

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

Number 40, January 2005

(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 ...?

Inclusion

The latest issue¹ of the newsletter from the ODPM has a couple of very useful items:

- Sarah Lovell's article, "Colour blind" (p4), looks at the work that is being pioneered in Tower Hamlets to develop new approaches to providing services for disabled people from ethnic minorities. Key issues identified are:
 - Improving communication
 - Tackling stigma
 - Ending isolation
 - Overcoming cultural barriers
 - Personalising services.
- "Child-centred thinking" (pp8-9) sets out very straightforwardly what is going to be provided at the new Children's Centres, and includes the perspectives of 4 people who work with children.

RecordKeeping

In the latest issue², Rachel Hasted (Social Inclusion Manager at TNA) writes about the work that TNA has undertaken so far; identifies some core values which need to be considered when developing an action plan; and looks at some practical steps that need to be taken to achieve social inclusion.

¹ *Inclusion* 11, Autumn 2004.

² Rachel Hasted "Thinking about social inclusion at TNA" *RecordKeeping* Autumn 2004, pp27-29. *RecordKeeping* is available to download as a pdf (3287k for the Autumn issue) from www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/services/recordkeeping.htm.

She also recommends some resources, including The Network, and gives some examples of TNA resources (including a Diversity Register of archives activities, and a quarterly Social Inclusion Forum).

The 9th National Information Forum “Getting the Message Across” Awards

The latest issue³ of *Innovations in Information* celebrates the winners of the NIF Awards:

- Refugee Resource – for its asylum-seekers and refugees directory of services in Oxfordshire
- Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland – for their easy-to-read version of their annual report
- Croydon Homeless Health Team – for their booklet, *Pictures of health*
- Changing Faces – for their booklet, *Facing changes*⁴
- Derby Homeless Forum – for their information card for homeless people
- Outsiders – for their Website at www.outsiders.org.uk
- Lothian Making Choices Keeping Safe Working Group – for their guide, *Making choices, keeping safe*
- ITAAL [“Is There An Accessible Loo?”] for their directory⁵, the Essential Companion to the directory, and their Website at www.itaal.org.uk
- Arthritis Care – for its range of publications, devised with and for people with arthritis
- MLA – for its Disability Portfolio
- HARP – for its Website, HARPWEB⁶, providing information for health professionals who support refugees and asylum-seekers
- Books Beyond Words – for the concept of telling stories through stand-alone pictures [a series of books for people with learning disabilities, that include topics such as *Getting on with cancer*, *Looking after my balls*, etc]⁷

Literacy Today

The latest issue of *Literacy Today*⁸ has a number of interesting articles (and an important announcement in the “Comment” section – more below):

- David Kendall “Creating new heroes”, a brief introduction to the work at HMP Reading & YOI, supported by SEMLAC (p7)

³ *Innovations in Information* 10 (3) 2004.

⁴ Winnie Coutinho. *Facing changes: changing the way we see disfigurement*. Changing Faces, nd [2004?] £3.50 (ISBN: 1-900928-26-4). Further information about this title and the range of resources available at: www.changingfaces.co.uk/resourcestest.html.

⁵ *The ITAAL directory of accessible loos in England*. ITAAL, nd [2004?]. Further information (and about the Essential Companion which offers guidance as to how design problems may be overcome) at: www.itaal.org.uk.

⁶ HARPWEB consists of three sites: www.harpweb.org.uk contains foundation resources, including cultural information; <http://mentalhealth.harpweb.org.uk> is the HARP Mental Health and Well-being Resource; and <http://www.communicate> has multilingual and multicultural resources.

⁷ Further information available at: www.rcpsych.ac.uk/publications/bbw/index.htm.

⁸ *Literacy Today* [The magazine of the National Literacy Trust] 41, December 2004.

- Alexandra Strick “Bookmark support on reading difficulties”, an outline of Booktrust’s Web-based provision to support those working with children with reading difficulties⁹ (p14)
- Debra Myhill and Susan Jones “Noisy boys, and invisible girls?”, a fascinating article which suggests that many of us who work with young people still stereotype boys and girls – the writers suggest that, rather than thinking in terms of gender, we should look at who’s achieving and who isn’t (as they say, “... underachieving girls appeared to be almost invisible.”) The article ends with some recommendations for improving practice (pp20-21).

