

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

Number 70, March 2007 – Special Issue

(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.

Contents List

Introduction – page 1

Social Exclusion Task Force Families at Risk Review – page 1

Social Exclusion Task Force Adults facing Chronic Exclusion Programme – page 2

The Lyons Inquiry into Local Government – page 3

Developing the local government services market: new ways of working and new models of provision within the public library service – a working paper – page 8

A blueprint for excellence ... – page 11

Building on success ... – page 13

Introduction

So much is happening at the moment – especially around local government – that we're producing a "Special Issue" to catch up, especially as the following items are of such importance.

Social Exclusion Task Force Families At Risk Review

The SETF is leading a cross-Whitehall review on excluded families, to be published in summer 2007.

The aims of the review will be:

- To set out a vision of an effective family support system for families with additional or complex needs.
- To identify barriers and practical solutions to the provision of a coherent whole family approach for these families. A key focus will be on how adult's services respond to their clients as parents or carers.
- To agree action to better integrate adult, child and community services around the needs of excluded families in order to tackle the drivers of deep seated exclusion.¹

Social Exclusion Task Force Adults facing Chronic Exclusion Programme

“The programme will improve service delivery for people with multiple problems and complex needs. We invite proposals for a range of 3-year pilots that can;

- improve service delivery to the hardest to reach
- engage with people who are excluded from society
- offer individual support during periods of transition.”²

The programme website³ also has a range of supporting material, including:

- An outcomes framework⁴ which plots what successful outcomes would look like for individuals, families, the community and services
- A report⁵ by the Institute of Mental Health⁶
- A scoping study⁷ from the University of Keele.

¹ See:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/publications/families_at_risk/.

² Taken from: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/.

³ See:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/publications/chronic_exclusion/index.asp.

⁴ See:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/documents/chronic_exclusion/annexa.pdf.

⁵ *Better outcomes for the most excluded: 15 February 2007 – final draft*. The Institute of Mental Health, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (418 Kb) from:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/documents/chronic_exclusion/better20070215.pdf.

⁶ The Institute of Mental Health has recently been launched – it's an initiative of the University of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust; see:

<http://www.institutemh.org.uk/index.php?mnu=1000/1001>.

⁷ Clinical Effectiveness Support Unit. *Service responses, and outcomes for adults described as having chaotic lives and multiple needs: a scoping exercise*. Keele University, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (310 Kb) from:

The report from the Institute of Mental Health:

“... looked at prevalence, effective interventions, existing mental health services and the perspective of the non-governmental sector in relation to adults with chronic exclusion, or ‘chaotic lives and multiple need’. It defined multiple need as having two of the following: mental illness; certain personality disorders; severe alcohol dependence; drug dependence; learning disability and adult neuro-developmental disorders. It defined chaotic lives as having four or more of the following characteristics: difficulty dealing with paperwork; difficulty managing money; no formal qualifications; no confidant; few friends; unemployed; highly mobile; and low income.” [p3]

It looks particularly at health responses, but is also of much wider interest; it concludes by highlighting:

“... 10 means by which chronic exclusion may be prevented, reduced or resolved:

1. Seizing opportunities to engage vulnerable young people at transition stages.
2. Early intervention, when primary needs are first identified.
3. Identification and support of young people with certain personality disorders, low intelligence, ADHD or other neuro-developmental disorders.
4. Continuous, appropriate provision which can respond flexibly to user demand.
5. Promoting zero exclusion policies within statutory provision, and providing the skills and back up required to implement these.
6. Re-examining the remit of community mental health services with respect to complex needs.
7. Addressing the needs of identifiable groups who are underserved by current services.
8. Finding ways of delivering evidence based therapeutic interventions to chronically excluded people.
9. Disseminating and applying innovative models in new contexts.
10. Attending to social and cultural needs together with physical and mental health.” [p4]

The Lyons Inquiry into Local Government

On 20 July 2004, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer commissioned Sir Michael Lyons to undertake an independent inquiry to consider the case for changes to the present system of local

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/documents/chronic_exclusion/research.pdf.

government funding in England. On 20 September 2005, the government announced an extension to the scope and length of Sir Michael's inquiry to enable him to consider issues relating to the wider functions of local government and its future role.

