk/sls
E: libraryhelp@tees.ac.uk
T: 01642 342100 (Monday – Friday 09:00 – 17:00)