For those of you who may have missed this, the “Comment” section (p3) announces the World Book Day initiative for 2006, which will target emergent adult readers.

“The initiative will ask book publishers to produce a series of cheap fiction and non-fiction books, by well-known authors, targeted at emergent adult readers. World Book Day 2005 will get the ball rolling with a massive postcard campaign involving adults in recommending good reads.

This initiative will be coordinated with the forthcoming BBC campaign targeting adults with poor literacy through television and radio programmes. The two to three-year campaign, probably scheduled to begin in autumn 2005, will build on what the BBC has learnt from 30 years of campaigning in this area.”

Library Services for Visually Impaired People: a vision of what might be before 2013

David Owen and Share the Vision [STV] have kindly given permission for us to draw from their 2004 Annual report – this is their vision for the future:

“The *Framework for the future* report sets out a vision for libraries in 2013 in the form of 11 possible future practical service scenarios. Our vision is that all of these scenarios will apply equally to visually impaired people but before 2013.

The ‘Wider Information and Library Issues Project’ report sets out a more philosophical “vision for library and information services”:

- Users are information-literate and have seamless and unfettered access to information resources at the time and place of their choosing and in the form that they want, no matter where the resources are located.
- Access is facilitated by more and more information being available electronically, including a wider range of older resources made accessible through digitisation.
- The library is the focus for access to the wider range of services.

⁹ Bookmark is available at: www.bookmark.org.uk.

- The library's role is more closely geared to customers' needs, supporting self-navigation by users, helping them develop information literacy skills or providing intermediation, according to requirements.

STV was part of the WILIP consultation process and we share this vision in terms of addressing the needs of visually impaired people.

In order to achieve this before 2013 (visually impaired people have waited too long already) we need to set out some specific and more prosaic requirements which reflect the realities which apply to visually impaired people.

This is our vision:

1. That no matter what their personal circumstances are (born blind or losing sight through infirmity of accident) VIPs will be able to access a continuum of library and information services [LIS] throughout their life which is equal to that available to sighted people but which meets their personal needs.
2. The totality of these LIS will be available in their preferred accessible formats via their preferred point(s) of contact wherever they may be situated in the LIS continuum.
3. That in order for this to be realised, all LIS providers will ensure that their policies and practices are reviewed in order to put the needs of their users first; in this case the needs of VIPs whether they are users of public libraries, mainstream school libraries, specialist school libraries, college libraries, university libraries, workplace libraries, voluntary sector libraries or others.
4. That, given the lack of content in accessible formats, LIS will reaffirm and adapt their longstanding tradition of co-operation and resource sharing in order to ensure maximum access to content for VIPs.
5. That, in order for this to be possible, all LIS whatever their sector will support the creation and on-going operation of a one-stop national referral agency which can advise and assist VIPs and those serving them.
6. That all LIS will provide access to the wider range of services from other non-LIS agencies which can assist the life opportunities and quality of life for VIPs.
7. That all LIS will ensure enhanced opportunities to access content either remotely or on site via accessible design of websites, opacs, digitisation projects etc... and the provision of assistive technology.
8. That all LIS staff are provided with the basic training which will enable them to assist the achievement of this vision.

We anticipate that all publicly funded LIS will welcome and endorse this vision as it will help them to achieve their new responsibilities to promote equality of opportunities under clause 8 of the Draft Disability Discrimination Bill.

Any VIP should be able to contact any LIS of their choice and be able to request any item in whatever format they prefer, whether for leisure, educational or other purposes and feel confident that all reasonable and informed steps will be taken to ensure that it is located and retrieved, or possibly reproduced in the requested format, and forwarded to them at their preferred location. Then we will have a national offer to a national standard which removes the current postcode lottery!”

Home Office Civil Renewal Unit publications

The benefits of community engagement ...

The Home Office Civil Renewal Unit has recently published a review¹⁰ of the benefits of community engagement, which looks at some examples of good practice (eg Lambeth’s Youth Council), as well as pointing directions for further research.