On Wednesday 21 March 2007, Sir Michael Lyons published the final report⁸ of his independent inquiry into the role, function and funding of local government.

The following has been taken from the Executive Summary⁹. The aim of this very brief outline is to give a flavour of the Inquiry report and to indicate its main findings and direction.

The report looks at the following topics:

- Local government: a continuing debate – which sets out the context for the Inquiry
- Local government in the 21st century: what is it for? – which looks at the modern role of local government and what we want from it
- What is limiting modern local government? – which includes issues around central control, lack of flexibility, expectations and pressures on services, confused accountability, public attitudes
- Central government's contribution to reform and what this means for services
- Local government's contribution to reform – particularly the role of "place-shaping", improving local accountability, and how to find innovative, local solutions to public service challenges
- Funding reforms
- Household taxation and local charges
- Business taxation
- The funding system and incentives
- A developmental approach – which looks at changing behaviours, legislative and policy changes, options for future governments, underpinning the developmental approach.

Local government in the 21st century: what is it for?

Here the report sets out its core views of the role of local government, which includes:

- Pursuing the well-being of citizens
- The importance of the local focus in planning and decision-making

⁸ *Place shaping – a shared vision for the future of local government: the Lyons Inquiry into Local Government – final report*. The Stationery Office, 2007. Available to download in sections from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1165334>.

⁹ Available to download as a pdf (2749 Kb) from: http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/919/LyonsInquiryFinalReportExecutiveSummary_id1508919.pdf.

- The necessity of local choice (and, with this, the need for variations in provision across the country)
- The importance of engagement – “Ensuring that local government is fully and transparently accountable to local people for the decisions it takes in the pursuit of their interests and the use of their resources is critical to an effective system of local government.” [p3]
- Place-shaping [see below]
- Services – “A new conception of the role for local government needs to go further [than just debating which services it provides], to reflect the well-being and place-shaping agenda.” [p3]

Place-shaping :

“Throughout my work, I have promoted a wider, strategic role for local government, which I have termed ‘place-shaping’ – the creative use of powers and influence to promote the general well-being of a community and its citizens. It includes the following components:

- building and shaping local identity;
- representing the community;
- regulating harmful and disruptive behaviours;
- maintaining the cohesiveness of the community and supporting debate within it, ensuring smaller voices are heard;
- helping to resolve disagreements;
- working to make the local economy more successful while being sensitive to pressures on the environment;
- understanding local needs and preferences and making sure that the right services are provided to local people; and
- working with other bodies to response to complex challenges such as natural disasters and other emergencies.” [p3]

Key challenges for local government

The report sets out four challenges:

- Providing safe and secure places to live, where communities are cohesive and integrated
- Helping to foster the greater prosperity which benefits individuals and allows us to fund public services, including engaging with the challenges and opportunities posed by globalisation
- Addressing the impact we are having on the environment by taking steps to make our lifestyles more sustainable through engagement with citizens and through the performance of its statutory functions
- “The final challenge that I believe exists for government, as a whole, is to address levels of trust and satisfaction among the public. Trust in government and elected representatives in the UK is low, and so is participation in political activity through the most obvious route – voting in elections. This seems to be a long-term problem, rather than an immediate crisis.” [p4]

Central government's contribution to reform

The report suggests that the Local Government White Paper¹⁰ (and other recent initiatives) includes the key ways in which central government can contribute to reform.

Local government's contribution to reform

“... responsibility for changing the dynamic of local-central relationships and re-energising the relationship between the citizen and their locality primarily rests with local government itself. I do not want to downplay the progress that many local authorities have made already but, while there is no comprehensive blueprint for success, I am convinced that major changes of approach are needed if councils are to embrace the place-shaping role in all our communities and rise to the challenge that ambition presents.” [p16]

The report then focuses on those changes which Sir Michael Lyons considers most urgent:

- Focusing on the future, “beyond the immediate delivery of services, the short-term electoral cycle and the timetables of funding and performance management – and to do this with greater ambition.” [p16]
- Leading communities and places – including political and managerial leadership; “convening” (“Convening requires local government to be able to identify a direction of travel, articulate a sense of the future and enthuse others to be part of a common mission.” [p17])
- Improving local accountability and engagement
- Innovative, local solutions to public service challenges, eg via Local Area Agreements, councils' commissioning role, improving efficiency.

