

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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Did you see ...?

“The reading cure”

Just in case you didn’t see this, *The Guardian* recently ran a long, positive article¹ on bibliotherapy and the “Get into Reading” scheme.²

Adults Learning

The latest issue³ of the NIACE journal has a couple of particularly interesting articles:

- Rachel Everard “My stammer doesn’t have to define me”, an outline of City Lit’s work with adults who stammer [pp20-22]

¹ Blake Morrison “The reading cure”, *The Guardian* 5 January 2008. Available at: <http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,2235352,00.html>.

² Source: CILIP Weekly Information World 14 Dec 2007-8 Jan 2008.

³ *Adults Learning* 19 (4) December 2007. Further information from www.niace.org.uk.

- Paul Stanistreet “Storybook soldiers” – based on the ‘Storybook Dads’ approach, this project uses storytelling as a means of maintaining links between serving soldiers and their families [pp25-26]

CILIP Update

The December 2007 issue⁴ has a couple of interesting short articles:

- Sarah Wilkie and James Nichol “Winning the lottery: the successful Community Libraries” [pp34-37]
- Miranda McKearney “The Reading Agency is five” [pp38-41]

Blog about research into children and young people’s library services

Just in case you haven't seen this, there's a blog for news of new research into libraries/info services for young people and children – see:

<http://youthlibraryresearch.blogspot.com/>.

The third sector: the crucial role of the new local performance framework

This is a very useful, brief introduction⁵ to the new local performance framework.

It explains – and sets in context – strategies such as Local Strategic Partnerships, Sustainable Community Strategies, Local Area Agreements, and also spells out what the Comprehensive Area Assessment will look like:

“The Audit Commission and six other inspectorates are jointly developing an outcome-focussed, proportionate and risk-based Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), which will be introduced from April 2009. Each year’s CAA will have four elements:

- an area risk assessment identifying risks to outcomes and the effectiveness of their management;
- a scored use of resources judgement for public bodies in the area;
- a scored direction of travel judgement for each local authority in the area; and
- publication of performance data for each area against the set of national indicators.” [p6]

The document also has a list of sources of further information, and a handy timeline to see when the various stages of the new process go ‘live’.

⁴ CILIP Update 6 (12) December 2007. Further information from: www.cilip.org.uk.

⁵ *The third sector: the crucial role of the new local performance framework*. DCLG, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (657 kb) from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/621274>.

Building cohesive communities: the crucial role of the new local performance framework

Similarly, this introductory guide⁶ looks at the role of the new local performance framework in assisting in the building of community cohesion.

It looks at what local partners need to do, including:

- Addressing multiple issues
- Mapping local communities
- Strong leadership and engagement
- Having a strong communication strategy
- Looking at conflict resolution and planning for responses to any crises
- Inter-faith dialogue.

Again, this document has a very useful list of sources of further information, and a timeline.

Delivering improved outcomes for children, young people and their families: the crucial role of the new local performance framework

In the same series is this document⁷ which looks at the role of the new framework in improving outcomes for children and young people and their families.

It suggests, among other things, that partnerships consider:

- “how they engage with children, young people and their families, and citizens more generally, collectively across all partners, about local priorities and how to deliver better services;
- develop robust evidence on needs, what works and what does not, and current performance, and share the development and use of data to inform that evidence ...
- how multiple funding streams can be better brought together which may mean being willing to allocate funding to others and vice versa; and
- work with other partners to manage performance relating to the LAA, including reporting back to citizens on improving outcomes for children and young people. This is likely to mean an on-going performance dialogue between partners to assess what has been achieved and how to address problems.” [p7]

⁶ *Building cohesive communities: the crucial role of the new local performance framework*. DCLG, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (2523 kb) from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/621282>.

⁷ *Delivering improved outcomes for children, young people and their families: the crucial role of the new local performance framework*. DCLG, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (720 kb) from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/621403>.

