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

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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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Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Involvement: a practical guide

The aim of this guidance[1] (which was published by the EHRC, with input from Urban Forum, in February):

> "… is to help public authorities involve their communities, including those who may be marginalised, in decision-making." [p1]

> "[It] goes beyond the requirement to involve disabled people in the development of their disability equality scheme and explains how public authorities can effectively involve all the 'protected' equality groups as well as marginalised people. It is intended to build on existing guidance on the disability equality duty and involvement … and the good work many public authorities are already doing to meet the specific duty to involve disabled people. It outlines the principles of good involvement and how they can be applied to effectively involve the protected equality strands as well as other groups that are less likely to participate. To help public authorities understand what good involvement looks like, the guidance includes real-life case studies of involving groups that are often marginalised. It also demonstrates how common involvement approaches can be used to achieve better outcomes for public authorities and their communities." [pp1-2]

The guidance goes through the key elements of involvement, ie:

- What is involvement? (Including principles, the difference between involvement and consultation)
- Benefits of involvement
- When to involve
- Who to involve (eg "Making sure that all key groups get an opportunity to have their voices heard can be a challenge. This is because some people face greater barriers to participation than others. It may be necessary to take extra efforts to include those who experience greater barriers to participation. This may mean using one involvement method for everyone, but making sure you address the needs of key groups when doing so. Or you could consider taking a multifaceted approach by using targeted methods as well as your general or universal involvement methods or strategies." [p13])
- Paying people for their involvement
- Your obligations to consult and involve under equality law

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[1] *Involvement: a practical guide*. EHRC, 2010. Available to download as a pdf (414.13 kb) from:
http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/PSD/involvement_guidance_final_new.pdf.

- The involvement success factors
- A step-by-step guide to planning involvement
- An outline of involvement methods
- Understanding and overcoming common barriers to participation.

This is a really useful guide, with lots of practical advice.

State of the nation report: poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency in the UK

Published in May 2010, this report[2]

> "sets out a comprehensive assessment of poverty in the UK at the start of the new Government, establishing a clear 'state of the nation' overview that will be used to inform policy decisions in the months and years ahead as the Government advances its aims of tackling poverty and improving life chances.
>
> The Coalition Government recognises that poverty is a multifaceted and wide-reaching problem. This report therefore includes a broad range of poverty and deprivation indicators, including income poverty, indebtedness, unemployment, educational and health inequalities, family structure and community breakdown.
>
> Taken together, these measurements set out a clear picture of poverty in the UK. They show that while some progress has been made in some areas, across a wide range of areas the government's performance in tackling poverty and inequality has stalled or deteriorated." [p6]

The report highlights some key statistics:

- "New analysis shows that 5.3 million people in the UK suffer from multiple disadvantage …
- New analysis shows that 1.4 million people in the UK have been on an out-of-work benefit for nine or more of the last 10 years …
- New analysis shows that an estimated 670,000 households in the UK are eligible for benefits and tax credits of over £15,600 per year …
- Income inequality in the UK is now at its highest level since comparable statistics began in 1961.
- Social mobility in Britain is, in terms of sons' earnings relative to their fathers', worse than in the USA, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Canada, Finland and Denmark.

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[2] *State of the nation report: poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency in the UK.* Cabinet Office, 2010. Available to download as a pdf (1340 kb) from: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/410872/web-poverty-report.pdf.

- A higher proportion of children grow up in workless households in the UK than in almost any other EU country.
- A higher proportion of young people in the UK are not in work, education or training than in almost any other EU country.
- People living in the poorest neighbourhoods in England will, on average, die seven years earlier than people living in the richest neighbourhoods.
- Health inequalities, as proxied by life expectancy at birth, are higher now than they were in the 1970s.
- The gap in educational attainment between children from rich and poor backgrounds remains persistently high.
- The gap in income between the middle and the bottom has not improved in the past decade and on some measures appears to have increased." [pp6-7]

It then considers six areas in turn:

- Income poverty, inequality and social immobility
- Worklessness: unemployment and inactivity
- Welfare dependency
- Poor health and educational disadvantage
- Families and communities
- Multiple disadvantage.