Firm foundations

The Civil Renewal Unit has also just published its plan of action¹¹ to support community capacity building more effectively. This report identifies six underlying principles which “will underpin Government action to bring about change:

- Adopt a community development approach, accepting as a starting point the values on which community development is based.
- Recognise and build on what exists – focusing on the assets and strengths of communities, as well as their needs or deficiencies.
- Take a long view – there are no quick fixes if change is to be lasting.
- Ensure that support is accessible at neighbourhood, parish or community level
- ...
- Accept that learning is a key to success for everyone involved.
- Embrace diversity and recognise solutions are needed which respond to local circumstances, rather than taking a ‘one size fits all’ approach.” [p3]

Literature Review for the Scottish Executive

In February 2004, the Scottish Executive published an extensive literature review of the evidence base for culture, the arts and sport policy¹².

¹⁰ Ben Rogers and Emily Robinson. *The benefits of community engagement: a review of the evidence*. Home Office for the Active Citizenship Centre, 2004. The report is available at: www.active-citizen.org.uk.

¹¹ *Firm foundations: the Government’s framework for community capacity building*. Home Office Civil Renewal Unit, 2004. Copies are available from: Collette Ogilvie, Civil Renewal Unit, Communities Group, Home Office, Allington Towers, 19 Allington Street, London SW1E 5EB. Tel: 020 7035 5305; email: collette.ogilvie@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

¹² Janet Ruiz. *A literature review of the evidence base for culture, the arts and sport policy*. Scottish Executive, 2004. £5.00 (ISBN: 0-7559-3782-1). Available from: Blackwell’s, 53-62 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1YS. Tel: 0131 622 8222; email: edinburgh@blackwell.co.uk (add £2.95 p&p).

This includes chapters on:

- Social impact of culture and the arts
- Culture, the arts and social inclusion
- Culture, the arts and ethnic minorities
- Culture, the arts and reduction of youth crime
- Culture, the arts and disability
- Culture, the arts and regeneration/community impact
- Culture, the arts and health
- Culture, the arts and education/employment
- Economic impact of culture and the arts
- Cultural tourism/Major cultural events
- Sport and social inclusion
- Sport and ethnic minorities
- Sport and disability
- Sport, physical activity and health
- The economic impact of major sporting events
- Conclusions – including suggestions for future research.

Each chapter begins with a ‘headline’ section, listing key findings and research issues, and there is also a very useful appendix listing key players in sports, the arts and cultural research in relation to Scotland.

This is a very useful summary of work carried out over the past 7 years or so, and is particularly valuable for drawing together the work carried out in Scotland.

Community cohesion and community development

In 2003, the CDF organised a conference on community development in a multi-ethnic society, which looked at race equality, social cohesion, inclusion and diversity policies and practices. This pamphlet^{13,14} by Alison Gilchrist draws on the debate from the conference.

It gives a useful summary of the development of the concept of social or community cohesion, and then goes on to look critically at how this is being applied in the UK: Alison Gilchrist’s view is that too much attention is being paid to ‘contact theory’ (that, by encouraging people from different groups to undertake joint activities and learn a bit about each other, hostility and ignorance can be reduced), and that more attention should be paid to what she calls “two related strands”:

Connection/Co-operation	Social Justice
Co-ordination Communication Collaboration	Equality Empowerment Education

¹³ Alison Gilchrist. *Community cohesion and community development – bridges or barricades?* Community Development Foundation, 2004. (ISBN: 1-901974-58-8).

¹⁴ Thanks to Kevin Harris at CDF for drawing this to my attention.

Both strands need to be pursued, otherwise, as she argues “[f]acilitating cross-community events, such as sports and arts events, while worthwhile, may simply displace existing tensions.” (p13)

She then goes on to argue a strong case for tackling community cohesion by using a community development approach – “Community development principles of empowerment, equality and education supply a useful framework for planning, implementing and evaluating progress. Ultimately, the success of such strategies will be judged on how well communities are able to maintain their own identities whilst simultaneously enjoying the full rights and responsibilities of equal citizenship.” (p43)

Bringing communities together ...

DCMS have published a booklet¹⁵ which, drawing on discussions at a conference in Oldham, provides practical advice to local authorities and other organisations on how to use culture and sport to build community cohesion.