Funding reforms/Household taxation and local charges/Business taxation/The funding system and incentives

Whilst these areas are of immense importance, they are also slightly outside the main scope of this newsletter. Their objectives can be summarised as follows:

- “greater local flexibility and choice;

¹⁰ Department for Communities and Local Government. *Strong and prosperous communities: the Local Government White Paper*. Vol 1: Cm 6939-I; Vol 2: Cm 6939-II. The Stationery Office, 2006. Volume 1:

http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/98/StrongandProsperousCommunitiestheLocalGovernmentWhitePaperVol1_id1504098.pdf.

Volume 2:

http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/99/StrongandProsperousCommunitiestheLocalGovernmentWhitePaperVol2_id1504099.pdf. See *The Network Newsletter*, 65,

December 2006.

- stronger national and local accountability based on clearer responsibilities;
- better incentives for local government;
- efficiency in local tax and spending;
- better management of pressures; and
- improved fairness, and perceived fairness in the tax system.” [p20]

A developmental approach

Changing behaviours

“Changes in behaviours will be important for both central and local government, including:

- for local government, the recognition of the place-shaping role and a greater focus on engagement with citizens and being recognised as a champion of efficiency; and
- for central government, providing greater flexibility for local authorities and the space for local decisions on priorities, with a reduction in centrally determined and monitored targets and the pressures these can create. The Comprehensive Spending Review later this year offers a key opportunity to implement changes, and particularly to ensure a corporate approach across government to the necessary prioritisation and resourcing.” [p34]

Conclusion

The report concludes:

“My definition of place-shaping as the modern role of local government within a single system of government is intended to reflect the ambitions which are shared by both local and central government for the country we live in. What I have set out is not an agenda for technical and administrative changes, but a basis for the improvement of public trust and satisfaction through closer engagement, honest debate and transparent decision-making. That is something that all involved in government, at whatever level, should care about. It is about strong, self-confident communities shaping their destinies and making choices for themselves.” [p35]

In relation to the taxation and other wider changes required, the report concludes:

“There is no simple solution to the problems affecting the system of local government and local government funding. These are profoundly complex and difficult issues which have their roots not only in legislation, but also in behaviours and deeply ingrained expectations on the part of local government, central government and the public they serve. Any reform will involve political trade-offs and is likely to have widespread impacts, and will therefore require a strong case for change. I have sought throughout my work, and throughout this report,

to recognise the complexity and diversity of the country we live in and the relationships we share, while focusing on the genuine choices we have to make in developing and empowering government to act in the best interests of all our communities.” [p35]

For those of us working in/involved with local government, probably the most significant part of the Inquiry report is that about place-shaping – it’s what the best cultural organisations have been involved in for a very long time, but now with an added emphasis and urgency.

Finally, the full recommendations regarding engagement (taken from Part IV, Conclusions¹¹) are:

“Local government needs to make a step-change in the quality of its engagement work, building on the effective communications and engagement practice already being used and also ensuring that its application is much more systematic and rigorous. In particular, councils need to:

- focus on what matters in their engagement work, being selective about where resources are targeted;
- follow best practice in engaging all sectors of the community, particularly those voices which are not always heard, including vulnerable people and black and minority ethnic groups;
- avoid allowing statutory requirements for consultation to limit their approach to consultation and engagement;
- accord higher status to the skills set needed by officers and councillors to engage effectively with the public; and
- ensure they explain to participants how the results of engagement have been used, including how they influenced councils’ or partners’ plans.” [p366]

Developing the local government services market: new ways of working and new models of provision within the public library service – a working paper

This draft discussion paper¹² sets out the key findings from research undertaken for DCLG by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.

¹¹ Available to download as a pdf (283 Kb) from:

http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/918/Part4Conclusions_id1508918.pdf.

¹² *Developing the local government services market: new ways of working and new models of provision within the public library service – a working paper*. DCLG, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (227 Kb) from:

http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/219/DevelopingtheLocalGovernmentServicesMarketNewwaysofworkingandnewmodelsofprovisir_id1508219.pdf.

