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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

After the riots ...

The final report¹ (and a summary²) of the Panel's findings were published at the end of March.

The report begins by setting the overall scene:

“Residents in communities where riots took place last summer want rioters – many of whom had long criminal records – appropriately punished. However, they also believe that action is needed to ensure that in future, these individuals and those displaying worrying signs of similar behaviour can play a positive role in their areas. When people feel they have no reason to stay out of trouble the consequences can be devastating. We must give everyone a stake in society. We have focused our efforts on doing just that.” [p1 – quotes are from the Summary report]

The Panel identified that, for communities to work, they need to be places:

- “where everyone feels they have a stake in society;
- where individuals respect each other and the place they live in;
- where public services work together and with the voluntary sector to spot those who are struggling at an early stage and help them;
- where opportunities are available to all, especially young people;
- where parents and schools ensure children develop the values, skills and character to make the right choices at crucial moments;
- where the police and the public work together to support the maintenance of law and order; and
- where the criminal justice system punishes those who commit crimes but also commits itself to making sure – for all our sakes – that they don't do it again.” [p1]

The report picks up on the six themes identified during the investigations and evidence-gathering:

- children and parents
- building personal resilience
- hopes and dreams
- riots and the brands
- the usual suspects
- the police and the public.

¹ *After the riots: the final report of the Riots Communities and Victims Panel*. Riots Communities and Victims Panel, 2012 (ISBN 978-1-4098-3418-2). Available to download as a pdf (4850 kb) from: <http://riotspanel.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Riots-Panel-Final-Report1.pdf>.

² *After the riots: the final report of the Riots Communities and Victims Panel – executive summary and recommendations*. Riots Communities and Victims Panel, 2012 (ISBN 978-1-4098-3419-9). Available to download as a pdf (2730 kb) from: <http://riotspanel.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Riots-Panel-Executive-Summary-and-Recommendations.pdf>.

Key points under each of these are:

Children and parents

- The overlap between the families of rioters and those targeted by the Troubled Families Programme appears limited. “Instead, public services describe a group of approximately 500,000 ‘forgotten families’ who ‘bump along the bottom’ of society.” [p2]
- The report recommends that public services engage with these families, including, as principles:
 - Timeliness – early intervention
 - Evidence-based support
 - Whole family view
 - The setting up of quality systems and sharing of data
 - “Asset rather than a deficit approach to children and families” [p2]
 - Widening inclusion – “Public services should take steps to ensure all children have a positive role model (from a child’s wider family or from the local community).” [p2]

Building personal resilience

- Developing new approaches to building young people’s character

Hopes and dreams

- “Many young people the Panel met following the riots spoke of a lack of hopes and dreams for the future – particularly because they feel there was no clear path to work in an age of record youth unemployment.” [p3]. The report’s recommendations include:
 - Ensuring schools focus on developing young people’s literacy skills
 - Improving careers advice and support
 - Joined-up approaches to youth unemployment.

Riots and the brands

- “The Panel particularly welcome businesses undertaking corporate social responsibility (CSR) activity which supports the local neighbourhoods within which they operate and focuses on using the company brand to engage and work with young people.” [p4]
- “Over half of respondents to the Panel’s Neighbourhood Survey believe there is a growing gap between rich and poor in their local area. The Panel believe society must continue to support sustainable growth and promote business expansion. However, alongside this, we believe that businesses have a clear role giving something back to society and making progressive steps to sharing wealth and providing opportunities for individuals to achieve a stake in business.” [p4]

- "...children and young people must be protected from excessive marketing, while supporting business and not harming commerce." [p5]

Usual suspects

- "The Interim Report showed that rioters brought before the courts had on average 11 previous convictions ... People want rioters to be punished, but they also want to make sure we do all we can to stop those people from continuing to offend in future. Victims and the wider public deserve a justice system that is effective at both. Some 66 per cent of residents we surveyed agreed that rehabilitation is the best way of preventing offenders from committing further crimes." [p5]

Police and the public

- Includes:
 - Increasing trust in the police
 - Integrity
 - Contact with the police – "Black and minority ethnic happiness following contact with the police is significantly worse than it is for white people – 64 per cent, compared to 77 per cent." [p6]
 - Improving communication by the police about their actions
 - Accountability.

Finally, the report draws together findings on and recommendations for **Community engagement, involvement and cohesion:**

- "Communities we spoke with felt they had a significant role to play in putting right the issues in their neighbourhoods, such as poor parenting. However, residents felt they had lost the ability to intervene in each other's lives. This 'disconnect' may go some way to explaining why in our Neighbourhood Survey 61 per cent did not agree that theirs was a close, tight-knit community or that neighbours treated each other with respect." [p7]
- "The Panel recommends that the Department for Communities and Local Government work with local areas to develop better neighbourhood level engagement and communication capabilities." [p7]
- "The Department for Communities and Local Government should work with public services and neighbourhoods to develop community involvement strategies, with volunteering at their heart." [p8]

The report concludes:

"The recommendations we make as part of this report are together designed to tackle these issues – ensuring public services work together and accept accountability for turning around the lives of individuals, families and, in turn, communities." [p8]

The following should summarise “the sort of treatment every child, family and community can expect from public services” [p8]:

- “Every child should be able to read and write to an age appropriate standard by the time they leave primary and then secondary school. If they cannot, the school should face a financial penalty equivalent to the cost of funding remedial support to take the child to the appropriate standard.
- No child should be transferred into an unsatisfactory Pupil Referral Unit or alternative provision until standards are improved (unless there is a risk of immediate danger).
- Every child should have the skills and character attributes to prepare them for work, when they leave education.
- No offender should be placed back into a community on leaving prison without wraparound support, otherwise the community is put at risk.
- No young person should be left on the work programme without sufficient support to realistically hope to find work.
- Government and local public services should together fund a ‘Youth Job Promise’ scheme to get young people a job, where they have been unemployed for one year or more.
- All families facing multiple difficulties should be supported by public services working together, not in isolation. This will require joining up help for the 500,000 forgotten families.” [p8]

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland 2012

JRF have just published this update³ to the 2009 report⁴.

“The last Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion in Northern Ireland report was published in autumn 2009, when Northern Ireland was being

³ Tom MacInnes, Hannah Aldridge, Anushree Parekh and Peter Kenway *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland 2012*. JRF, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (4578.8 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-northern-ireland-social-exclusion-2012-full.pdf>. There is a summary available to download as a pdf (3200.8 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-northern-ireland-social-exclusion-2012-summary%20.pdf>.

⁴ *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland 2009*. JRF (“Findings”), 2009. Available to download as a pdf (186.22 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/monitoring-poverty-northern-ireland-2009-summary.pdf>.

hit hard by the recession and had seen a steeper rise in unemployment than any other part of the UK. The report was quite downbeat, with a fear of worse to come.

This report looks at what has changed in the two-and-a-half years since then. It examines low income, work, benefits and education. What emerges is a complex picture. There has been continued long-term improvement in some areas and persistent problems in others. There are variations both between and within geographical areas and population groups. In all of this, there is the sense that while the position is no worse than three years ago, it is also no better, and Northern Ireland is now faced by the uncertainties of public sector cuts and welfare reform.” [p2]

This report goes on to look at four key areas:

- Income and poverty
- Work and worklessness
- Social security benefits
- Education and qualifications.

The ‘headline’ findings from the research are:

- “One in five people (22%) in Northern Ireland are living in poverty.
- Pensioner poverty in Northern Ireland has risen by 27%.
- Between 2009 and 2011, 34% of working-age adults in Northern Ireland were not in paid work. This is higher than the Great Britain average but similar to Wales.
- Children on free school meals are less likely to attain expected levels of educational qualifications.
- In 2011, 38% of working-age women were workless compared with 28% of working-age men. This gap is closing and the gap in full-time hourly pay rates between women and men has closed.”⁵

Disability issues – Other Agencies

Over-looked communities, over-due change: how services can better support BME disabled people

Scope and the Equalities National Council⁶ have produced this new report⁷ which takes as its starting point that:

⁵ Taken from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/monitoring-poverty-northern-ireland-2012?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Weekly+publications+and+blogs+wb+30+April+2012&utm_content=Weekly+publications+and+blogs+wb+30+April+2012+CID_5ead787d643a9b9b00d6f2e943140f26&utm_source=Email+marketing+software&utm_term=Monitoring+poverty+and+social+exclusion+in+Northern+Ireland+2012.

⁶ “Britain’s only BME user-led Disabled People Organisation” – see: <http://www.encweb.org.uk/>.

⁷ Robert Trotter. *Over-looked communities, over-due change: how services can better support BME disabled people*. Scope, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (2140 kb)

“Little research has been conducted into how the lives of disabled people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds can be improved, yet there are at least one million Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) disabled people in the UK – and this number is growing.” [p5]

The first part of the research draws together what is known about BME disabled people, for example:

“There are at least 1 million disabled people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds – and the population is growing.

- There tends to be lower prevalence of impairments amongst BME disabled people of working age, but over the age of 40 prevalence increases dramatically.
- Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups have the highest rates of disability in old age of any ethnic group.
- 44% of BME disabled people live in household poverty, compared with 32% of all disabled people and 17% of the population as a whole.
- Individual incomes for BME disabled people are 30% lower than for the general population.
- Less than 4 in 10 BME disabled people of working age are in employment.” [pp6-7]

Secondly, the research highlights the findings from a series of focus groups which explored how disabled people experienced services; the key issues include:

- Communication difficulties and language barriers
- Stigma
- Social isolation and family life
- Migration
- Discrimination.

The research then goes on to make recommendations for policy-makers; service commissioners; and service providers:

“Combining the findings from our primary research with examples of good practice from service visits and stakeholder interviews, we developed our ‘Plato’ model for inclusive service provision. We argue that such a model would create services that would be more accessible to BME disabled people, but that would also benefit all disabled people. The ‘Plato’ model would be:

- Person-centred principles
- Local community action
- Advocacy
- Translated communication

from: <http://www.scope.org.uk/sites/default/files/BME%20full%20report.pdf>. There is a summary of the report available (817.41 kb) from: <http://www.scope.org.uk/sites/default/files/BME%20summary%20report.pdf>.

- Outreach into communities.” [p8]

The background information in this report is immensely useful, and the research itself can help point us in new directions.

Highly recommended.⁸

Abbreviations and acronyms

DCLG = Department for Communities and Local Government

JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation

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⁸ Source: Scope *Early Years Newsletter*, May 2012.