Jisc library purchasing coordination group  
Summary of the meeting on 28/05/20

The group received presentations from two subscription agents who had been invited to attend to provide information on their business continuity and long term plans in the transition to open access, including the services they would offer and the way they would charge for them. The group also took the opportunity to ask questions of the agents. A third subscription agent was unable to attend as planned and will therefore be invited to the next meeting.

The group then considered their requirements for subscription agents and where they might bring the best value. The procurement consortia need to know what their customers require and will take a consistent approach to finding this out. Members noted that the OA Switchboard may play a role in this environment and it will be interesting to see the link between the Switchboard and subscription agents.

Caren Milloy confirmed that the UUK/Jisc content negotiation strategy group has discussed and agreed the sectors requirement for open access agreement for 2020 and that reducing and constraining costs is a major component. The updated requirements will be made available on the Jisc website. The group has also agreed, in light of the impact of Covid, that immediate reductions be sought from publishers. The library purchasing coordination group agreed with this approach and will support the letter from the CNSG.

Anna Vernon confirmed how Jisc are supporting members regarding the application of 0% VAT. Jisc is also providing a technical paper to HMRC to put forward the best case for institutions to obtain refunds and credits and to highlight the read and publish split within transitional agreements and where the sector is heading. It is important to ensure that the UK government do not disincentivise their own aims around transitional agreements.

Caren Milloy confirmed that Jisc has had a dialogue with members about e-textbooks and identified lack of affordability and access mechanisms as restricting access to content. As a result Jisc are checking agreements and speaking to publishers (Sage, OUP, T&F) about new models which are not unaffordable and open up across all platforms.

The group were advised about Jisc’s national digital learning licensing initiative which seeks to provide access to all textbooks but reduce institution expenditure by aggregating academic and departmental spend with library spend to secure the best possible agreement. Negotiations are currently taking place with suppliers.

The task and finish group for e-textbooks has begun work with a focus on achieving a standard for digital preservation. Librarians are now being brought into what have been consortia discussions. Institutions must ensure they download ownership of holdings so that rights are recorded.

The group agreed some actions to support institutions who are experiencing difficulty in obtaining e-book versions of arts books.

The next meeting of the group will take place in September.