This report was one of the foundation stones in the setting up of the Social Justice Cabinet Committee (indeed, Ian Duncan Smith wrote the foreword to this report), and it is the Coalition Government's equivalent of *Bringing Britain together[3]*.

Highly recommended as a source document statistics and information to back up our work and as a current analysis of key issues across the UK.

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

Opening your doors to young people – practical guidelines for making advice services young person-friendly

Youth Access have just published this new guidance[4] which is

"aimed at anyone who is responsible for developing advice services (e.g. managers, development workers and trustees) and who would

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[3] Social Exclusion Unit. *Bringing Britain together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal. Cm 4045.* The Stationery Office, 1998.

[4] *Opening your doors to young people – practical guidelines for making advice services young person-friendly*. Youth Access, 2010. Available to download as a pdf (992.74 kb) from:
http://www.youthaccess.org.uk/publications/upload/OpeningDoors_FINAL.pdf.

like to ensure their agency is providing the best service possible to young people." [p4]

The guidelines are arranged into a series of steps (although the introduction makes it clear that we're not necessarily going to want to follow them all):

- Getting started
- Access routes
- Intake systems
- Promoting your service
- Offering advice
- Staffing, skills and attitudes
- Child protection and confidentiality
- Collaborative working with youth agencies
- Involving young people.

Each of the steps outlines an issue – for example, in "Getting started", the issue is identified as:

"Improving your service to young people may require changes in organisational culture, working practices and staff attitudes, so some important groundwork will be needed." [p6]

This is followed by "Ways to improve your service" which are themselves broken down into three steps – simple, intermediate and advanced – with advice and tips under each. Each section finishes with brief case studies.

Finally, there is a list of "Ten top tips", a chart for you to write in your own priorities for action, and a brief list of resources and further support (the latter from Youth Access).

This is a very useful reminder of good practice, and could be used as part of an assessment of just how well our own advice and information-giving to young people is.

The future ageing of the ethnic minority population of England and Wales

This new report[5] from the Runnymede Trust "looks at likely changes in the age structures of the ethnic minority populations of England and Wales." [p4]

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[5] Nat Lievesley. *The future ageing of the ethnic minority population of England and Wales*. Runnymede Trust (Older BME and Financial Inclusion Report), 2010. Available to download as a pdf (4880 kb) from:
http://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/147/32.html?utm_source=The+Runnymede+Trust&utm_campaign=9c43524dd9-AugustUpdate2010&utm_medium=email
(you will need to register on the website to access this report).

It does, of course, give all the usual warnings about using projections, but, nevertheless, would be immensely valuable in helping us plan our own services for the future. For example, the key findings include:

a. "By 2051 the BME (including white ethnic minority groups) population of England and Wales will have reached 25 million making up 36% of the total.

b. By 2051 the non-white population will be 20 million making up 29.7% of the total.

c. The fastest growing ethnic group in terms of numbers will be 'Other White' followed by the Black African, Pakistani and Indian ethnic groups. The fastest growing in percentage terms will be the 'mixed' groups and 'Other' followed by the Chinese and Black African groups.

d. The slowest growing will be 'Other Black' and 'Black Caribbean'. In percentage terms the White British population will hold steady but the White Irish will decline by over 50%.

e. The White Irish and 'White Other' ethnic groups have ageing populations with a high proportion of children, born to mothers from these groups, being described as White British

f. The mixed ethnic groups are initially a very young population with, in 2016, over one half under the age of 15. By 2051, as these groups age this will reduce to less than one third.

g. By 2051, in England and Wales, there will be 3.8 million Black and minority ethnic older people aged 65 and over and 2.8 million aged 70 and over.

h. For the non-white ethnic groups alone, by 2051, in England and Wales, there will 2.7 million people aged 65 and over and 1.9 million aged 70 and over.

i. Presently and in the near future, with the exception of the White Irish, most ethnic groups have younger populations than the majority White British population. This will gradually change and by 2051 the ethnic groups with the highest proportions of people, aged 50 and over will be the 'Other White', Chinese, 'Other Asian', White British, Indian, 'Other' and White Irish." [pp4-5]

Social mobility

This is a very useful brief report[6] from the TUC (the latest in a series of bi-monthly economic reports), which assesses recent reports on social mobility, and looks at whether the media suggestions that social mobility in the UK has stalled is correct.

