



ISSN 1475-8202

The Network Newsletter: tackling social exclusion in libraries, museums, archives and galleries

Number 131, March 2012

(formerly published as *Public Libraries & Social Exclusion Action Planning Network Newsletter*, issue 1, May 1999 – issue 29, September 2001)

The Network's Website is at www.seapn.org.uk and includes information on courses, good practice, specific socially excluded groups, as well as the newsletter archive.

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Network updates

JISCMAIL lists

Just a reminder that we coordinate the following email (JISCMAIL) lists – if you would like to join any of these, please contact john@nadder.org.uk.

- The Network – a list for sharing news, good practice and information, and for placing enquiries
- Network Newsletter – our monthly newsletter
- Ebulletin – regular information digest (produced every 2-3 weeks)
- LAC – for people interested in working with children and young people in care
- Learning disabilities – for people interested in work with adults and children with learning disabilities
- LGBT – for people interested in developing provision for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people
- Older people – for people interested in work with older people
- Prisons – primarily for the CILIP Prison Libraries Group, but also for anyone interested in working with prisoners and ex-prisoners and their families
- Travellers – for people interested in working with Travellers and Gypsies.

“Innovation and best practice” webpages

In case you have not yet seen these¹, there are new pages on our website to highlight good practice and innovation – if anyone would like to add a case study (and it can be brief or longer!), please email john@nadder.org.uk.

Did you see ...?

CILIP Update

The January issue² includes an interesting article about the use of texting in bibliotherapy, Hugh Wilson “Texting words of hope” [pp46-47].

The April issue³ includes a number of interesting articles, as usual – of particular interest is Rob Froud “Access equals success”, which looks briefly at the work of RNIB and the development of the “Six steps to library services for blind and partially sighted people” [pp36-38].

¹ See: http://www.seapn.org.uk/innovation.asp?page_id=90.

² *CILIP Update*, January 2012.

³ *CILIP Update*, April 2012. Further information (and access for CILIP members to the e-edition) at: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/publications/update-magazine/Pages/default.aspx>.

New York Times

There is an interesting short article⁴ in the *NYT*, which looks at how the Queens Library system offers books and other materials in 59 different languages.

Museums Journal

Apologies for getting a bit behind with these⁵!

The January 2012 issue had some interesting items, including:

- Sharon Heal “Should museums tackle social justice?” [Editorial], which briefly argues a strong case in favour [p4]
- Tracy-Ann Smith “Genuine participation has a long way to go” [p17].

The February issue included:

- Victoria Hollows and Virginia Tandy “Head to head: should museums be pursuing the social justice agenda?” [p19]
- Helen Weinstein “Going local”, a look at what localism, volunteering and community empowerment mean for museums and their visitors [pp23-27].

The March issue includes:

- Huw Lewis “Museums can help address inequality” [“Comment” column], [p16]
- “What would you like to see in the Museums Association’s 2020 vision of the future?” [“Vox pop” column] [p21].

Prison Libraries Journal

The latest issue⁶ has a number of useful articles, including:

- “JISCMail questions and answers”, a summary of some recent exchanges on the email list⁷ coordinated by The Network [pp9-10]
- Leanne Bunten “Creative writing workshop at Kilmarnock” [p16]
- Genevieve Clarke “Prison Libraries take up the Challenge”, which looks at how prison libraries can use the Six Book Challenge to raise the profile of their service [pp20-22].

⁴ Joseph Berger “Queens Libraries speak the mother tongue”, *New York Times*, 2 January 2012 – see: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/03/nyregion/queens-libraries-serve-59-languages.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=%22libraries%20speak%20the%20mother%20tongue&st=cse.

⁵ Further information about *Museums Journal* at: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal>.

⁶ *Prison Libraries Journal*, 2, 2011. Further information about the *Journal* at: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/special-interest-groups/prison/publications/pages/default.aspx>.

⁷ See: <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=PRISONS>.

Children & Young People Now

There is a very brief, positive write-up of the work of Letterbox Club Northern Ireland in the February-March issue⁸:

- “Book scheme boosts foster children’s skills” [pp32-33].