The paper begins by setting the policy context within which public libraries are operating, including current challenges and opportunities which are summarised as:

“The challenges and opportunities available to stimulate further improvement in the delivery of library services include:

- re-balancing key service priorities, whilst adding capacity to deliver new services
- addressing the disparities between the best and worst performers in the public library service, a key theme explored in *Framework for the Future*
- exploring new ways of working as a stimulus to improving traditional service delivery
- moving the debate forward from one focused on **what** to deliver, to initiatives tackling **how** to deliver new objectives and new services” [p3] [emphases theirs]

It then goes on to look at some specific issues:

“Although the challenges facing individual services vary on an authority-by-authority basis, consensus seems to exist that as ‘benchmarks’ of a good service, the following issues need attention in improving the service overall:

- appropriate stocks of books and other material for use or loan
- access to the library at times relevant to customers
- location in easily accessible venues, convenient to customers
- customer service that matches user experience of comparable services
- surroundings conducive to use by customers.” [p11]

and a “final dimension”:

“A final dimension that is worth considering is how best to identify specific areas on which improvement efforts can be focused, given the diverse elements that make up a public library service. Participants in this study discussed some potential segmentation of public library services into the following key areas:

- the core library service, with associated management and branding
- the library ‘back office’, book purchasing, support services and finance
- the library property portfolio
- community functions, including links to lifelong learning, community support and wider service information” [p12]

The paper also sets libraries in the wider local government context:

“The service will also need to respond to the wider challenge outlined for local government, including:

- the move away from a narrowly defined service delivery role towards a strategic commissioning role as a way of delivering service outcomes
- the need to build upon the role of libraries as ‘community hubs’ through new ways of working that enable a truly user-focused service, linked to the concept of ‘cultural entitlement’ that is currently being explored by policy makers and some library services
- the requirement for revitalised performance management metrics, which truly reflect the multi-functional nature of library services and the strategic outcomes which local government is trying to achieve
- the genuine potential for service development through partnership working on a public-public, public-voluntary or public-private basis
- a focus on the efficiency of the service, within which not only stock acquisition, but also estates and staffing are key drivers of overall service costs” [p4]

It then goes on to propose three new models for public library provision. These are:

Collaborative working and trading models within local government

for example, “in which a high-performing local authority library service supplies the management of the whole service – or one or more components of the service – to another “commissioning” authority” [p15]

This could also include shared service arrangements across council boundaries:

“... shared services models are understood to be based upon a collaborative approach to service delivery in which a number of local authority library functions are concentrated into a discrete, semi-autonomous business that has a management structure, staff and other resources designed to add value to the participating authorities and their stakeholders, be this in terms of cost reduction or efficiency gains, and/or improved service delivery. It will also involve either geographic or virtual co-location, through maximising the use of ICT investment.” [p20]

Increasing the involvement of the private sector

“The second broad range of options focused on extending the role of the private and voluntary sectors in delivering all or part of a public library service, through a range of different relationships: partnership alliances and contracting models. To source provision from the private sector, there may be some potential amongst existing organisations with relevant expertise from the service industry. Sources might include:

- high street book retailers and supermarkets
- publishers and wholesalers
- professional support & managed service providers
- specialist information providers.” [p23]

Increasing the role of the voluntary & social enterprise sector
which could involve the establishing of trusts, or greater community ownership and management, for example by:

- “Community groups temporarily hosting libraries – using volunteers and/or library staff to reach out to specific communities of interest such as ethnic minority groups and other hard-to-reach groups
- Community groups establishing new libraries which function as part of the overall service, perhaps in new settings for the service in terms of physical presence in the community, but also alongside other community functions (and not just ‘public services’)
- Community groups ‘taking over’ the day-to-day management of individual libraries, again functioning as part of the overall service.” [p28]

There is then a brief recap of issues around stock procurement, and the paper finishes with a “Potential next steps” section:

“What is now needed is a continuing dialogue that expands upon that begun through the development of this paper and draws in a wider spectrum of opinion from the policymakers and practitioners in this area, as well as potential new suppliers into the sector.” [p5]

A blueprint for excellence ...

As you will no doubt have seen, MLA has launched its consultation document¹³, the aim of which is to:

“... set out a shared universal understanding of the role of the modern public library and of the core services that the public can expect.” [p2]

The paper starts by setting out the current strengths and weaknesses of the English public library system, and outlines improvement work already being undertaken nationally through the “Framework for the Future” programme.