> "There is a strong case that education plays an important part in transferring advantage and disadvantage from one generation to the next, says the report, which also finds that the UK has a large wage premium to growing up in a better educated family and a similar wage penalty associated with growing up in a less-educated family.

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[6] *Social mobility*. TUC, 2010. Available to download as a pdf (1920 kb) from: http://www.tuc.org.uk/extras/Social_Mobility.pdf.

However, while education is a key factor, the evidence shows that real improvements in social mobility will not be possible without making Britain a more equal society …

The TUC believes the UK's high level of income inequality means that its performance in social mobility is poor compared with other countries."[7]

Valuable for a quick overview of the current debate.[8]

Broader issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

The people's inquiry into the public library service

Published in April, this report[9] makes some good points, but is already being overtaken by events.

It was published as a follow-on to the original report, *Taking part*[10], and was, in many ways, acting as a critique of the final statement[11] from the DCMS Modernisation Review. UNISON wanted to "harness the widespread public commitment to libraries, library staff and strong local communities so we organised the 'Love your Libraries Day – The People's Inquiry' to see how together we can protect a precious asset and improve services." [p2]

"The People's Inquiry held hearings on 11 February at the British Library. These were chaired by broadcaster (and host of the Radio 4 books programme, *A Good Read*) Sue MacGregor. Those providing oral evidence were questioned by a panel of experts – biographer Ann Thwaite; children's author and former Children's Laureate Michael Rosen; Observer journalist Rachel Cooke; children's author Joe Craig; and novelist and playwright Sue Townsend. The inquiry was addressed by UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis, culture minister Margaret Hodge MP and Steve Davies of Cardiff University." [p3]

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[7] Taken from: http://www.tuc.org.uk/newsroom/tuc-18356-f0.cfm.

[8] Thanks to Valerie Bearne for letting me know about this report.

[9] Steve Davies. *The people's inquiry into the public library service: a report for UNISON*. Unison, 2010. Available to download as a pdf (1001.12 kb) from: http://www.thebookseller.com/documents/Unison%20libraries%20report.pdf.

[10] Steve Davies. *Taking stock: the future of our public library service.* UNISON, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (1270 kb) from: http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/17301.pdf.

[11] *The modernisation review of public libraries: a policy statement*. DCMS, 2010. Available to download as a pdf (2090 kb) from: http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm78/7821/7821.pdf.

The report is in two parts: a review of what is happening in public libraries today; followed by the future of the public library service and recommendations. It surprisingly little about the social justice role of the public library, and the recommendations reflect this. Positively, there is "an awareness and increasingly an expectation that libraries contribute to a council's broader social aims" [p4], and there is also a very positive final recommendation:

> "Finally, as the government recognises, public libraries are a community resource that is highly valued by the public – both those who regularly use the service and those that do not. They are an integral part of local public services, and should continue to be so. Of course, book stock could be improved, opening hours made more convenient and buildings refurbished or replaced. But this should be done within the framework of an accountable publicly owned and provided service, rooted in the local community, responsive to it and worthy of the trust extended to it by local people." [p5]

Perhaps the issue is (as we are seeing at the time of writing with the people chosen to speak about public libraries in the media) that the "people" in this inquiry do not really represent libraries – or, in some cases understand what a modern public library service is aiming to achieve – but, nevertheless, this does include some key evidence which we can use to boost the case for the retention and development of public libraries.

Abbreviations and acronyms

BME = Black and minority ethnic
DCMS = Department for Culture, Media and Sport
EHRC = Equality and Human Rights Commission
TUC = Trades Union Congress

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