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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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The Riots, August 2011 – update

Citizens' Inquiry into the Tottenham riots

“The Citizens' Inquiry into the Tottenham Riots is a community-led response to identify a clear plan of action for a brighter future in Tottenham following the shocking events between 4th and 8th August 2011.

The Citizens' Inquiry was commissioned by North London Citizens, an alliance of 40 civic institutions, mostly faith and education, who work together to make change in their communities. The Citizens' Inquiry has been led by nine local community leaders who either live or work in Tottenham and has been supported by a board of advisors and organisers.” [p3]

This community-led investigation¹ found that the key issues that led up to the riots included:

- Breakdown of community/police relationships
- Youth unemployment

Both of these were exacerbated by what the report calls the “Reputation and Condition of Tottenham”; and feelings of powerlessness.

This report outlines the Inquiry's findings and recommendations, including the setting of a Citizens' Work Plan – a plan of action to be conducted by local community leaders in 2012 and beyond.²

¹ *Citizens' Inquiry into the Tottenham riots*. Citizens UK, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (1680 kb) from: <http://www.citizensuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Citizens-Inquiry-into-the-Tottenham-Riots-REPORT.pdf>.

² Thanks to John Pateman for alerting me to this, and to the *Morning Star* for the initial news item: Paddy McGuffin “Riot report says police to blame”, *Morning Star*, 6 Feb 2012, <http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/news/content/view/full/115113>.

Did you see ...?

Runnymede Bulletin

The latest *Bulletin*³ is almost entirely devoted to BME older people, including articles on:

- The future ageing of Britain's Black and minority ethnic population;
- The Dilnot Review on social care;
- Retirement;
- Older women's human rights;
- Older workers;
- Access to social care;
- Asset-building;
- BME carers.

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

Register your Spring Online event today!

Don't forget, **Spring Online and Silver Surfers Day is earlier this year, from 23-27 April.**

It's one of the biggest campaigns each year to give older people and less confident users a taste of computers and the internet and last year's campaign saw 2,500 events all around the UK, from Wii sessions to online gardening parties. Often, all people need is someone to get them started, show them the basics and make it fun. Holding a Spring Online session can really help.

Register your event (see: <http://springonline.org/register>) and Digital Unite will support you all the way with publicity material, tips and learning guides – and include your event on its searchable map. The website has lots of ideas for activities on the day.

Emma Solomon, Managing Director of Digital Unite says: "Libraries, museums, charities and voluntary sector organisations play a huge part in making Spring Online such a huge success – and with your help we can make it even bigger and better this year."

Martha Lane Fox, UK Digital Champion, said: "There are still a staggering 8.2 million people in the UK who are yet to experience how magic the web really is. Saving money, keeping in touch and reducing feelings of isolation are just a few examples of how the internet can change lives for the better. Fantastic initiatives like Spring Online play a vital role in highlighting these benefits and helping us achieve the ambition of creating a truly networked UK."

³ *Runnymede Bulletin*, 368, Winter 2011-2012. Available to download as a pdf (1780 kb) from: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/368-BulletinWinter2011-2012.pdf>.

And Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary of State, Work and Pensions said: “I know from my own involvement with Spring Online last year how effectively it promotes older people’s digital inclusion. I would encourage as many people as possible to get involved in this important campaign in 2012.”

Spring Online with Silver Surfers’ Day is delivered by Digital Unite in partnership with UK Online Centres and Race Online 2012.

For more information, see: www.springonline.org.

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Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Launch of new reading competition in England

DfE have just announced this initiative⁴ to inspire children to read.

What is of particular interest is that DfE have illustrated the need for this with a stark summary of statistics – which are not usually shown quite as clearly:

“The Government is committed to driving up reading standards of young people because:

- One in 10 boys leaves primary school with the reading age of a seven-year-old.
- 15 per cent of seven-year-olds do not reach the expected level (level 2) in reading.
- 16 per cent of 11-year-olds do not achieve the expected level (level 4) in reading.
- England has slipped down the international table for reading in primary schools. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) of 10-year-olds saw England fall from third out of 35 countries in 2001 to fifteenth out of 40 countries in 2006.
- Fifteen-year-olds in England are at least six months behind those in Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and Australia, according to the Department’s analysis of the OECD’s 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study.

Evidence shows that the regular enjoyment of reading leads to higher achievement at school.

⁴ See: <http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00203158/new-national-reading-competition-to-create-a-generation-of-book-lovers>.

