

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

Number 33, June 2004

(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.

For a general overview of work to tackle social exclusion, see the CILIP Community Services Group site at <http://www.cilip.org.uk/groups/csg/si/index.html>.

Did you see ...?

Youth Library Review

The latest issue of *Youth Library Review*¹ includes a piece by Natasha Innocent (Early Years Library Network) on family friendly libraries²; and a feature on looked-after children³, with a review of three websites⁴, including ours!

LGIU Briefing

The latest issue⁵ contains a short piece by Heather Wills, Tower Hamlets's Idea Store Programme Director, on how the setting up of Idea Stores has turned round library usage – “The Idea Store has very quickly become the place to be for the local community.”

Update

The June issue⁶ of CILIP *Update* includes the second in John Pateman's series of articles about tackling social exclusion, looking at staffing structures and staff support and training.

¹ *Youth Library Review* 34, Spring 2004.

² “How Family Friendly is *your* library?”, p9.

³ “Looked after children”, pp10-15.

⁴ “Looked after children weblinks”, p32.

⁵ Heather Wills “Libraries of the future”, *Briefing* [Local Government Information Unit] 172, May 2004, pp14-15.

⁶ John Pateman “Structures to tackle social exclusion”, *Update* 3 (6), June 2004, pp38-40.

Inclusion

The latest issue⁷ of *Inclusion* (the newsletter produced by the ODPM) includes some interesting articles and news reports, including (amongst others):

- A brief description of the Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre in Camden
- An introduction to Floor Targets Interactive which brings together key information on health, employment, crime, education and housing at a district level, with a particular focus on the 88 most deprived areas (further information available at www.neighbourhood.gov.uk)
- An article, "Imagine ... no labels", looking at a project in Liverpool, that is working with people with mental health problems
- The outline of a partnership between Chicken Shed theatre company and Danegrove Primary School, Barnet to work on an "inclusivity programme"
- An article about Oldham's Community Cohesion Agency
- Two articles about involving big businesses in regeneration
- An article about combating rural exclusion through community policing.

The reading kit 3

Published by The National Youth Agency in partnership with The Reading Agency and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, this *Reading kit*⁸ pulls together what has been learned from the third YouthBOOX programme (which was run in 2001-2), and focuses particularly on challenges for staff and managers in running a reader development programme as a partnership between the library and youth services.

As well as running through the methodology for establishing a successful partnership project, this *Kit* also includes some valuable resources, such as:

- Models of partnership
- Models of reader development work
- Case studies (eg "Dissemination activities in Sheffield")
- Ways in which a YouthBOOX project can link to local authority plans
- The most popular books in YouthBOOX projects
- Reflective practice (based on Kolb's "Cycle of Learning")
- Sample questionnaires for young people, youth workers and librarians.

A very useful practical guide to developing successful partnership working.

⁷ *Inclusion: the newsletter for those involved in tackling social exclusion*, 9, Spring 2004. *Inclusion* is available online at: www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk. Alternatively, hard copies are available – tel: 020-7944 8133; email: inclusioneditor@odpm.gsi.gov.uk.

⁸ Rob Hunter and Bronwen Hunter. *The reading kit 3: new approaches to reading for socially excluded young people*. The National Youth Agency, 2004. £7.50 (ISBN: 0-86155-307-1).

Making the transition ...

This is a new report⁹ which was commissioned in response to the Disability Rights Task Force's recommendations¹⁰ regarding the need to tackle barriers to joint working in the provision of services and support to disabled people.

Barriers may be at central government level, local level, or both, and include:

- Organisational/structural issues
- Budgetary issues
- Procedural issues.

The possible areas for policy development (which would also possibly apply to museums, archives and libraries) are:

- Raising of awareness of services amongst service-users and providers;
- Increasing joint working between providers;
- Investigating the possibility of a 'key worker' role for service-users;
- Widening already existing initiatives and policies;
- Ensuring new initiatives are evidence-based.

Not just a place to find books!

This is the title of a small booklet¹¹, aimed at people leaving prison, and providing an introduction to the ranges of services available from public libraries in West Sussex.

A very simple piece of publicity, well produced and attractive – something for other areas to consider?

It was produced by SEMLAC, in partnership with the National Probation Service, Sussex Youth Ltd, West Sussex County Council, HMP Ford, and DfES.

Pooling resources across sectors ...

The Health Development Agency has just published this briefing report¹² with the aim of supporting Local Strategic Partnerships in making the best use of the new flexibility in pooling and realigning resources.