¹³ John Dolan. *A blueprint for excellence: public libraries 2008-2011 – “Connecting People to Knowledge and Inspiration”*. MLA, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (72 Kb) from: http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//B/blueprint_11126.pdf.

In the first section of the paper, there is also a proposal for the process and timescale of consultation and the subsequent steps necessary to the preparation of an action plan for guide investment until 2011.

The second part of the paper contains the propositions for consultation:

1. The Purpose of the Public Library
2. The Key Roles of the Public Library
3. Eight Key Challenges for Improvement
4. Essential Elements for Success
5. What Excellence Will Look Like for People, Communities and for Funders
6. Actions and Outcomes 2008-2011.

Rather than go through the whole document here, I'd like to highlight point 3, the eight key challenges for improvement, as this is where the key issues are raised.

These are aimed at providing "A national entitlement_– an unequivocal definition of the library service with a clear expression of what users and communities can expect and the performance evaluation to enable informed public response." [p6], and include:

- Funding: adequate to deliver effective, responsive services
- Partnership: working increasingly in partnership – with public, private and third sector partners – to deliver shared outcomes from jointly secured financial and other resources
- Improved buildings and access: up to 70% of community library buildings do not meet the needs of disability access or safety standards. They are dated and deter potential users. Well designed libraries are 'attractors' both externally and in the configuration and presentation of services. Opening hours and staffing must reflect diverse user needs and contemporary lifestyles
- What users want: to counter the continuing decline in spend on books and other resources and secure sustained investment to provide current and comprehensive stocks to meet demand and need
- The Digital Library: an entitlement to 24/7 online access to catalogues, resources, interactive content, communications and expert help through sustained information, learning and communications technologies
- Staff: enabled and empowered to lead and deliver customer-focused services that meet the national entitlement
- Innovation: exploring new service models and new partnerships better to meet changing customer needs and offer new approaches to service delivery and evaluation
- Awareness-raising and celebrating success: the narrative, the research and the evidence to raise political and public awareness of library

services; to increase the user base and to energise policy makers, stakeholders and funders in promoting the value of libraries.

[taken from pp6-7]

To respond to *A blueprint for excellence*:

- Visit <http://mla.wufoo.com/forms/blueprint/> and complete the online questionnaire, or
- Write to: Blueprint for Excellence, MLA Council, Victoria House, Southampton Row, London WC1B 4EA

by Thursday 31 May 2007.

Building on success ...

The Scottish Library and Information Council has just published this important document¹⁴ which, through the development of the Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix “offers the opportunity for local library services to demonstrate to the public how good provision is and the importance of the range and diversity of the services provided to the communities they serve.” [p1]. It is also to be supported by £1m from the Scottish Executive.

The Matrix takes the form of a self-evaluation guide which “will enable public library services to demonstrate the impact which they have on individuals and communities and how well the services meet users’ needs.” [p3]

The Scottish Executive has set out its priorities¹⁵ for the development of culture and public services reform, and public libraries are expected to align with these, a key strand of which is for local authorities to undertake cultural planning, including the development of a set of local cultural entitlements.

The guide briefly summarises the role of the public library:

“Public library services:-

- Provide universal access to resources, which is free, consistent and customer focussed

¹⁴ Scottish Library and Information Council. *Building on success: a public library quality improvement matrix for Scotland*. Scottish Executive, 2007. Available to download as a pdf from: <http://www.slainte.org.uk/files/pdf/slic/plqim/plqim2.pdf>.

¹⁵ See: *Scotland’s culture/Cultar na h-Alba*. Scottish Executive, 2006 (ISBN-10: 0-7559-4961-7). Available to download as a pdf (1.5 Mb) from: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/89659/0021549.pdf>; and *Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill: consultation document*. Scottish Executive, 2006 (ISBN-10: 0-7559-5261-8). Available to download as a pdf (2.3 Mb) from: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/160710/0043681.pdf>.