- A 2010 survey [5] by the National Literacy Trust (NLT) of eight- to 17-year olds and their reading showed that more than 96 per cent of those that read daily were reading at or above the expected level.
- A 2009 PISA study [6] shows that almost 40 per cent of pupils in England never read for pleasure and that the difference in reading ability between these pupils and those who read for just half an hour a day is equivalent to a year's schooling at age 15.
- Another survey [7] by the NLT of primary and secondary pupils showed that only 48 per cent of young people think they read enough and that more young people preferred to read websites and text messages than fiction."

Serving deprived communities in a recession

This new report⁸ from JRF:

"... explores how budget cuts will affect the capacity of local government to meet the needs of more deprived households and communities." [p1]

It assesses the real scale and effects of the cuts, and also:

"... identifies the distinctive strategies and approaches being developed to remodel services, to address needs and to achieve broader efficiencies, and provides some evidence of the early impacts of these." [p7]

The 'headline' findings include:

There is strong evidence that local government has indeed been subjected to a particularly severe real terms cut. The analysis goes beneath some of the rather obscure reporting of the implications of the December grant settlement to identify an overall reduction in grant of around 40 per cent, and of spending power of around 25 per cent, in real terms, over the four-year Comprehensive Spending Review period.

The analysis also demonstrates that the most deprived authorities will be hardest hit. These authorities systematically lost the most spending power, especially in the first year, while some affluent areas have faced

⁵ Christina Clark. *Setting the baseline: the National Literacy Trust's first annual survey into young people's reading – 2010*. NLT, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (450.45 kb) from: http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0001/1393/Omnibus_reading_2010.pdf.

⁶ Jenny Bradshaw *et al.* *PISA 2009: achievement of 15-year-olds in England*. NFER, 2010. Available to download as a pdf (6620 kb) from: <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/NPDZ01/NPDZ01.pdf>.

⁷ Christina Clark *and* Amelia Foster. *Children's and young people's reading habits and preferences: the who, what, why, where and when*. NLT, 2005. Available to download as a pdf (455.65 kb) from: http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0577/Reading_Connects_Survey_2005.pdf.

⁸ Annette Hastings *et al.* *Serving deprived communities in a recession*. JRF, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (936.30 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/communities-recession-services-full.pdf>.

only mild cuts initially. Indeed the front-loading of the cuts, the fact that the settlement targeted the various grants previously focused towards the needs of deprived authorities and the design of the damping system have all ensured that deprived authorities will face a swifter and more severe cut. The evidence points to the likelihood that the contraction of local government service provision will be experienced differentially across England. It also suggests that the consequences for vulnerable people and places living in the most disadvantaged council areas may be substantial.” [p7]

Despite English local authorities’ preparations for significant budget cuts:

“... the scale of the cuts and their ‘front-loaded’ nature came as something of a shock to senior officials. In addition, plans had not been put in place to deal with the largely unanticipated ‘in-year’ cut brought about by the June 2010 Emergency Budget. In a number of authorities, the response to the Emergency Budget appeared to be rather unstrategic. It led to reduced services, cancelled projects and job losses in many places.” [p8]

In addition:

“... the local authorities also differed in their approaches, and it was clear that distinctive choices were being made.

- One type of distinction was between those authorities who were:
 - developing a more client- or community-targeted approach to a range of services. In these authorities, a shift from universal to targeted provision for clients and communities was evident. The emphasis was on focusing scarce resources on the people and places where they were most needed;
 - and those resisting targeting in favour of a focus on service sustainability and equity. Here the emphasis was on strategies such as an across-the-board retrenchment to providing statutory services only, or on deleting entire services or attempting to distribute cuts proportionately across services.
- A second type of distinction was found between authorities:
 - who intended to use area decentralisation or neighbourhood management approaches as part of their strategy to manage the cuts;
 - and those who planned an a-spatial approach. In the latter group, such an approach was either considered a costly option or there was no history of such a focus on ‘place’.

In more than half of the authorities there was a clear impetus to refocus services on the most needy. In the remainder, the approach appeared to be more service- than client-focused. Indeed, in some of these authorities, ‘targeting’ services had been explicitly rejected. In around a third of the authorities a neighbourhood approach had been planned, with a-spatial approaches in place in the remainder.