⁹ Ini Grewal, *et al. Making the transition: addressing barriers in services for disabled people*. Department for Work and Pensions (Research Report 204), 2004 £44.00 (ISBN: 1-84123-651-9). Also available as a free download from www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/. A research summary is also available.

¹⁰ *From exclusion to inclusion: a report of the Disability Rights Task Force on civil rights for disabled people*. Disability Rights Task Force, 1999.

¹¹ *Not just a place to find books!* SEMLAC, 2004.

¹² Lucy Hamer. *Pooling resources across the sectors: a report for local strategic partnerships*. Health Development Agency, 2004. Further information and/or the report itself are available on the HDA website at www.hda.nhs.uk.

It includes some interesting case studies from LSPs that have started to pool resources (eg crosscutting approaches to funding work with children and young people), but does not appear to involve libraries, archives or museums at this stage.

Mentoring disaffected young people

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation have just published an evaluation¹³ of the “Mentoring Plus” scheme (via which disaffected young people at risk of social exclusion were offered individual mentoring).

The report shows where mentoring has proved to be successful, and suggests that more rigorous work to determine how mentoring actually works – and therefore whether it can be applied to sectors other than education – needs to be undertaken.

Effective drug prevention

The Health Development Agency has just published a useful summary¹⁴ of recent research into what works – stressing, for example outreach work and engaging young people – and this would be useful background for any of you developing work around young people and drugs.

Debt and the nature of indebtedness

The DWP have just published¹⁵ an analysis of families in debt and the main causes.

The Social Exclusion Unit has also just produced an *Action on Debt* pack¹⁶ which gives practical guidance for people working in the following sectors:

- communities
 - housing
 - health
 - business
 - children and families
 - the justice system
 - employment.
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¹³ Michael Shiner *et al.* *Mentoring disaffected young people: an evaluation of Mentoring Plus*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2004. £15.95 (ISBN: 1-85935-163-8).

¹⁴ Louise Millward *et al.* *Evidence for effective drug prevention in young people: a summary of research findings arising from research activity to date*. Health Development Agency, 2004. (ISBN 1-84279-270-9). Available on the HDA website at www.hda.nhs.uk.

¹⁵ *Characteristics of families in debt and the nature of indebtedness*. DWP, 2004. Available at www.dwp.gov.uk.

¹⁶ The *Action on Debt* pack is available free from: ODPM Publications, PO Box 236, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7NB; tel: 0870 1226 236; email: seu@twoten.press.net.

“Make a Noise in Libraries”

The National Library for the Blind is again co-ordinating a week of activities in libraries (19-15 July 2004) to “make a noise” about the inclusive, accessible services for visually impaired people that they have been developing.

Further information is available on the NLB website at www.nlb-online.org/campaigns.

How to access disability services ...

Subtitled *A guide for organisations in contact with refugees and asylum seekers in London*, this new publication¹⁷ from the National Information Forum gives practical signposting information on rights, benefits, services and opportunities available to disabled refugees and asylum-seekers in London.

Contents include community care; health services; money; equipment; caring; housing; education; employment; and leisure.

Social exclusion and disability

CASE at the LSE has recently published the findings¹⁸ of a research study which shows that disability and social exclusion are closely linked: for example, people in the poorest fifth of income distribution are 2½ times more likely to become disabled than those in the top fifth.

Volunteering and social exclusion

The Institute of Volunteering Research has recently produced a report¹⁹ looking at whether there are barriers to volunteering, for example for Black and ethnic minority or disabled people.

The report highlights ways in which volunteering can assist in breaking down exclusion barriers and makes some recommendations for developing good practice²⁰.

¹⁷ *How to access disability services: a guide for organisations in contact with refugees and asylum seekers in London*. National Information Forum, £12.99 (statutory agencies), £5.99 (voluntary agencies). Further information from NIF: tel: 020-7402 6681; fax: 020-7402 1259; email: info@nif.org.uk; order online at www.nif.org.uk; write to National Information Forum, Post Point 905, BT Burne House, Bell Street, London NW1 5BZ.

¹⁸ Tania Burchardt. *Being and becoming: social exclusion and the onset of disability*. CASE (CASEreport 21), 2003. Available at: <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case>.

¹⁹ *Volunteering for all? Exploring the link between volunteering and social exclusion*. Institute of Volunteering Research, n.d. Available at: www.ivr.org.uk.