The early March issue⁹ has, as always, a number of interesting articles, including:

- Neil Puffett “Nationwide rescue plan begins for disengaged 16- and 17-year-olds” [pp14-15]
- Lauren Higgs “Schools revolution”, a look at the role of academy schools (and a very good introduction if you are not clear what differentiates them from local-authority-run schools) [pp25-27]

In the March-April issue, there is a very useful article¹⁰, describing the break-up of the Children’s Workforce Development Council, and which organisations are taking over responsibility for its different areas of work.

The issue for 3-16 April has a number of interesting articles, including:

- Neil Puffett “Conflicting policy thwarts drive to tackle youth homelessness” which highlights that:

“4,310 16- to 24-year-olds were officially declared homeless in the three months between October and December 2011. This is up from 3,880 in the same quarter in 2010 – and increase of 11 percent.

But the scale of the issue is projected to be far greater. Many young homeless people receive no support from statutory services and survive by ‘sofa-surfing’, relying on friends. Youth homelessness charity Centrepoin estimates that up to 80,000 young people experience some form of homelessness every year.” [p12]

- Charlotte Goddard “Job title: Virtual head teacher” looks at the role of the VHT in supporting looked-after children & young people – it also has a short list of resources for finding out more about their role [p32].

Adults Learning

The Spring 2012 issue¹¹ has a number of interesting articles, including:

⁸ *Children & Young People Now*, 21 Feb-5 Mar 2012.

⁹ *Children & Young People Now*, 6-19 March 2012. Further details at: <http://www.cypnow.co.uk/>.

¹⁰ Charlotte Goddard “Workforce disintegration?”, *Children & Young People Now*, 20 March-2 April, pp25-27.

¹¹ *Adults Learning*. Further information from: <http://www.niace.org.uk/publications/adults-learning>.

- Sue Southwood “The joy of reading groups” which looks at NIACE’s outreach work around Quick Reads [pp36-37]
- Paul Stanistreet “Big books and small marvels”, a look at The Reader Organisation’s “Get into Reading” programme¹² [pp39-40, 42]

Equality Act 2010

***Race Equality Teaching* – special issue on the Equality Act**

This special issue of *RET*¹³ (guest-edited by Robin Richardson and Bill Bolton) focuses on the Equality Act, with particular reference to the specific duties.

The editors start out by stating that “The single most important concept in the Equality Act, so far as schools and other public bodies are concerned, is due regard.” [p1]

This concept has been heavily criticised, for example by Lord (Herman) Ouseley whose comments during a House of Lords debate are noted here. His – and others’ – argument is that the idea of ‘due regard’ leads to organisations doing as little as they need to do to comply with the legislation, and, certainly, there is some evidence that the Government wants to have a hands-off approach to the Act and its interpretation.¹⁴

The articles in this issue look at just how schools and other organisations can move beyond the minimal approach, and include, for example:

- Ruth Wilson “Singing from the same song sheet – policy consensus at a children’s centre”, which looks at work with staff in a Children’s Centre around LGBT and faith issues [pp6-8]
- Tony Fenwick and Sue Sanders “Educating out prejudice – focusing on homophobia and transphobia” [pp15-18]

¹² This article is available to download as a sample from:

http://www.niace.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/adults-learning/Adults_Learning_2012_03_p38-p42.pdf.

¹³ *Race Equality Teaching*, 30 (2), Spring 2012. Further information at:

http://www.trentham-books.co.uk/acatalog/Race_Equality_Teaching.html.

¹⁴ The EHRC have just announced: “We were intending to produce further statutory codes of practice on the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force on 5 April 2011, and codes for the Further and Higher Education (FEHE) sector and schools.

Unfortunately, we are no longer able to proceed with these plans. The Government is keen to reduce bureaucracy around the Equality Act 2010, and feels that further statutory guidance may place too much of a burden on public bodies.” (Taken from: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-act-codes-of-practice/>).

- Tony Booth “Creating welcoming cultures – *the Index for Inclusion*”¹⁵ [pp19-21]
- Richard Rieser “Disability equality – definitions and meanings” [pp22-26]
- Robin Richardson “‘I balanced all, brought all to mind’ – lessons for schools from recent case law” [pp27-29]
- Pete Coulson “Ofsted and self-evaluation – a draft framework for approaching the specific duties”, which, whilst applying particularly to schools, does include a model that applies more widely [pp30-33]
- Somerset County Council “Showing due regard – equality evidence and information”, which shows how one education authority has set about publishing information on due regard as required by the Act [pp34-37]
- Bill Bolloten “Being SMART – developing and writing equality objectives” [pp38-41].