It cannot be assumed that the needs of disadvantaged residents and communities will inevitably be to the fore as councils manage budget reductions. While there is evidence that strategies are being devised to try to ensure that the needs of disadvantaged places and people can continue to be met, there is also evidence of tensions emerging around the degree to which such needs should be protected and prioritised. Thus, only half of the sample of authorities had adopted ‘protecting the needs of the most vulnerable clients or communities’ as a principle guiding budgetary decision-making and only two of the twenty-five suggested that ‘protecting deprived neighbourhoods’ was a key priority.” [pp8-9]

In a grim summary of the findings, the report concludes:

- For 2011/12, survey evidence suggests that the service areas most frequently identified for cuts were services for young people and early years, libraries and culture, sport, leisure and parks. Most authorities were protecting social care services but some are still seeking some economies in these.
- There is clear evidence from the actual budgets reported for 2011/12 that while both deprived and affluent local authorities are cutting significantly, deprived authorities are generally making greater cuts in relation to most services and overall.
- There is some tendency for service cuts to be greater for services that are neutral or pro-rich in their individual usage distributional pattern, and less sizeable for some of the most pro-poor services. However, a number of pro-poor services are experiencing significant cuts for 2011/12.
- There is a pronounced tendency for cuts to affect adversely services aimed at or heavily used by young people, which could compound problems of entry to the labour market or higher education for this group.
- Although nearly all authorities emphasise efficiency savings and cutting of central costs, many have already undertaken most of the obvious organisational changes. Current and future spending reductions will therefore have a general impact on service levels.” [p48]

Finally, the report comes to some difficult conclusions, including:

- One effect of budget reductions is the cutting or lessening of the monitoring and evaluation role within local authorities – at the very time when the Audit Commission has been abolished and the CAA discontinued. It will be “much more difficult for authorities to know the outcomes of service provision in the future.” [p63]
- Collecting data is likely to become an ‘opt-in’ system, rather than an obligation.
- In terms of equalities assessment:

“The requirement to assess the impact of changes to service provision on the range of ‘equalities’ groups does mean that all authorities have had to think about how specific changes might

have a differential impact on people with disabilities, or different ethnicities and across gender. However, the fact that there is no requirement to assess the impact on socioeconomic groups means that the opportunity to assess the impact on people in poverty has been lost. It was also clear that the task of ‘equality impact assessment’ had been prioritised to differing degrees across the authorities. In some, it was clearly a ‘tick box’ exercise. In others, interviewees acknowledged the shortcomings of their approach as well as time constraints. A number used the same phrase “it’s a work in progress” when asked to assess how well they felt the exercise had helped them to understand the differential impacts of service changes.” [p63]

Finally:

“The evidence this far is mixed then as to whether English local government can continue to serve deprived communities. There is, however, undoubted cause for concern, particularly it would seem in relation to people living in concentrations of multiple disadvantage in the most deprived authorities wrestling with the largest cuts.” [p65]

This is a grim read, but invaluable background to the climate we’re working in – recommended.

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

Multiple risk factors in young children’s development

This new working paper⁹ published by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies shows that more than one in four UK children are facing multiple risks to development.

These risks include:

- Living in overcrowded housing
- Having a teenage mother
- Having one or more parents with depression, a physical disability, or low basic skills
- Substance misuse
- Excessive alcohol intake
- Living in a family experiencing financial stress, worklessness or domestic violence.

⁹ Ricardo Sabates and Shirley Dex. *Multiple risk factors in young children’s development*. Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Institute of Education, 2012 (CLS Cohort Studies – Working paper 2012/1). Available to download as a pdf (235.59 kb) from: <http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/news.aspx?itemid=1661&itemTitle=More+than+one+in+four+UK+children+facing+multiple++risks+to+development%2c+study+finds&siteid=905&siteid=905&siteid=905&siteid=905&siteid=905>.

The authors:

“... examined information on more than 18,000 families with young children who are taking part in the Millennium Cohort Study. They found that 28 per cent of families faced two or more of these ten risk factors.

Just over four in ten children did not experience any of these risk factors in early childhood. A further three in ten faced only one. Previous research suggests that most children living with only one risk factor will not end up with a major developmental problem. It is multiple family difficulties that are most damaging.

The study's authors also discovered that Bangladeshi children were most likely to be exposed to multiple family difficulties. Almost half of them (48 per cent) experienced two or more risk factors – financial hardship was often one of them – compared to only 20 per cent of Indian children.”¹⁰

This report includes material that we may well be able to use as increased evidence of the need for our input.¹¹

Social mobility

The Equality Trust has just published its latest Research Digest¹² which has some stark findings:

- “Social mobility is higher in societies with smaller income differences between rich and poor.
- If we want our children to have equal opportunities in life, reducing income inequality is the most important step we can take towards achieving that goal.
- London School of Economics researchers and the OECD demonstrated separately that social mobility in Britain is worse than in comparable rich market democracies.
- Britons in their early forties have lived in a more unequal country and experienced less equality of opportunity than their fathers experienced.
- The widely respected Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) commented in a comprehensive review of the academic literature: “[it is] likely to be very hard to increase social mobility without tackling inequality.” [p1]

The report concludes that:

¹⁰ Taken from:

<http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/news.aspx?itemid=1661&itemTitle=More+than+one+in+four+UK+children+facing+multiple++risks+to+development%2c+study+finds&sitesectionid=905&sitesectiontitle=Press+Releases>.