²⁰ Thanks to Susan White (Shropshire Libraries) for drawing my attention to this and the next item.

“Double Discrimination”

The June issue of *Disability Now* includes a useful article²¹ about Black and ethnic minority disabled people and the “double” set of barriers they often face – it also includes some examples of advocacy and support projects.

New “Right to Read” Projects

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation has just announced six new “Right to Read” awards for libraries and other agencies working with young people in public care. The new projects are:

- Reading Champion for Looked-After Children (Croydon)
- “Booked for Life” (Northamptonshire)
- “Animate” (Cheshire)
- Right to Read in Knowsley (Knowsley)
- Supporting Informal Home Literacy (University of Sussex)
- Right to Read St Helens (St Helens)

Further information is available at www.readon.org.uk/phffund/righttoread.html.

Public libraries and public space

A recent article²² in the journal, *LIBRES*, looks at the changing role of the public library, and argues that it needs to provide a place where learning – in the widest sense – can take place, where people can meet to use a public space, and where social exclusion issues can be challenged²³.

Inspiring Learning for All

SWMLAC launched ILFA at Powderham Castle on 10 June, and here are the key points from the morning sessions:

The scene was set (in terms of harnessing/releasing creativity and the importance of understanding and accommodating different learning styles) by **Rosie Millard** (broadcaster and writer) and **Sue Kay** (Executive Director, Culture SW).

Jonathan Douglas (MLA) then introduced ILFA²⁴:

²¹ Lucy Glynn “Double discrimination” *Disability Now*, June 2004. Available at: www.disabilitynow.org.uk/features/features_2.htm.

²² Colleen Alstad and Ann Curry “Public space, public discourse and public libraries”, *LIBRES* 13 (1) 2003. Available at: http://libres.curtin.edu.au/libres13n1/pub_space.htm.

²³ Thanks to Anne Goulding at Loughborough University for drawing this to my attention.

²⁴ Available at: www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk.

- Learning is a national policy priority, driven for example by demographic and social changes which have led to new and continuous learning being necessary, and the evidence that there are links between learning and exclusion
- During the consultations about ILFA, some basic principles became clear:
 - Organisations had to become learning organisations
 - Learning had to be linked to individual and community needs
 - We need to consult, involve, pilot, evaluate
 - We need to look for outcomes, not outputs, and continuous improvement
 - We need to be able to gather evidence of achievement from users.
- ILFA consists of the framework, plus support for organisational development, plus toolkits (eg social inclusion, cultural diversity, disability, etc)
- The evidence gathered by using ILFA can be used to develop organisations, for advocacy, for arguing (eg with the Treasury) for more resources for libraries, archives and museums
- In relation to *Framework for the future*, MLA are working up five national learning offers:
 - Early Years
 - Out-of-school-hours learning
 - Working with disengaged teenagers
 - Working with adult learners
 - Inspiring high quality adult reading
- ILFA was going to be influencing work across MLA's remit, eg "Routes to Knowledge", Archives Task Force, Renaissance in the Regions, Museums Education Strategy²⁵.
- MLA's "ambitions" were:
 - To create a national framework for advocacy
 - To shift towards outcomes and forward-planning
 - To develop social impact indicators
 - To mainstream learning within the sector as a core function
 - To mainstream our role in learning within the wider learning community.

Miranda McKearney (The Reading Agency) then showed how effective ILFA had been in analysing responses to last year's summer reading challenge²⁶, and stressed the need to develop evidence to have an impact on funders and opinion-formers.

In the brief questions session at the end of the morning, the major issues raised – which, interestingly, several people had already mentioned in passing – was the urgent need to develop links across the whole of the cultural sector: why, for example, weren't the arts involved? The Arts Council also needs to be more involved ...

²⁵ See, for example, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill *et al.* *What did you learn at the museum today?* MLA, 2004 (ISBN: 1-903743-46-X). Available at: www.mla.gov.uk.

²⁶ See *Inspiring children: the impact of the Summer Reading Challenge* at www.readingagency.org.uk/html/research_downloads.cfm.

This was an impressive get-together of people from many different sectors in the SW – it will be interesting to see how ILFA takes off from here.

“Social Exclusion and Reader Development”

This was a one-day training course, organised by the NW Reader Development network, “Time to Read”, held in Blackpool on 18 June.

John Vincent started off the day by looking at definitions, what works, and where libraries fit into the wider Government and exclusion picture. The whole group then explored barriers to take-up of service.