- Enable access to resources for reading, information and learning
 - Help to build vibrant communities by encouraging community involvement and community-based activity and assisting in the creation of social capital
 - Promote social justice, civic engagement and democracy
 - Help minimise exclusion, be it social or digital
 - Support learning in the information society
 - Support the information needs for the knowledge economy
 - Promote access to Scotland's cultural heritage
 - Support and promote cultural/creative activities through the provision of information and venues.
 - Encourage the public to pursue individual interests
 - Work in partnership with others to offer value added services”
- [p4]

It then goes on to outline a recommended framework for the delivery of library services (eg “Public library services in a local authority area must be planned and provided in consultation with other services, consistent with the strategic priorities agreed as part of the Community Planning process.” (p6)), followed by a set of entitlements – which should be taken as the starting point of core provision.

These include (just examples from a list of 10 entitlements):

- Free access to books for lending and study and the internet through broadband networks
- Access to the local authority's policy objectives and vision for the public library service
- Access to the public library service's policies on resource and collections management
- Access to stock which is in good condition
- Public library services offered through the National Entitlement Card, which is issued locally. [taken from p7]

The self-evaluation framework itself follows. It includes guidance on the six levels (from Excellent to Unsatisfactory) at which services can be assessed, gives examples of how evidence for these can be sought and built up, and then details the seven Quality Indicators:

Access to information

which includes, for example, the role libraries need to play in lifelong learning, information and digital literacy

Personal and community participation

which states right at the start:

“Social inclusion is a founding principle of the public library service. Libraries actively contribute to building a sense of community well-being

and cohesion. Increasingly libraries are more than passive providers of materials and facilities. Libraries do this by supporting, recording and providing access to community heritage, history and identity. Libraries can also assist in providing support to new communities and those which are hard to reach.” [p22]

There is a list of eleven recommendations, including, for example:

- “Public library services should reach all individuals in their communities and should fully engage in offering opportunities for personal and social development by providing the physical space, a mobile library or appropriate activities such as homework clubs or housebound services.
- Libraries should contribute to building a sense of community well being and cohesion by supporting, recording and providing access to community heritage, culture, history and identity.” [p22]

Meeting readers’ needs

which, as well as recommendations about stock, also includes:

- “Free provision must be made for those whose reading activity relies on different formats such as large-print, spoken word, Braille or e-books.
- Libraries should support the progressive development of literacy and numeracy through the provision of appropriate stock and support.” [p25]

Learners’ experiences

which emphasises the role that libraries play in continuing learning.

Ethos and values

which begins by stating:

“For libraries to realise their full potential, they must provide valued, high quality services that are relevant and accessible to all ...The role which they can play in supporting wider corporate values and agendas should be demonstrated.

Libraries must provide welcoming, neutral community spaces. They must promote inclusion, equality and fairness. They must work positively with partners to encourage participation which contributes to community involvement and identity. In order to achieve this, local authorities must adopt policy objectives for libraries as part of service improvement planning.

Staff are a key resource who must be appropriately trained and supported. Libraries must have structured and inclusive on-going staff training programmes. Comprehensive training programmes must maintain and improve the level of services to individuals and enhance the knowledge, competence and skills of the library workforce.” [p28]

It then recommends:

- “Libraries should aim to provide a neutral welcoming public space, both externally and internally.
- Libraries must promote inclusion, equality and fairness and work positively with partners to facilitate communities of interest and encourage participation.
- Libraries must ensure compliance with legislation and visitors should experience minimal barriers to access, both to physical and virtual services. In particular, the use of clear and appropriate signage is recommended.
- Provision for reading, information and ICT should be made in languages, which are appropriate to community profiles.
- Customer Services must be of a consistent high quality and be regularly updated.
- Library management should ensure that recruitment and induction processes secure appropriate personnel for service delivery.
- Library management should ensure that training needs assessments are carried out regularly and that library staff have access to training so that they have appropriate skills.
- Public library services should encourage staff to gain qualifications, including professional and other relevant qualifications, such as the Diploma/Advanced Diploma in Applications of ICT in Libraries.
- Library staff should be trained in appropriate mentoring and counselling skills to maximise the benefits to individuals and communities.” [p28]

Organisation and use of resources and space

which focuses on the quality of provision, including the need for appropriate levels of funding.

Leadership

which recommends that libraries develop robust planning and self-evaluation systems, and also develop strong leadership.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ADHD = Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

DCLG = Department of Communities and Local Government

MLA = Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

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:

John Vincent
Wisteria Cottage
Nadderwater
Exeter EX4 2JQ

Tel/fax: 0845 128 4897
E-mail: john@nadder.org.uk

March 2007