¹¹ Source: *Children & Young People Now*, 8 Feb 2012.

¹² *The Equality Trust Research Digest: social mobility*, Digest no.4, Feb 2012. Available to download as a pdf (250 kb) from: <http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/docs/research-digest-social-mobility-final.pdf>.

“By reducing income inequality to levels more like those of the Scandanavian [sic] countries we would increase equality of opportunity, and help ensure that all our children are able to fulfill their potential. Even smaller reductions, to match levels of inequality in Canada or Germany could improve the life chances for the next generation of children in the UK.” [p6]

Health & Wellbeing issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Improving outcomes and supporting transparency – Part 1: a public health outcomes framework for England, 2013-2016

The DH has just published this new framework¹³ for public health improvement, which “depends on the provisions of the Health and Social Care Bill, which has yet to be passed by Parliament.” [p5]

The framework will focus on two high-level outcomes:

1. Increased healthy life expectancy.
2. Reduced differences in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between communities.

To achieve these outcomes, there will be actions taken around four “domains”:

1. Improving the wider determinants of health
Objective: Improvements against wider factors that affect health and wellbeing, and health inequalities
2. Health improvement
Objective: People are helped to live healthy lifestyles, make healthy choices and reduce health inequalities
3. Health protection
Objective: The population’s health is protected from major incidents and other threats, while reducing health inequalities
4. Healthcare, public health and preventing premature mortality
Objective: Reduced numbers of people living with preventable ill health and people dying prematurely, while reducing the gap between communities [taken from p9]

¹³ *Improving outcomes and supporting transparency – Part 1: a public health outcomes framework for England, 2013-2016*. DH, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (516.41 kb) from:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_132559.pdf.

For each “domain”, the framework sets out the indicators that will be used to assess this, for example for “Improving the wider determinants of health”, they include:

- Children in poverty
- School readiness*
- Pupil absence
- First-time entrants to the youth justice system
- 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training, etc.

Some indicators are labelled “placeholders” which is where major development work is still required.

The remainder of the document sets out the process for obtaining the data to meet these indicators, and the general arrangements being made to take it forward.

Assuming that the Health and Social Care Bill is passed, then this framework will become vital for our relating our work to England-wide health targets.

Part 2 of the document, the technical summary, is available¹⁴, and there is also a summary^{15, 16}.

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

Libraries Inspire delivery plan

Further to the piece in the last Newsletter¹⁷ on *Libraries inspire/Llyfrgelloedd yn Ysbrydoli*, CyMAL has now published the delivery plan¹⁸ covering the period January 2012-March 2013.¹⁹

¹⁴ *Improving outcomes and supporting transparency – Part 2: Summary technical specifications of public health indicators, January 2012*. DH, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (714kb) from:
http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_132558.pdf.

¹⁵ *The Public Health Outcomes Framework for England, 2013-2016*. DH, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (826 kb) from:
http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_132362.pdf.

¹⁶ Thanks to *STV Bulletin*, 106 for alerting me to this.

¹⁷ *The Network Newsletter*, 129, January 2012, pp10-11.

¹⁸ *Libraries Inspire delivery plan: January 2012 to March 2013*. CyMAL, 2012. Available to download from:

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/drah/publications/120206inspiredelivery12en.doc>.

¹⁹ Source: email from Alison Tyler, CyMAL.

Written Evidence to the House of Commons Inquiry into Public Library Closures

The written submissions to the Inquiry have now been published²⁰, including one from The Network²¹.

Abbreviations and acronyms

BME = Black and Minority Ethnic

CAA = Comprehensive Area Assessment

DfE = Department for Education

DH = Department of Health

JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation

NFER = National Foundation for Educational Research

NLT = National Literacy Trust

OECD = Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PISA = OECD Programme for International Student Assessment

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²⁰ See:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmcomeds/writev/library/contents.htm>.

²¹ See:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmcomeds/writev/library/ib032.htm>.