Developing health and well-being in partnership: the crucial role of the new local performance framework

Also in the series is this guide⁸ to how health and well-being fit into the new framework. The key issues here are summed up in the following:

“The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007) changes the statutory landscape upon which the new local performance framework, and in particular new LAAs, are founded. The Act includes provisions for:

- a duty on local authorities and PCTs to undertake a joint strategic needs assessment of the health and well-being needs of the local community;
- a duty on the local authority and named statutory partners (including PCTs, NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts) to cooperate with each other in determining LAA targets, of which up to 35 will be national priority targets agreed with central government;
- a duty on those partners to have regard to those targets they have agreed; and
- the establishment of the new local involvement networks (LINKs) which will help ensure local communities have a stronger voice in the process of commissioning health and social care. LINKs will also be a key mechanism for PCTs to discharge their duty to involve and consult.” [p5]

Again there is a list of sources of further information, and also lists of the national indicators which health and social care organisations have an interest in, plus a timeline.

Council on Social Action

Just in case you haven't yet seen this, the Government has just launched the Council on Social Action⁹.

“The Council will aim to generate ideas and initiatives through which Government and other key stakeholders can inspire, catalyse and celebrate social action. By social action, we refer to the wide range of ways through which individuals, communities, organisations and businesses can seek, through their choices, actions and commitments, to create change to address the social issues they care about.”¹⁰

⁸ *Developing health and well-being in partnership: the crucial role of the new local performance framework*. DCLG, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (2199 kb) from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/620628>.

⁹ See: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/news/news_stories/071211_council_social_action.aspx.

¹⁰ Taken from: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_action.aspx.

The Vital Link e-letter

Just in case you don't receive this, the Vital Link has just produced their January 2008 newsletter. You can sign up by sending your contact details to: resources@readingagency.org.uk.

Listing of 18 historic buildings amended to highlight their links to the abolition of slavery

English Heritage and DCMS have just announced¹¹ the listing of 4 new sites, the upgrading of two, and the amendment of the remaining 12 – all to ensure that their connection with the slave trade and special historic interest is adequately reflected.¹²

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Focusing on citizens, users and diverse communities

This new report¹³ from the Audit Commission “summarises what the Commission has learnt about how well councils understand, engage with and focus on their communities and identifies what progress councils are making to address issues of equality and diversity.”¹⁴

Key messages include:

- “While there is good evidence that improvements in user focus in councils are widespread, some councils need to make more progress in ensuring that these improvements are consistently and systematically used to inform decision making.” [p2]
- “Consultation and engagement needs to address all parts of the community and recognise new communities, those whose circumstances make them vulnerable or those not traditionally heard, for example migrant workers, minority groups, travelling communities and faith groups. Notably, there is little evidence that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities are adequately engaged with councils and approaches to equalities and diversity do not encompass a broader definition of diverse communities. This can result in local

¹¹ See: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.12888>.

¹² Source: Rachel Hasted, English Heritage.

¹³ *Focusing on citizens, users and diverse communities: learning from comprehensive performance assessment 2006/07*. Audit Commission, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (143 kb) from: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/Products/NATIONAL-REPORT/0168CA25-997E-4d82-A40A-49440D2CA04F/FocusingOnCitizensUsersAndDiverseCommunitiesJan08REP.pdf>.

¹⁴ Taken from: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/NATIONAL-REPORT.asp?CategoryID=&ProdID=0168CA25-997E-4d82-A40A-49440D2CA04F&fromREPORTSANDDATA=NATIONAL-REPORT>.

priorities and services that may not meet the needs of all communities.” [p2]

- “Some progress can be seen in the diversity of the councils’ workforce, but this has been less marked than other equality and diversity improvements. Most progress is being made towards achieving equal opportunities in employment, in terms of black and minority ethnic (BME) representation in the workforce. Significantly, more progress has been made in improving the percentage of the top 5 per cent of local authority staff that are women than the top paid 5 per cent that are from an ethnic minority. More work is needed to increase the proportion of council staff with disabilities.” [p3]
- “Engagement with older people and children and young people tends to be well developed, but does not necessarily take full account of diversity within these groups, for example children and young people with learning disabilities. Engagement with minority communities should be further improved in many councils.” [p3]

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

Devon Record Office LGBT Project

The Intercom Trust, which supports gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans-sexual people and communities throughout the South West, has appointed, with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, a Heritage Project Co-ordinator for eighteen months to research the histories of individual people and create collections of archival material. Although this is not easy, it is possible to start with a few notorious case studies, such as that of Mary Hamilton, who posed as a male doctor and was tried at Glastonbury in 1746. The hope is that other stories will emerge to fill in some of the gaps in the picture.