The booklet outlines the 4 key stages in building a successful project:

- Needs analysis
- Partnership working
- Growing and adapting
- Evidence and evaluation

and then adds a fifth “x-factor”, celebration. Each stage is illustrated with a case study – these include:

- Bradford Sport Action Zone
- Burnley Sports Alliance
- “Be Our Guest” (Blackburn with Darwen Library Service’s programme to support asylum-seekers)
- “Moving Minds” (the project that brought together museums and galleries from Bradford, Leeds and Manchester with communities and artists to create works that reflected their ideas on migration, culture and identity)
- “Lark in the Park” (the annual arts festival in Mercer Park, Clayton le Moors, Lancs).

Indicators of integration

The Home Office has recently published the final report¹⁶ of the “Indicators of Integration” [IOI] project.

¹⁵ *Bringing communities together through sport and culture: Oldham 2004*. DCMS, 2004. Further information available at: www.culture.gov.uk.

¹⁶ Alastair Ager and Alison Strang. *Indicators of integration: final report*. Home Office (Development and Practice Report 28), 2004 (ISBN: 1-84473-456-0)

The IOI study was commissioned in 2002, initially to support the evaluation of the Challenge Fund and the European Refugee Fund, both of which support the integration of refugees into the UK (in line with Home Office policy¹⁷).

This document is primarily fulfilling the third objective of the study, which was “to design the framework for use by local projects and policy makers to assist them with the planning and evaluation of services for refugees” (p2).

The framework is made up of 10 “domains” grouped under four headings, as:

Markers and means

These are major areas of attainment, that are widely recognised as critical factors in the integration process:

1. Employment
2. Housing
3. Education
4. Health

Social connections

5. Social bonds (connections within a community defined by, for example, ethnic, national or religious identity)
6. Social bridges (with members of other communities)
7. Social links (with institutions, including local and central government services)

Facilitators

Key facilitating factors for the process of integration:

8. Language and cultural knowledge
9. Safety and stability

Foundation

10. Rights and citizenship – “This represents the basis upon which expectations and obligations for the process of integration are established.” (p4)

Each domain then has a more detailed definition, together with methods for evaluation at practice and policy levels. For example, the domain, “social bridges”, includes:

“Practice level

- Participation rates of refugees in youth clubs, childcare facilities, sports clubs etc (in relation to ethnic diversity of locality)
- Extent to which school sports teams, out-of-school activities and children’s friendship networks span the ethnic/religious composition of catchment area
- The proportion of refugees who report actively mixing with people from different ethnic backgrounds in everyday situations

¹⁷ As specified in *Full and equal citizens*. Home Office, 2002.

- Number of refugees undertaking voluntary work in the community in the past month
- Reported public attitudes to refugees

Potential sources of such data: project enrolment records; school records; local surveys; [local authority] monitoring of community cohesion; Home Office Citizenship Survey.

Policy level

Core indicators:

- The proportion of refugees who report actively mixing with people from different ethnic backgrounds in everyday situations
- Number of refugees undertaking voluntary work in the community in the past month

Other indicators:

- Reported public attitudes to refugees
- Perceived friendliness of local people (by refugees and non-refugees)

Potential sources of such data: HO longitudinal survey; Home Office Citizenship Survey; Audit Commission assessment of cohesion within CPA; programme records; attitude surveys.” (p18).

The report suggests that the framework will be useful for:

- Policy review
- Helping with local consultations
- Service monitoring and evaluation
- Benchmarking
- Measuring integration and community cohesion in other contexts
- Guiding governmental survey strategy.

This will fit in well with the small but growing range of tools to assist in measuring how well our services are doing.

Social exclusion and young adults

JRF have recently produced a report¹⁸ looking at “change and continuity in young adults’ experiences of social exclusion”.

The research was carried out by the University of Teesside, and looked at a sample of 34 young adults aged between 23-29.

¹⁸ Donald Simpson *et al.* *Poor transitions: social exclusion and young adults*. The Policy Press, 2004. £13.95 (ISBN: 1-86134-650-6).

As the JRF Website¹⁹ summarises:

“There was a striking disparity between young people's strong attachment to work and their actual employment experiences. Their ambitions – though modest – were disappointed and accompanied by frustration, disappointment and anxiety. Although most young people were committed to employment and persistently searched for work, their experiences were of intermittent, low-waged jobs, which were often poor quality, temporary and exploitative, interspersed with periods of economic inactivity ...

Current policy emphasises training, advice, incentives and childcare support as rectifying supposed gaps in employability and skills among disadvantaged young adults. However, this study suggests that such marginal redistribution of income and opportunity will not lift people out of poverty unless they have access to good quality training and rewarding and secure employment ...