After lunch, **Bernard Murphy** (Calderdale Libraries) talked about the RAYS [Reading and You Scheme] project. RAYS is a bibliotherapy project which, as their leaflet says, is “promoting well being, relaxation and friendship through books and reading.” Bibliotherapy was being shown to be effective because it was, at the same time, involving (people in stories, for example, which might relate to their own situation) and distancing (in that it wasn’t directly related to the person).

RAYS was set up as a partnership between Calderdale and Kirklees Library Services, with funding via DCMS/Wolfson. The Scheme has created links with health professionals so that they can refer patients to work with Bibliotherapists – of whom there are 7, all part-time, working with people who are suffering from stress and/or depression, or who are lonely, using fiction and poetry. These links have been created by the Bibliotherapists themselves and also via an awareness day for healthcare professionals.

The project is also targeting particular groups, and is working with depression self-help, abuse, families, refugees and asylum-seekers, and youth groups.

At the same time, RAYS is very keen to look at people’s reading histories, and, in this, looking at all reading (newspapers, online, non-fiction – as well as fiction and poetry).

The original funding partners included the two Library Services, PCTs and Sure Start, and, as the project has developed, partnerships have also been created with other organisations (eg further Sure Start schemes, Ufl).

RAYS has gained considerable recognition (eg via the “Libraries Change Lives” awards, an article in the national press).

People are coming off tranquilliser dependency through the project, and Bernard quoted one user as saying that they liked it because “It’s up to me” – they could choose whether to attend or not and how much/what to read.

Finally, **Beverley Ward** (formerly of Sheffield Libraries, now freelancing, including working for The Reading Agency) talked about her work with homeless people. She began by emphasising the needs of homeless people and the levels of exclusion

they face – excluded from work, education, a normal life. They often used libraries which were seen as a safe haven and also a place to access learning.

Beverley then briefly described the YouthBOOX project she'd led in Sheffield, and said that the books that had been bought for use in the hostel (for homeless young people) were being very well used. In addition, she had been working with young people in their first tenancies – and again had found a great deal of interest in reading and poetry-writing.

Two themes emerged from this session: firstly, the need to challenge the systems (eg joining procedures); and secondly the importance of recognising that this kind of work was not necessarily about working with large numbers – we might make a difference to just one person's life.

The course took place at the Blackpool City Learning Centre, a brilliant new facility which offers a Cyber Lounge with all-day refreshments; a 100-seat lecture theatre; a UK-Online Centre; PC and Apple training suites; a TV broadcasting studio; a training centre; ICT learning rooms; and a public library. The CLC is the “hub” of a new systems, with the “spokes” being mini-CLCs based in 8 secondary schools.

New Membership procedures

Here in Stockport Library and Information Service we have recently introduced new membership procedures. The Audit Commission has recently rated our service ‘good’ with ‘excellent prospects for improvement’. One of our commitments to the Stockport community is to ensure access for all. With this commitment in mind we have made joining the library a much easier process, and at the same time ensured that anyone can now join our libraries.

A small cross-hierarchical working party was set up to make recommendations to our management team. The first thing the working party did was to contact as many library authorities as possible, to find examples of good practice. We also started with the premise that anyone should be able to join a library, and the need to be a socially inclusive service was an important influence here.

The working party questioned 4 main areas:

- The need for ID
- The need for printed forms
- The need for guarantors for under 18s, and
- The need for proof of eligibility for concessions related to visual and print related or learning disabilities.

After much research into these four areas, including the legal, Freedom of Information and Data Protection issues, our management team decided to change the membership procedures. These include membership without the need to show any proof of name or address, which means our library service is accessible for people who may not have ID e.g. people who are homeless, refugees etc.

Each member of the public is now given the choice of giving a member of staff their details verbally or filling out a simple form to join the library, ensuring an easier process for people with basic skills needs, people with visual impairments etc. If people choose to fill out a printed form e.g. if they have a hearing or speech disability, the form is destroyed as soon as the details are typed into the computer system, thereby saving staff time and keeping within legal guidelines re data collection.

We no longer ask for a guarantor for under 18s, and this will mean more looked-after children and refugee children, here without their parents, will be able to join a library. The last change is that we no longer ask for proof of eligibility for concessions related to visual and print related or learning disabilities, which ensures a more accessible service.

At the same time we have also started to collect information about our new members in terms of ethnic origin, languages spoken and disability. This information will help us make informed decisions about future service provision. The information is stored electronically and we no longer keep paper forms.