February 2008 is LGBT History Month, devoted to research into this hidden area of the history of the South West Peninsula. A travelling exhibition, ‘1967 and all that’, will be on display for a time at the Record Office in Exeter.

For further details:

The latest DRO Newsletter: <http://www.devon.gov.uk/autumn2007.pdf>

The DRO Homepage: http://www.devon.gov.uk/record_office.htm.¹⁵

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

Silver Surfers' Day

Silver Surfers' Day (SSD) is on 23 May 2008: another opportunity to widen participation.

¹⁵ Thanks to Colin Bray for this.

All of us who want to help more, and more diverse, people benefit from our stewardship of local and national literature and culture, could use this nationwide opportunity to hold taster events on using the Net, on or around Silver Surfers' Day.

Aimed at over-50s who have little or no knowledge or skills using digital technology (there are currently 8-10million such people in the UK), this annual, national Internet-taster-fest has a tried and tested history spanning the last six years. Events can be as small or ambitious as you like and success only depends on having one (or more) public-access, Internet-ready computers and one (or more) willing volunteers ready to donate half a day or so on or near May 23rd. This year the resources will be better than ever and will start to appear on the SSD re-launched website towards the end of February.

Many of you will already have used the resources on www.silversurfersday.org and delivered events, others will have thought about doing so, and wondered how/if to allocate time and money.

If you want extra advice on whether/how to use this opportunity this year, contact the Silver Surfers' Day Information Office, via 0870 241 5091 or email silver@digitalunite.net . You can also simply put your email into the ezine slot on www.silversurfersday.org (2007 version) and you will automatically receive email updates as the campaign progresses.

Silver Surfers' Day is run by Digital Unite, in partnership with Ofcom, on the Friday of Adult Learners' Week each year. There will also be opportunities to nominate Silver Surfers of the Year in May. The winners will be awarded at the Houses of Parliament in October and you can also run your own local awards and recognise all nominees. This, too, is a good way to excite local interest from over-50s.

Gill Adams
DU / Silver Surfers' Day Information Team

'Knife Crime': a review of evidence and policy

The Centre for Crime & Justice Studies has just issued this fascinating critique¹⁶ of current attitudes towards 'knife crime'. It identifies, from available evidence, that specific groups are particularly affected by 'knife crime':

- Children and young people
- Those living in poor areas
- Members of Black and ethnic minority communities.

¹⁶ Chris Eades *et al.* *'Knife crime': a review of evidence and policy*. 2nd edition. Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, 2007 (ISBN-13: 978-1-906003-06-7). Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/opus439/ccjs_knife_report.pdf.

The report looks at ‘what works’, emphasising the need for education and identification/sharing of good practice.

“Without dealing with the underlying causes of violent crime, initiatives to reduce knife usage will have only a limited impact. Knives – like guns, baseball bats, screwdrivers and poison – make an expression of violence potentially more damaging or lethal, even if not intended to cause death, but, ultimately, stabbings are not caused merely by the presence of a knife. More essential is the context within which the resort to extreme acts of violence unfolds. As research commissioned by the Home Office has stated:

‘First of all, one of the most consistent findings is that homicide, like most other violent crime and predatory property crime, is strongly associated with poverty and social inequality. This suggests that preventive strategies focused upon particular offences should be complemented by, and complementary to, broader long-term initiatives against poverty and social exclusion.’ [pp31-32]¹⁷

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

Skilled for Health classes at Wood End Library, Ealing

A successful partnership between the Skills for Life teacher, library staff and health workers has developed in Ealing, and Ann Wolfe (MLA London) has written an outline of the work, which is attached as an Appendix.

Disability issues – Other Agencies

BSL/English interpreters

The Regional Language Network – Yorkshire & The Humber¹⁸ has just produced a report¹⁹, the aim of which is “to provide a description of the issues

¹⁷ The research commissioned by the Home Office is: Fiona Brookman and Mike Maguire. *Reducing homicide: a review of the possibilities*. Home Office (Online Report 01/03), 2003. Available to download as a pdf from: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/rdsolr0103.pdf>.

¹⁸ The RLNYH provides free information, guidance and advice on services and funding to assist companies with their international communication, language and cultural awareness requirements – see: http://www.myv12.com/v12/modules/website/pages/index.php?custom_page_id=259&website=rln-yh.com&cpn=rlnyh&campaign=68.

¹⁹ Helen Tagg. *BSL/English interpreters: report on current provision within Yorkshire and The Humber*. RLNYH, 2007. Available to download as a pdf from:

concerning British Sign Language (BSL)/English Interpreters in Yorkshire and the Humber and nationally” [p6].

The report starts from a stark premise:

“It is estimated that there are 50,000 Deaf people in Britain and only 469 BSL/English Interpreters in England and Wales (less than 1 per cent).” [p6]

The key findings are:

- “There are no empirical data regarding the number of Deaf people who use British Sign Language (BSL) nor the numbers of people working as interpreters outside the official (voluntary) registration system;
- Completing the BSL/English Interpreter training is expensive and it is a very long process;
- There are few BSL/English interpreting training courses nationally;
- The lack of BSL/English Interpreters has a profound effect on most Deaf people's ability to lead full and equal lives. It affects the ability of the public and private sectors to meet their legal responsibilities under disability legislation;
- There is poor co-operation or planning and what can be seen as an often competing agenda between the organisations supporting the Deaf and Interpreting communities;
- Deaf people are currently unable to register as BSL/English Interpreters.” [p6]

The report makes a number of recommendations about the urgent need for a more strategic approach, with widely-available training opportunities, and greater consultation with and involvement of Deaf people.

Without some major developments taking place:

“... every day, Deaf people are being denied access to public services, to education, to health, to the criminal justice system and in the work place.” [p8]²⁰

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

Community Knowledge Networks: Public libraries and the information needs of the voluntary sector

<http://www.myv12.com/customers/rlnyh/uploads/documents/BSL%20Report%20on%20current%20provision.pdf>.

²⁰ Thanks to David Owen for alerting me to this.

This project, commissioned by MLA London, researched the role that London's public libraries should play in meeting the information and resource needs of local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, and the research report²¹ has recently been published.

The research found that:

- Smaller VCS groups have huge capacity building needs, and have little idea of their information needs.
- More established VCS groups are more likely to use the internet and/or a VCS for information than a library.
- VCS groups are more likely to use a library for meeting space, ICT, notice board, and other services.
- Libraries have very little contact with the great majority of VCS groups.
- While keen to develop work in this area libraries are unsure how best to engage with smaller VCS groups

The report recommended that, as a result of the findings, the library offer to VCS groups would be different than that envisaged in the project brief:

- The library offer to VCS groups should be rooted in community engagement and in developing an understanding of the local community.
- The library offer to small VCS groups could include:
 - Free internet access and other ICT provision
 - ICT training and support
 - An access point to other local services
 - Meeting spaces, available day-time and evening
 - Notice board and display spaces

An information role for libraries for these groups is only likely to develop following initial contact and capacity building work.

- For more established groups the information offer is essentially around the provision of remotely accessed information:
 - Online access to information about local groups and communities
 - Online access to funding databases and other online resources
 - Access to community profiling information.²²

²¹ Monica Blake, Pirkko Elliott, Kevin Harris and Rebecca Linley. *Community knowledge networks: the role of London's public libraries in meeting voluntary sector information and resource needs – a report to MLA London*. MLA London, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (368 Kb) from: http://www.mlalondon.org.uk/uploads/documents/Community_knowledge_networks_report_v2.pdf.

²² Source: Dermot Kennedy (MLA London).

Broader issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Building community capacity

The Scottish Government has just published this very useful guide²³ which:

“brings together frameworks, tools and other materials that may be helpful for community learning and development practitioners in taking forward their role in building community capacity.” [p1]

The guide “assesses over 40 readily accessible resources relevant to community capacity building in Scotland” [p1], focusing particularly on:

- “Why community capacity building is important;
- What the outcomes of community capacity building are;
- How community capacity building relates to other aspects of practice; and
- How to take forward a community capacity building programme.” [p1]

Abbreviations and acronyms

BSL = British Sign Language

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information professionals

DCLG = Department for Communities and Local Government

DCMS = Department for Culture, Media and Sport

LGBT = lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people

MLA = Museums, Libraries and Archives

NIACE = National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

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²³ Scottish Community Development Centre for Learning Connections. *Building community capacity: resources for community learning & development practice – a guide*. The Scottish Government, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (557.15 kb) from: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/206381/0054848.pdf>.

Skilled for Health classes at Wood End Library, Ealing

A successful partnership between the Skills for Life teacher, library staff and health workers

Wood End Library in Ealing started running Skilled for Health classes for the local community in September 2007. The lessons are taught by Sue Smith, a qualified ESOL teacher who has a special interest in health issues. She has designed the course to help learners improve their confidence in understanding, speaking, reading and writing English, while learning about a different health topic each week.

The first classes at Wood End Library proved so popular with local Tamil-speaking women that a second class was quickly set up to satisfy demand. Learners range in age from 25 to 64 and some have young children attending the infants' school next door.

Health topics

Sue Smith has used the Skilled for Health teaching materials to design a course covering a wide range of health-related topics, including:

- food groups
- five-a-day
- understanding portions
- general nutrition
- food labels and identification of salt, fibre, sugar and fat content
- exercise and the heart
- female health
- making doctor's appointments
- explaining symptoms
- mental well-being

Involvement of health professionals

Stella Ward, Family Planning and Sexual Health Advisor from Ealing Primary Care Trust, attended a class to give advice about breast awareness, smear tests and contraception, together with information about local clinics and what to expect during appointments. The learners asked lots of questions and really enjoyed Stella's relaxed approach.

Another popular session was led by Sumir Vaid, Active Ealing's Sport Outreach Officer, who measured learners' blood pressure, body mass index and talked about heart-related issues.

Feedback from the learners

Feedback from the learners has been extremely positive, with many saying they now buy more healthy food for their families and use less oil and salt when cooking.

Many also said that they felt more confident about communicating in English with doctors and other health professionals.

Shanthi Ahilathirunayagam, Ethnic Stock Librarian at Ealing libraries, writes:

“The students at Wood End library are extremely pleased with Sue Smith's teaching. They also tell me that they now feel more confident after having attended the classes, and are enjoying reading books in English and watching English programmes on television. They also feel confident in helping their children with their school work.”

Further classes for people with ESOL needs are due to begin in January 2008 at both Wood End and Southall Libraries.

Funding for Skilled for Health

Ealing's Skilled for Health classes are funded through MLA London's pilot Skilled for Health project, which aims to test the effectiveness of libraries as locations for this type of informal learning. Funding for the project comes from the Department of Health and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, and is supported by the community learning organization ContinYou. MLA London hopes to secure further funding to continue the classes in Ealing and in other boroughs across London.

Skilled for Health is a national innovative programme with two key aims: (1) to contribute to reducing health inequalities among communities which demonstrate the worst health outcomes and (2) to use health as an incentive to engage adults in learning and improving their Skills for Life.

For further information about Ealing's Skilled for health classes, or MLA London's project in general, please contact Ann Wolfe, Skilled for Health Development Worker on ann.wolfe@mlalondon.org.uk