The researchers suggest that the Government's 'joined-up' policy towards reducing poverty and social exclusion, to be more effective, needs to look at demand-side labour market reform, by creating more secure, better quality jobs in disadvantaged areas like Teesside.”

The Children's Fund

The University of Birmingham has carried out an evaluation²⁰ of the Children's Fund. It emphasises the importance of partnership-working, and also highlights a couple of good practice examples that involve libraries.

This is a useful background document for anyone interested in looking at some of the broad conclusions that have been drawn from the work supported by the Children's Fund.

Sport and physical activity

Sport England, the LGA and the ODPM have recently published Guidance Notes²¹ for LPSAs relating to sport and physical activity.

There are some interesting examples of how sport and physical activity can contribute to the Shared Priorities, and there may be some useful parallels for us here.

¹⁹ www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/d54.asp (accessed 17 January 2005).

²⁰ *Prevention and early intervention in the social inclusion of children and young people: national evaluation of the Children's Fund*. DfES (Research Report 603), 2004.

²¹ *Sport and physical activity in 2nd generation Local Public Service Agreements: guidance notes*. Sport England, 2004. Available at: www.sportengland.org/16327_guidance_exec_summ.pdf.

Extending the role of libraries

This report²² contains the findings of a study commissioned by the LGA and carried out by the NFER into provision being made by public libraries “over and above their traditional role.” (p1)

The research involved a literature review, a questionnaire survey of library authorities in England and Wales, and 10 case studies.

The literature review includes a section on social inclusion, and refers to *Open to all?*, as well as looking at provision for visually impaired people, and children and young people.

The survey resulted in a 63% return rate, and provided clear evidence of a high level of library service involvement in a wide range of initiatives and a high level of partnership-working.

The case studies include:

- Caerphilly – responding to economic decline and promoting good health
- Hampshire – Discovery Centres
- Lincolnshire – remodelling for the future
- Suffolk – wholesale Sunday opening
- Blackburn with Darwen – partnerships for learning
- Enfield – wide ranging social inclusion
- Hull – flexible and creative partnerships
- Liverpool – working with young people and reducing disaffection
- Sandwell – promoting lifelong learning
- Sunderland – integrated public service.

The report concludes with a number of recommendations. These include:

- A forum needs to be made available through which libraries could disseminate information about new and innovative schemes they have implemented successfully [and more of that in a moment!]
- Libraries need to identify clearly their main target audiences and promote their services appropriately to these groups.
- Strengthen and promote “niche markets” eg local history and genealogy
- “Sufficient funding and appropriate training need to be put in place to ensure that staff are fully supported and equipped to deal with groups that can be challenging in their attitudes and behaviour.”
- Staffing structures need to reflect the changing roles of staff
- Policy-makers and senior library managers need to look at what kinds of people with what kinds of skills do libraries want in the future

²² Anne Lines, Christopher Savory and Angharad Reakes. *Extending the role of libraries: final report*. NFER (LGA Research Report 23/04), 2004. £10.00 (incl. postage) (ISBN: 1-903880-88-2).

- Radical thinking is needed ... to anticipate and plan for even five years' time in terms of the role of technology in changing the way libraries operate.”
- Further investigations of local, regional or national library cards
- Re-evaluation of multi-use buildings
- The need for capital funding to finance new building programmes
- The complex role that libraries play needs to be fully acknowledged – these kinds of activities do not have simple quantifiable outcomes: “Qualitative measures of performance that are sensitive to local circumstances need to carry weight.”
- “Other local authority departments and services need to recognise that library services can play a role in most projects concerned with building communities and promoting social inclusion and citizenship, and should be proactive in enlisting library involvement from the start of projects.” (pp44-45)

This is a useful advocacy tool for public libraries, and the case studies are a valuable round-up of some current initiatives. However, based on my own experience of offering assistance to the researchers (including offering a meeting to discuss the social exclusion issues, which they did not take up), I do wonder whether this was all done a bit quickly and without sufficient understanding of the domain. For example, there is a forum that exists to share good practice, certainly in the social inclusion area ...!

It would be interesting to know how this document is being used in practice – perhaps you could let me know if you've started to use it.

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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