Overall we feel the new procedures will open up our library service and ensure we are providing a service that is socially inclusive. Of course we also aim to increase the numbers of new members and issues.

The new procedures were introduced as a one-year pilot in May, so it is too early to give any definite feedback, but members of the public and our partners have welcomed the changes.

Please contact Maria Nother at maria.nother@stockport.gov.uk if you require more information.

Maria Nother

Library Services to Guest Workers

It is not unknown for Lincolnshire to attract workers from other parts of the country and even other parts of the world. During the Second World War, many men, Italian and German prisoners of war came to the county, worked on its fields and in several well-documented cases became close friends with their former “enemies”. Now the county is seeing a new influx of people from overseas coming to work on the land and in its food-processing factories.

There are approximately 75,000 migrant workers in the UK. The simplest definition of a migrant worker is “those who are foreign born”. In the UK in 2001, 3.6 million people of working age were “foreign born”, that is, ten per cent of the working population of whom three per cent are from Eastern Europe.

Overall, the 25-49 age range predominates with women making up 49% of all migrants. The distinction between permanent/temporary/flexible migrant workers is less clearly defined, particularly in the UK.

Fruit pickers and vegetable packers, school teachers, nurses and social workers head for foreign lands in search of work, or higher pay or just for the opportunity to make a better life. It is estimated that 150 million people are living outside their country of origin.

They are variably labelled as “contract workers” or “economic migrant workers” such as Seasonal Agricultural Workers who stay only a short length of time in a particular country, six months to a year. We prefer to call these guest workers. We have a large number of these in Lincolnshire, particularly in the Boston area, many of whom are from Portugal and Brazil.

To keep this community in perspective, we should remember that there are guest workers in the UK who work as professionals – 13% of our nurses, 31% of our doctors and 12.5% of academic and research staff at universities have specific work permits specifying the nature of their employment and length of residency.

The need for this guest workforce is unquestionable. The demographics of the UK, the increasing amount of time people of all ages spend in education, and other factors are reducing the amount of indigenous labour available and making us increasingly dependent on guest workers.

We need these guest workers to sustain our local and national economy; in return we have a responsibility as consumers and citizens to be aware of the needs of these guest workers, many of whom are disadvantaged or excluded. For example, provision of health care insurance, pensions and insurance for work-related injuries should be made available to all guest workers.

Guest workers also face issues such as the breaking of family ties, friends and social networks, a departure from traditional routines, value systems, and accepted ways of behaving and having to adapt to new social environments. The library service, and other cultural services, have an important role in helping to meet the inclusion, learning and regeneration needs of guest workers.

Guest workers are positively accepted and valued by some employers:

“This year, in harvesting 70 acres of Bramley apples, we were dependent on Ukrainian students. We now use very little local labour as we have found that the rigorous selection process results in very good, careful and pleasant workforce. It is very advantageous for us to have these students living on the farm”.

“I find them generally extremely diligent. They are people like teachers, students and so on. There are 15 trained florists among them. I couldn't get 15 trained florists for love nor money. If it weren't for East European labour available, supermarkets wouldn't have much on their shelves.”

It would be dangerous to make generalising conclusions about all guest workers based on media reports, but they clearly face a number of significant challenges:

“The people are not well informed of the living conditions abroad and do not have sufficient command of foreign languages. The support networks for migrants, such as intermediaries, consultants and public services barely exists.” (from a survey of guest workers).

Libraries and other cultural services can help to fill some of these gaps. We can offer training in language skills, develop support networks , act as intermediaries and consultants – and, ultimately, as advocates and champions for these guest workers within our communities.

Guest workers live outside the realm of the social and public institutions of the receiving countries and are deprived of social guarantees. Over 85% of guest workers surveyed did not have medical insurance, and many did not know that it was necessary or possible to obtain such insurance.

Libraries can provide access to the information which guest workers need to assert their rights to medical insurance and a whole range of other benefits and entitlements. Libraries can also play a crucial role in hospitality and welcome and being safe environments for guest workers to celebrate their cultures.

This is already happening through the libraries’ Multicultural Development Service. I am convinced that Lincolnshire libraries can create and show the way forward in listening and responding to the voices and needs of the guest worker. In doing so we are developing best practice and excellence that will be of use to others in the region and nationally.²⁷

John Pateman
June 2004

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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June 2004

²⁷ This article was based on “A Whole New Workforce” by Alan Robson in *Lincolnshire Life* magazine.