Recommended.

Tackling social exclusion – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

Public libraries and the homeless – dissertation findings

Carly Miller’s original enquiry for information for her Masters dissertation was forwarded to Network contacts in June 2011, and Carly has now kindly given permission for me to pass on the summary of her findings.

“Recommendations for Best Practice

- Training appears to be a key issue; if staff at all levels are not trained to work effectively with the homeless, problems may arise. If staff have only had negative experiences with library users who identify themselves as homeless and have no support or training to show them the problems the homeless face or the fact that the homeless are not a homogenous group, they may start to treat homeless users negatively. This could undo any good work outreach projects achieve, if the homeless are encouraged to use libraries only to find an unwelcoming attitude they may be unlikely to return. It is also important outreach workers understand the best way to work with homeless people to ensure they do not cause any undue harm and that they also feel confident doing their job.
- Finding partners in the community, such as homeless shelters, to work with is a way for public libraries to identify homeless people. They can also learn a lot from people who work with the homeless on a continuous basis, such as the most important aspects that training sessions need to cover; they may also be able to help libraries tailor outreach work so it meets the needs of the homeless. Also the homeless are a vulnerable group who may be wary of new people and so, by working with a trusted

¹⁵ Tony Booth. *Index for inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools*. Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, 2011. Further information at: <http://www.csie.org.uk/resources/current.shtml>.

organisation, who can promote their work, public libraries may be more likely to build up a strong relationship.

- It is thought that more than one person should be involved with outreach work; this means the library staff can support each other and that if one is unable to attend work there is someone else, who is known to the users, who can take over.
- It would also be beneficial for public libraries to speak to homeless people themselves. This would enable them to find out what the homeless would like from a library service, their everyday needs and problems and any barriers that may stop them from using the library. It is important libraries provide a service that is needed, rather than just a service they think is needed.

Recommendations for Future Research

- It would be interesting to discover more about the opinions of homeless people about public libraries and reading. This may be best done as a PhD as that would allow more time for the researcher to build relationships with the homeless. However, if this researcher had had slightly more time on this project and if the scope had been narrower focusing solely on the opinions of the homeless it would have been possible to conduct in-depth interviews with the clients at the Archer Project, meaning it would be possible for a future researcher to gain insight about the opinions of the homeless whilst doing M.A. research.
- As a finding of this research was that partnership working is an important aspect of providing effective outreach work to homeless populations, it would be useful if more research was conducted around the opinions of, and constraints facing, those people who work for homeless charities and organisations.
- It would also be useful to gain a complete understanding of the amount of homeless outreach work being undertaken so research which looked at each Public Library Authority in the country is recommended.
- Some of the respondents to the public library questionnaire discussed how they are legally obliged to see some form of identification before they can allow a library user to access the Internet and so it would be interesting to look further into the issue of the homeless populations' ability to get online and how this affects their quality of life.
- Concern has been raised that allowing homeless people to join the library would result in a loss of stock; it would be interesting if there was research into the validity of this assumption.
- It may also be interesting to conduct more specific research into how bibliotherapy can be of benefit to homeless people.

Overall Conclusions

- The research revealed a number of key issues including the need for training and the difficulties involved with publicising, and the perceived importance of, outreach work. A lot of these problems could be overcome by partnership working; working with homeless charities could help public libraries to put together effective training programmes and they could also help to publicise the work that libraries do. Also the homeless are a vulnerable group who may not trust people easily and so having an

organisation that has an established relationship with them to promote library services would be an advantage. Homeless charities and organisations could also help libraries to put together outreach projects or to decide which of the services they currently offer are best suited to the needs of the homeless. It is important for libraries to remember though that organisations who work with the homeless are often too busy dealing with the immediate needs of the homeless (medical, food, housing etc) to be able to approach libraries, it is likely it will be up to us to make first contact.

