

# 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](http://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 ...?

### **ARC Magazine**

The latest special issue<sup>1</sup> focuses on film, sound and photography, and includes, for example:

- Angela English and Jenny Davison “Archive film and reminiscence – working in the community” [pp16-17]
  - Sandra McMurtrie “Rainbow Lives and its importance to the Fife community” [pp26-27], a description of recording oral testimonies from minority ethnic people living in Fife.
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## National Year of Reading

### **Universal joining form**

A first – NYR and the Society of Chief Librarians have developed a universal library membership form, available to download from the NYR website<sup>2</sup>. As it says on the website:

"All you have to do is fill in the form and take it down to your local library with one form of ID to join up. Easy!"

### **“Taken as read?”**

If you haven't looked at this yet, the NYR website<sup>3</sup> has information about reading for:

- Blind and partially sighted people
- People with dyslexia
- Adults wanting to improve their reading
- Reading when English is an additional language
- People with hearing difficulties.

### **National Year of Reading in Wales<sup>4</sup>**

Llanelli and Barry local authorities were successful in their bids to be selected as Reading Towns by the Welsh Books Council. Each authority has now been awarded £20,000 to encourage people within the community to read more.

Activities include a competition in Llanelli, which has ten authors going head-to-head in a battle to make their book the best read in Llanelli.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *ARC Magazine* 227, July 2008. Further details from the Society of Archivists, [www.archives.org.uk](http://www.archives.org.uk).

<sup>2</sup> See: [http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/index.php?id=130&dm\\_i=343784518](http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/index.php?id=130&dm_i=343784518).

<sup>3</sup> See: <http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/index.php?id=223>.

<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.yearofreadingwales.org.uk/home?diablo.lang=eng>.

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

### ***Building a diverse workforce: libraries and archives in Yorkshire***

MLA Yorkshire have just published a short report<sup>6</sup> which draws on research findings from work commissioned to measure the diversity of the workforce in libraries and archives in Bradford, Hull, Leeds, Sheffield and York in terms of age, ethnicity, gender and disability.

The report highlights the need to diversify the workforce, and then goes on to set out key steps towards achieving a more diverse workforce (including establishing benchmarking groups and Action Learning Sets); and outlines some case studies, primarily from the UK, but also the US Spectrum Programme.

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## Broader issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

### ***Creating strong, safe and prosperous communities: statutory guidance***

DCLG have just published this new guidance<sup>7</sup> which sets out how new provisions in the Local Government Public Involvement in Health Act<sup>8</sup> “will enable local authorities to engage their citizens, lead their communities, and find new and more effective ways to deliver high quality services with their partners.” [p6]

This includes:

- Section 1 – an overview of the changes introduced in the Local Government White Paper<sup>9</sup>, including the new settlement [see below] between central government, local government and their partners and citizens and community leadership.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Wales Current Awareness Service, 4 August 2008.

<sup>6</sup> *Building a diverse workforce: libraries and archives in Yorkshire*. MLA Yorkshire, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (1540 kb) from: [http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets/B/Building\\_a\\_Diverse\\_Workforce\\_Libraries\\_and\\_Archives\\_in\\_Yorkshire\\_PDF\\_1\\_580KB\\_13433.pdf](http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets/B/Building_a_Diverse_Workforce_Libraries_and_Archives_in_Yorkshire_PDF_1_580KB_13433.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> *Creating strong, safe and prosperous communities: statutory guidance*. DCLG, 2008 (ISBN-13: 978-1-4098-0243-3). Available to download as a pdf (452 kb) from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/885397.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> See: [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga\\_20070028\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga_20070028_en_1).

<sup>9</sup> Available to download from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strongprosperous>.

- Section 2 – sets out the role of the Local Strategic Partnership and the leadership role of local authorities within them. It also outlines the new “duty to involve” which seeks to ensure that people have greater opportunities to have their say (and which comes into force on 1 April 2009). It stresses the crucial importance of information provision [p22].
- Section 3 – provides guidance on establishing a vision for the area via the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- Section 4 – looks at establishing priorities for an area through the Local Area Agreement (including the formal submission, approval, designation and revision processes).
- Section 5 – looks at the role of partners in agreeing priority outcomes for an area [see below for the current list of partner organisations].
- Section 6 – covers the delivery of outcomes for an area. It explains how partner authorities are required to have regard to targets they have agreed in the Local Area Agreements, along with how commissioning and the duty of best value should be addressed in the future.

Just a quick reminder – the “new settlement” includes:

- “a recognition that **every place is different**, with distinctive strengths and needs
- a new approach by central government that creates space for distinctive **local priorities** and **local innovation**
- a commitment to widen and deepen the **involvement of local communities** in shaping their own future
- councils taking on the role of democratically elected **strategic leaders** and
- convenors of local partnerships in the **wider governance** of their localities
- a focus on **coordinated action** tailored to the distinctive needs and opportunities of each place and its people.” [p11 – emphasises theirs]

Current partner organisations are:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Arts Council                               | Metropolitan Passenger Transport Authorities                                       |
| The Broads Authority                       | Museums, Libraries and Archives Council  |
| Chief Officer of Police                    | National Park Authorities  |
| District authorities                       | Natural England  |
| English Heritage                           | NHS Foundation Trusts  |
| The Environment Agency                     | NHS Health Trusts  |
| Fire and rescue authorities                | Police authorities   |
| Health and Safety Executive                | Primary Care Trusts  |
| The Highways Agency                        | Local Probation Boards; Probation Trusts and other providers of Probation services |
| Jobcentre Plus                             | Regional Development Agencies  |
| Joint Waste Authorities                    |  |
| Joint Waste Disposal Authorities           |  |
| The Learning and Skills Council in England |  |

## ***Cohesion delivery framework: overview***

DCLG have also just published this new guidance document<sup>10</sup>:

“This document is the starting point for anyone interested in what cohesion is and why it matters. It draws on the work of the independent Commission on Integration and Cohesion, who spent nine months examining how people around the country are getting involved to help make their communities better places to live. It explains the practical things that local authorities and their partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors can do to build places where everyone shares a sense of belonging. And it signposts the support and advice available from central government.” [p3]

The guidance begins in Part One by setting the context (why it’s been produced; what the Government means by community cohesion), and then goes on to outline eight key principles on cohesion:

- “Cohesion is relevant to all parts of the country
- Building cohesion has wider benefits to individuals, groups and communities
- Solutions are local and one size does not fit all
- Cohesion is about all parts of the community, not just race and faith issues
- Improving cohesion is about multiple actions tackling a range of causal factors
- Improving cohesion is about both targeted actions and taking account of cohesion in the delivery of other services
- Good practice in one place may not be transferable to another – but it may inspire an action that will work in another place
- Delivery is about common sense solutions that will help people get along better, that is what will make the vision a reality.” [p6]

Part Two looks at building a local understanding of community cohesion via mapping (which is developed further in Annexe B); and Part Three looks at how to decide a local set of actions and how to start to tackle these – Annexe D works through examples, such as:

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<sup>10</sup> *Cohesion delivery framework: overview*. DCLG, 2008 (ISBN-13: 978-1-4098-0219-8). Available to download as a pdf (250 kb) from:  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/898656.pdf>.

| Issue Identified                                       | Action which a local areas [sic] could take  |
|--|--|
| Existing population have negative views about migrants | <p>Work with local media</p> <p>Promote cohesion duty in schools and work with local colleges</p> <p>Promote citizenship ceremonies</p> <p>Use translation guidance</p> <p>Provide support for specific groups eg gypsies and travellers or asylum seekers</p> |

Annexe E is a very useful list of other guidance; and Annexe F summarises the key lessons learned on local planning from the community cohesion pathfinders.

This is a very useful practical guide to ‘getting going’ with community cohesion work – recommended.

### ***Face to face and Side by side***

Coming out of previous consultation about working with faith groups, DCLG have just published this new guide<sup>11</sup>:

“This Framework is primarily concerned with ... how faith communities and government and wider society can work together, at all levels, to encourage and enable greater local activity which brings people with different religions and beliefs together.” [p14]

“Both ‘face to face’ dialogue and ‘side by side’ collaborative social action can help to build cohesive, active and empowered communities. People of different religions and beliefs choose to take part in dialogue and social action for a wide range of reasons such as compassion for others, a strong sense of social justice, or a commitment to human rights ...” [p17]

Drawing on comments about meaningful contacts made by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion<sup>12</sup> and research carried out by JRF<sup>13</sup>, the Framework is structured around four “building blocks”:

<sup>11</sup> *Face to face and Side by side: a framework for partnership in our multi faith society*. DCLG, 2008 (ISBN-13: 978-1-4098-0315-7). Available to download as a pdf (2203 kb) from:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/898668.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> See: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/commissionintegration/>.

- Confidence and skills to 'bridge' and 'link'
- Shared spaces for interaction
- Structures and processes which support dialogue and social action
- Opportunities for learning which build understanding.

Libraries, museums and arts & cultural activities are cited as good opportunities for the learning which will assist in building understanding (see, for example, p108 which looks particularly at the role of the British Library's "Sacred" exhibition).

The Framework concludes with a "menu" of options for local authorities – and that for the fourth "Building block" is:

"Invest and support their local SACRE<sup>14</sup> to be effective by building its capacity and capability.

Explore the role that arts and culture can play in helping to increase understanding of different religions and beliefs and shared values within the local community perhaps through exhibitions and festivals in secular spaces, eg libraries, schools and sports centres.

Create opportunities for informal learning such as cultural or arts events that bring people together. Shape these events so that people can explore what it means to be part of the local community and the role faith and belief play in this.

Encourage and support their local inter faith body and SACRE to work with local faith communities – and perhaps a local FE college or HE institution – to produce a short book and linked website on faith communities in the authority area and on why inter faith work is important. Photography students could take the photographs." [p128]

It's very good that the positive role of our sector has been recognised, and there are activities here that we could get involved in.

### **"Skills, welfare reform and local government"**

IDeA has just published a new, web-based document which looks at:

- The Government's 'new deal' programme for welfare reform, set out in 2006
- The updates to the reform programme announced in June 2008

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<sup>13</sup> *Faith as social capital: connecting or dividing?*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2006. Available to download as a pdf (398.21 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/9781861348388.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education. A SACRE is a statutory local multi faith body whose broad role is to support the effective provision of religious education and collective worship in local schools.

- How local government is involved in delivering welfare and skills programmes
- How local authorities, as employers, can help tackle worklessness in their local areas and raise workforce skills
- How to develop a skills strategy.

This is a very useful, brief update, and includes, for example:

- Case studies of work undertaken by some local authorities
- The local authority as employer
- Researching the local labour/skills market.

It also includes a useful round-up of sources of information and links to key websites.

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

DCLG = Department of Communities and Local Government

IDeA = Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government

JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation

SACRE = Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

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