

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

**Number 91, November 2008**

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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 ...?

### ***Literacy Today***

The latest issue<sup>1</sup> has a number of interesting articles, including:

- Debbie Hicks “The learning power of reading groups”, looking at the success of library reading groups in promoting reading for pleasure [pp7-8]
- Lisa Fenaroli “Try learning: taking study support into the sports club” [pp9-10]
- “Family literacy, language and numeracy”, a summary of recent research by the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy [p31].

### ***Museums Journal***

The latest issue<sup>2</sup> has a number of interesting articles – of particular interest are:

- The Editorial by Sharon Heal, “Culture isn’t a luxury that we can’t afford” [p4], where she argues that “... we should stop acting like museums and galleries are a nice add-on that can only be paid for once the basics are taken care of ...”
- The News Analysis column by Felicity Heywood, in which she asks “Have the Tories changed their tune?” [p15] Based on a number of recent indications, including a speech in the summer by Jeremy Hunt (Shadow Culture Secretary), the article suggests that: “The underlying worry about the Tories for some in museums and galleries is that they will undo all the good work that has been done over the last decade or so on access and social inclusion. But on the contrary, Hunt appears to be a convert to access, claiming that a future conservative government will accept both the intrinsic value of the arts as well as the social impact of arts policy.”

### ***CILIP Update***

The November issue<sup>3</sup> includes a couple of very interesting articles:

- “New missions for the public library service”, an interview with Rossella Black (Westminster Libraries) about an innovative creative writing project that confronted issues such as knife crime and racism [pp28-30]

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<sup>1</sup> *Literacy Today* 56, September 2008. For further information, see: <http://www.educationpublishing.com/>.

<sup>2</sup> *Museums Journal* November 2008. For further information, see: [http://www.museumsassociation.org/publications&\\_IXMENU\\_=publications\\_ma](http://www.museumsassociation.org/publications&_IXMENU_=publications_ma).

<sup>3</sup> *Library & Information Update* November 2008. Further information at: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/publications/> (and the latest issue available digitally to CILIP members).

- Simeon Moore “Making connexions”, which looks at the opportunities that the reorganising of the Connexions service<sup>4</sup> brings for libraries [pp38-39].

### **Adults Learning**

The October issue has an interesting article<sup>5</sup> about the development of a “literacies partnership” in the Highlands, which involved, amongst others, the Council’s adult basic education and library services.

### **National Year of Reading**

#### **Local authority of the month**

The NYR website continues to grow – check out the final local authority of the month<sup>6</sup> (Warwickshire), and see the ranges of activities they have undertaken and how they supported and developed this through building strategic partnerships.

### **Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies**

#### ***What is needed to end child poverty in 2020?***

This “Round-up”<sup>7</sup> draws on the findings of seven reports about how to take forward different aspects of a child poverty strategy; examines the impact of current policy; and suggests what is needed to ensure the target is met.

The key findings are:

- “Over the last few years a significant reduction in child poverty has been achieved, backed by significant resources. However, further progress depends on a big shift that raises the level of resources invested and widens the scope of anti-poverty measures.
- The strategy requires over two million more children to be taken out of poverty, four times the progress since 1997. No single policy can achieve this. Only if worklessness is reduced and benefits raised and working parents' earnings improved does the strategy stand a chance of success.

<sup>4</sup> For more information about this, see: <http://www.cypnow.co.uk/bulletins/Daily-Bulletin/news/862959/?DCMP=EMC-DailyBulletin>.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Stanistreet “High hopes”, *Adults Learning* 20 (2) October 2008, pp26-28. Further information at:

<http://www.niace.org.uk/Publications/Periodicals/AdultsLearning/Default.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> See: <http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/index.php?id=monthlyla>.

<sup>7</sup> Donald Hirsch. *What is needed to end child poverty in 2020?* JRF (“Round-up” series), 2008. Available to download as a pdf (195 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/pdf/2275.pdf>.

- Improvement of in-work incomes is particularly needed – there has been little progress on reducing in-work poverty and existing policy tools seem inadequate.
- The child poverty strategy will need to help parents into jobs but also consider factors affecting their earnings opportunities, including:
  - the adequacy of childcare
  - job flexibility for parents
  - the level of parental skills; and
  - how these are used by employers to create quality employment.
- Ending child poverty will depend not just on provision but on the behaviour of individuals, employers and public bodies, including:
  - decisions taken by families about working patterns, including whether both members of a couple work, as well as the number of working hours;
  - whether employers offer parents good quality jobs, with hours that meet their wants and constraints; and
  - whether government agencies provide support that genuinely responds to individuals' needs.
- Families, employers and government need to work together to combat child poverty:
  - This partnership needs to deliver improved routes into work, so that parents can work in a way that complements their family lives.
  - It needs to repair the damaging mistrust between families and the state, and create a benefits and tax credits system that reliably helps families to escape poverty.
  - Finally, basic benefits need to provide an adequate foundation for improvement in families' lives, enabling them to avoid hardship and debt.”<sup>8</sup>

## Health & Wellbeing issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

### Mental Capital and Wellbeing

The Government think-tank, Foresight<sup>9</sup>, has just published the findings of a major research project.

“The aim of the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing has been to advise the Government on how to achieve the best possible mental development and mental wellbeing for everyone in the UK in the future.

<sup>8</sup> Taken from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/2275.asp>.

<sup>9</sup> “Our aim is to provide visions of the future using robust science to be used by policymakers to inform government policy and strategy, and to improve how science and technology are used within Government and by society.” Taken from: <http://www.foresight.gov.uk/About/index.asp>.

The Project has used the best available scientific evidence to develop a vision for:

- the opportunities and challenges facing the UK over the next 20 years and beyond, and the implications for everyone's mental development and mental wellbeing;
- signposts to what we all need to do to meet the challenges ahead – Government, individuals and business.<sup>10</sup>

The research project has produced a huge number of outputs, available to download from the Project Outputs page<sup>11</sup>. These include:

- An Executive Summary<sup>12</sup>
- A series of "Science Synthesis Reports and Evidence Reviews", including, for example, on:
  - Depression<sup>13</sup>
  - Barriers to learning<sup>14</sup>
  - Prisoners<sup>15</sup>
  - Homeless people<sup>16</sup>
  - Looked-after children<sup>17</sup>
  - People who migrate<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Taken from:

<http://www.foresight.gov.uk/OurWork/ActiveProjects/Mental%20Capital/Welcome.asp>

<sup>11</sup> See:

<http://www.foresight.gov.uk/OurWork/ActiveProjects/Mental%20Capital/ProjectOutputs.asp>.

<sup>12</sup> *Mental capital and wellbeing: making the most of ourselves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. The Government Office for Science, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (2150 kb) from:

[http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/Mental\\_capital\\_&\\_wellbeing\\_Exec\\_Sum.pdf](http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/Mental_capital_&_wellbeing_Exec_Sum.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> *Depression and its toll on mental capital*. The Government Office for Science, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (165 kb) from:

[http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-E21\\_MCW.PDF](http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-E21_MCW.PDF).

<sup>14</sup> *Participation in learning; barriers to learning*. The Government Office for Science, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (199.76 kb) from:

[http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-A4\\_MCW.pdf](http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-A4_MCW.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> *The mental ill-health of prisoners*. The Government Office for Science, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (161.58 kb) from:

[http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-B5\\_MCW.pdf](http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-B5_MCW.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> *The mental ill-health of homeless people*. The Government Office for Science, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (152.59 kb) from:

[http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-B6\\_MCW.pdf](http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-B6_MCW.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> *The mental ill-health of children in local authority care*. The Government Office for Science, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (kb) from:

[http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-B7\\_MCW.pdf](http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-B7_MCW.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> *The mental ill-health of people who migrate, and their descendants: risk factors, associated disability and wider consequences*. The Government Office for Science,

- Leisure<sup>19</sup>
- A wide range of learning difficulties.

These are immensely useful 'state-of-the-art' review papers which would be valuable to support arguments about the role of MLAs in mental wellbeing.<sup>20</sup>

## **2008 children and young people's well-being monitor for Wales**

The Welsh Assembly Government has just published its first Children and Young People's Well-being Monitor<sup>21</sup>, <sup>22</sup>.

The Monitor provides an analysis of children and young people's well-being in relation to the Welsh Assembly Government's seven core aims for children and young people. These include:

- "Having a flying start in life and the best possible basis for future growth and development.
- Having access to a comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities – including acquisition of essential personal and social skills.
- Enjoying the best possible physical and mental, social and emotional health – including freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation.
- Having access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.
- Ensuring that children are listened to, treated with respect and are able to have their race and cultural identity recognised.
- Having a safe home and a community that supports emotional well-being.
- Ensuring that no child or young person is disadvantaged by poverty."<sup>23</sup>

As well as giving some valuable general information about children and young people in Wales, the report also focuses on the specific needs of looked-after children, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, Gypsy Traveller children, disabled children, children with special educational needs, young carers, children in need, and young people in custody.

This is a key resource.

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2008. Available to download as a pdf (248.01 kb) from:

[http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-B7\\_MCW.pdf](http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-B7_MCW.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> *Leisure: the next 25 years*. The Government Office for Science, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (kb) from: [http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-C8\\_MCW.pdf](http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Mental%20Capital/SR-C8_MCW.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Source: *Times Higher Education*, 30 October-5 November 2008, p18.

<sup>21</sup> *2008 children and young people's well-being monitor for Wales*. Welsh Assembly Government, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (2583.28 kb) from: [http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/40382313/293077/1266940/2765056/Monitor\\_Eng.pdf?lang=en](http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/40382313/293077/1266940/2765056/Monitor_Eng.pdf?lang=en).

<sup>22</sup> Source: Wales Current Awareness Service /Gwasanaeth Gwybodaeth CILIP Cymru, 28 November 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Taken from: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/latest/2777856/?lang=en>.

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

### ***Place matters ...***

CLG have just published this report<sup>24</sup> which could have immense significance for us.

As the executive summary states:

“Place matters. Everything happens somewhere. If we can understand more about the nature of place, where events happen, and the impacts on the people and assets at that location, we can plan better, manage risk better and use our resources better. This will increase the success rate for new initiatives, assist in the reduction of the potential for future problems and give tangible financial benefits ...

The objective of the Location Strategy for the United Kingdom is to maximise the value to the public, government, UK business and industry of geographic information. It will provide a consistent framework to assist national, regional and local initiatives and service delivery ...

Key areas where the Location Strategy will be of benefit are in policy and operational areas of the public and private sector where shared and integrated place-based information is valuable for decision making. These include planning for communities, environment, health, education, security, construction, transport, crime prevention, insurance, retail, energy, climate change, agriculture, heritage, sport, employment and statistics. To illustrate these benefits this document is interspersed with five real-world case studies that provide an insight into exemplars of today: these will become the norm over the next five years through the implementation of an effective Location Strategy.”  
[p8]

The key aim of the Strategy is to bring together all those answers to “where are ...?” questions in order to avoid duplication of resources and effort.

“The local, regional, country and national needs within the United Kingdom require considerably more support. In addition to supporting individual ‘place-based’ initiatives, there is a need to underpin legislative arrangements for the like of:

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<sup>24</sup> *Place matters: the Location Strategy for the United Kingdom – a report by the Geographic Information Panel to Baroness Andrews, Minister for the Geographic Information Panel.* CLG, 2008 (ISBN-13: 978-1-4098-0816-9). Available to download as a pdf (1028 kb) from:

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

- traffic management
- countryside and rights of way
- land registration
- property valuation
- civil contingencies
- marine protection

and to support public service requirements that directly impact on people's lives, for example:

- planning and land use needs
- social exclusion programmes and their equivalents at regional levels
- waste collection
- monitoring the impact of climate change." [p15]

This will enable local communities to gain access to collated information and service-providers to develop targeted, joined-up services.

The role of the cultural sector does not yet seem to have been recognised here, yet we have a huge part to play in this process, and it would be valuable to comment – comments on the Location Strategy may be sent to:

[Location.Strategy@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Location.Strategy@defra.gsi.gov.uk), and should reach Defra by 31 January 2009.

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

CLG = Communities and Local Government

Defra = Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

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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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