- Training is important for all members of staff, not just those involved with outreach work; if a homeless person was encouraged to use the library only to be confronted by a hostile member of staff they could be unlikely to return.
- It would also be useful for public libraries to try to establish the opinions of homeless people about library services; this would help libraries to ensure they provide a service which is needed rather than one that they think is needed. It would also help them to remove any barriers to the homeless accessing the library that may not have been considered.”

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Creating the conditions for integration

This new paper¹⁶ from DCLG:

“... sets out our approach to creating an integrated society. Integration means creating the conditions for everyone to play a full part in national and local life. Our country is stronger by far when each of us, whatever our background, has a chance to contribute. And our communities are stronger when different people not only treat each other with respect, but contribute together. Integration is achieved when neighbourhoods, families and individuals come together on issues which matter to them, and so we are committed to rebalancing activity from centrally-led to locally-led action and from the public to the voluntary and private sectors. But this also means that we all have a role to play in creating an integrated society. This document is therefore a challenge to local public, private and voluntary sectors to support these ends in all that they do.

Integration benefits us all, and extremism and intolerance undermine this as they promote fear and division. An integrated society may be better equipped to reject extremism and marginalise extremists. The approach to integrated communities set out here is therefore central to long term action to counter extremism. But we must also act now to tackle the extremism and intolerance present in Britain today, which this document covers only in part. We will therefore continue our efforts to challenge

¹⁶ *Creating the conditions for integration*. DCLG, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (280 kb) from:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/2092103.pdf>.

and outflank extremism, and we will strongly encourage others in the public and private sectors and in local communities to do likewise.

This paper outlines our approach to integration in England. However, the issues this raises have wider relevance across the United Kingdom.” [p2]

It focuses particularly on the following five areas:

1. **“Common ground** A clear sense of shared aspirations and values, which focuses on what we have in common rather than our differences.
2. **Responsibility** A strong sense of our mutual commitments and obligations, which brings personal and social responsibility.
3. **Social mobility** People able to realise their potential to get on in life.
4. **Participation and empowerment** People of all backgrounds have the opportunities to take part, be heard and take decisions in local and national life.
5. **Tackling intolerance and extremism** A robust response to threats, whether discrimination, extremism or disorder, that deepen division and increase tensions.” [p5]

This paper is particularly significant in that it spells out key areas of the Government’s policies and priorities, including some clear political and social ‘nuances’, for example:

“There are also other challenges facing us at this point. The disturbances that occurred in a number of English towns and cities in August 2011 highlighted some deep-seated challenges we need to tackle. But it is important not to oversimplify these serious events. These were not race riots. The perpetrators and victims of the disturbances were from a wide range of backgrounds, as were the local residents who came together afterwards to clean up their streets. The challenge is how to respond to the criminality and lack of social responsibility that lay behind the actions of a small number of people.

We must understand and protect the values, experiences and opportunities which bring people together to act on issues which matter to them.

We believe that core values and experience must be held in common. We should be robustly promoting British values such as democracy, rule of law, equality of opportunity and treatment, freedom of speech and the rights of all men and women to live free from persecution of any kind.” [pp3-4]

It is well-worth reading to get a quick overview of current policies and how DCLG sees them tying in together.

Equality framework for local government: self-assessment guidance

The LGA has just published a revised version of its *Equality framework*¹⁷ which brings it into line with the Equality Act 2010. It includes five performance areas:

- Knowing your communities
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A skilled and committed workforce.

It also assists you to assess your service at one of three levels:

- Developing
- Achieving
- Excellent.

The *Framework* guides the reader through the self-assessment process, with useful reminders and questions. There is also a brief summary on the LGA website¹⁸.

Recommended.

Abbreviations and acronyms

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

DCLG = Department for Communities and Local Government

LGA = Local Government Association

NIACE = National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

RNIB = Royal National Institute of Blind People

This Newsletter was compiled by John Vincent, and all items are written by him, unless otherwise stated. Please send any comments or items for the next issue to:

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March 2012

¹⁷ *Equality framework for local government: self-assessment guidance*. LGA, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (464.15 kb) from: http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=d6f829f1-2fbf-4c72-81ae-8c843b9b43a8&groupId=10161.

¹⁸ See: http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/equality-frameworks/-/journal_content/56/10161/3476575/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE.