

Annual Report: April 2018-March 2019

Introduction

Welcome to our annual review for 2018-2019; this report covers the period from April 2018 to March 2019. Copies of the accounts are available on request.

Firstly, thank you for your continued support of The Network. Please see Appendix C for a reminder about ways of making the most of your subscription (members have commented during the year on what good value membership is!).

Our work

Key successes included:

- Producing newsletters for March 2018-January 2019
- Producing 21 Ebulletins for the period April 2018-March 2019
- Regularly adding events, resources and new features to the website¹
- Developing, running and participating in some 30 courses, workshops and conferences.

Further information about these – and other – areas of work are in the report that follows.

Working towards social justice and developing approaches to community engagement are still very much live issues – in fact, some organisations have even started referring to ‘social exclusion’ again: it is increasingly clear that libraries, museums, archives and cultural & heritage organisations have a key role to play in this (despite the economic position), and The Network is contributing to the spread of good practice and the raising of our sector profile.

Finally, my thanks to all those who shared good practice, made enquiries, and generally contributed to The Network – please continue doing so!

My particular thanks also go to Carol Boswarthack and Juliet Pirez for being the counter-signatories for The Network’s bank account.

John Vincent
January 2020

¹ See: www.seapn.org.uk.

Membership, contacts and enquiries

Organisational members at March 2019

There are 94 organisational members.²

Here are the new joiners and leavers:

Joiners

None.

Leavers

Bedford

Mergers

Bournemouth and Poole into Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

Individual members

At March 2019, The Network had 8 individual members.

Partners

The Network is continuing to work in partnership with a number of key organisations and individuals, including ASCEL (with whom we swap ebulletins); CILIP Scotland; CILIP Wales; City of Sanctuary; Libraries Connected; Share The Vision; and The Reading Agency.

Membership of JISCMail lists

The following lists are open to anybody:

List	2018-19	2017-18
LAC [people working with looked-after children]	258	279
Learning Disability	165	161
LGBT [people working with LGBTs]	286	284
Network Ebulletin [combining WTYL & Newsletter subscribers]	604	642
Older people [people working with older people]	181	198
Travellers [people working with Travellers]	168	180

The following are primarily for Network members only:

List	2018-19	2017-18
Network Newsletter	316	348
The Network [for circulation of general information]	231	248

² This is correct at December 2019 – we still have a number of subscription renewals outstanding.

and enquiries]		
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The following is primarily for Network and Prison Libraries Group members:

List	2018-19	2017-18
Prisons	146	140

In addition, from November 2015, The Network took over responsibility for managing the Six Steps list:

List	2018-19	2017-18
Six Steps	197	206

Enquiries

These now include enquiries made on the elists The Network coordinates (eg Prisons):

2018-2019 [April 2018-March 2019]	83 ³
2017-2018 [April 2017-March 2018]	103
2016-2017 [April 2016-March 2017]	85
2015-2016 [April 2015-March 2016]	69
2014-2015 [April 2014-March 2015]	82
2013-2014 [April 2013-March 2014]	111
2012-2013 [January 2012-March 2013]	104
2011 [January-December 2011]	100
2010 [January-December 2010]	117
2009 [January-December 2009]	108
2008 [January-December 2008]	87
2007 [January-December 2007]	75
2006 [January-December 2006]	122
2005 [January-December 2005]	83
2004 [January-December 2004]	102
2003/4 [April-December 2003]	50
2002/3	46
2001/2	15
2000/1	8

The Network website statistics

Here are our 'headline' web statistics:

- 2388 people made 2878 visits
- 92.7% of visitors were new, 17.3% returning
- The top three countries where people visited from were the UK, US and France.

³ The range of enquiries is wide – to give a taste of them, some examples are included as Appendix B. Six enquiries were from students, and another 14 were asking for job information to be circulated.

Making a difference

As noted above, The Network makes a difference, including:

- Drawing together, highlighting and disseminating innovation and good practice
- Being active in the sector on behalf of members: adding to and widening the debate about libraries, museums, archives, cultural heritage organisations and social justice issues
- Working with Network members and across the sector to help develop strategy
- Campaigning and lobbying on behalf of the sector
- Giving advice and information, and sharing good practice from other Network members
- Giving support to colleagues
- Linking the UK cultural sector's social justice work to that abroad.

The work of The Network, 2018-2019 – Report by the Networker

I worked some 1055.75 hours for the Network between April 2018 and March 2019. This is an outline of what that has involved:

Activities	Hours 2018-19	% 2018-19	Hours 2017-18	% 2017-18
Preparation, delivery and follow-up to training courses [self-financing]	259.50	24.6%	49.50	4.9%
Organising training day for SWRLS	7.75	0.70%	-	-
STV/SCL/CDEG/RNIB Six Steps courses + follow-up	-	-	85.50	8.5%
STV - general	1.50	<1%	-	-
STV: scanning for STV Bulletin	-	-	0.25	<1%
STV: prep of modules for community libraries, etc	4.25	<1%	4.00	0.4%
Arts Council Equality & Diversity project	37.75	3.6%	155.50	15.5%
<i>Externally-funded work</i>	<i>310.75</i>	<i>29.9%</i>	<i>294.75</i>	<i>29.3%</i>
Managing The Network, including new members, adding to JISCMail lists (1.75), filing, etc (18.50); accounts (52.25); maintaining our website (0.75); GDPR (6.0)	79.25	7.50%	76.00	7.59%
Emails	147.75	14.0%	156.75	15.7%
Work on Newsletters & Ebulletins	273.75	25.9%	242.50	24.2%
Work on Ashgate LGBT book*	8.00	0.8%	0.25	<1%
Work on LGBT History Month	20.75	2.0%	4.50	0.4%
Emails etc to SWRLS	2.25	<1%		
Writing chapter for <i>LGBTQ librarianship in the 21st century</i>	11.75	1.1%	31.75	3.2%
Other writing	14.25	1.3%	8.50	0.8%
Other activities (eg attending meetings)	66.75	6.3%	70.75	7.0%
Enquiries	9.00	0.9%	16.25	1.6%
Responding to reports etc	9.00	0.9%	6.50	0.6%
Supporting work with looked-after children	-	-	6.25	0.6%
Work on 'New Arrivals' (post-WTYL) + Libraries of Sanctuary	5.75	0.5%	11.25	1.1%
Member of judging panel for CILIP Libraries Change Lives Award (and follow-up with CILIP re: redesigning awards)	91.00	8.6%	74.00	7.4%
Trustee of the Jodi Awards	5.75	0.5%	1.50	0.1%
<i>Paid for from subscriptions, income from courses, etc</i>	<i>745.00</i>	<i>70.30%</i>		
TOTAL	1055.75	~100%	1001.50	~100%

*Note: this includes follow-on work, such as responding to enquiries, dealing with the publisher, posting to the WordPress blog

Initiatives and Developments

- The Network signed up to the Cultural Inclusion manifesto⁴

Attendance at conferences, seminars, formal and other meetings, visits, etc

- Attended course organised by the Archives Learning and Education Section of the ARA, "Archives and Learning for All: Engaging Diverse Communities" (January 2019)

⁴ See: <https://culturalinclusion.uk/>.

- Attended “EDGY”, the 16th LGBTQ+ Conference at London Metropolitan Archives (December 2018)
- Attended launch of LGBT History Month 2019, London (November 2019)
- Attended consultation workshop with Arts Council England as part of their development of a new 10-year strategy 2020-2030 (November 2018)
- Attended CDEG Committee meetings (July, October 2018, February 2019)
- Attended the CILIP Ethics Review “Summit” meeting (May 2018)
- Attended working group to look at further developments of the British Museum exhibition, “Desire, love, identity: exploring LGBTQ histories” (April 2018)
- Attended “conversation” meeting with Arts Council England as part of their development of a new 10-year strategy 2020-2030 (April 2018)

Meetings related to the Arts Council England Equality & Diversity project

- Meeting with Arts Council England, Birmingham to discuss final arrangements for publishing the paper (April 2018)

CILIP Libraries Change Lives Award

- Attended meetings to review LCLA and discuss CILIP’s new strategy (November 2018, January & March 2019)
- Attended the Award-giving at CILIP (October 2018)
- Visited shortlisted services at Newcastle, Glasgow, Kirklees (September 2018)
- Shortlisting meeting, CILIP (June 2018)

Jodi Mattes Trust

John Vincent is a trustee.

- Attended Board meeting (September 2018)

Formal responses made by the Network

- Commented on time allowed for CDEG survey (February 2019)
- Responded to the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance annual survey (February 2019)
- Commented on the EHRC *Draft Strategic Plan 2019-22: consultation document* (January 2019)
- Responded to CDEG membership survey (December 2018)
- Commented for CDEG on proposal by the CILIP Information Literacy Group to establish a post of Equality Officer (December 2018)
- Commented on draft membership survey for CDEG (November 2018)
- Completed survey on politically offensive LGBT words (October 2018)
- Commented on draft blogpost for CDEG (August 2018)
- Commented on the blogpost “Libraries Taskforce – how we communicate will change” (July 2018)
- Responded to Clinks membership survey (July 2018)
- Completed feedback survey, having looked at *Rethinking heritage: a guide to making your site more dementia-friendly* (July 2018)

- Commented on the draft labels for the LGBTQ exhibition for the British Museum (July 2018)
- Completed NCVO member survey (May 2019)
- Responded to a survey about BigPicnic, an EU project on food security (via GEM) (April 2019)

Publications – The Network’s own

- *The Network Newsletter*, issues 206-215
- *The Network Ebulletin*, numbers 255-275.

Publications – articles, blogs, books, reports etc

- Amanda Wilk and John Vincent. “LGBTQ+: 2018 in review”, *Open Shelf*, (February 2019)⁵
- John Vincent “Political correctness and society—have we really gone mad?”, *Open Shelf* (November 2018)⁶
- John Vincent. *Libraries welcome everyone: six stories of diversity and inclusion from libraries in England*. Arts Council England (July 2018)⁷
- Amanda Wilk and John Vincent “Respecting anonymity through collection development”, *Open Shelf* (April 2018)⁸
- John Vincent interviewed by John Pateman “John Vincent: Libraries, the universe & everything”, *Open Shelf* (April 2018)⁹

Courses and other events (April 2018-March 2019)

1. Our own open courses

None.

2. Other organisations’ open courses/Lectures

- Session on diversity at “Perspectives on library recruitment: supporting diversity” for the M25 Consortium, London (January 2019)
- Organised and hosted a session, “Prison libraries change lives”, with the CILIP Prison Libraries Group and CDEG at the CILIP Conference 2018 (July 2018)

3. In-house courses and talks

- 6 x courses “Working with older people” for Birmingham Library Service (January 2019)

⁵ See: <https://open-shelf.ca/190201-2018-in-review/>.

⁶ See: <https://open-shelf.ca/181105-political-correctness-and-society/>.

⁷ See: https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/ACE_Libraries_welcome_everyone_report_July18.pdf.

⁸ See: <https://open-shelf.ca/180403-respecting-anonymity-through-collection-development/>.

⁹ See: <https://open-shelf.ca/180403-john-vincent-libraries-the-universe-everything/>.

- 7 x courses “Working with new arrivals” for Birmingham Library Service (October 2018)
- Course “Working with older people”, Newcastle Library Service (March 2019)
- Course “Working with new arrivals”, Newcastle Library Service (March 2019)
- 4 x 1 hour talks on why we celebrate LGBT History Month and what it is like living as a gay man, John Smeaton Academy, Leeds (February 2019)
- Preparation, hosting and co-presentation of seminar for the University of Missouri study visit to the UK, Coventry (July 2018)
- 9 x courses “An introduction to diversity” for Birmingham Library Service (June, July 2018)
- 2 x seminars (“Social justice and diversity in the delivery of library services to young people and the general public”) for information studies students at the University of Sheffield (April 2018, March 2019)

Appendix A: Meetings with key contacts 2017-2018

These included:

Kelly Saini Badwal (Sutton); Shelagh Levett (SWRLS); Rachel Kudlick (CILIP); Rob Mackinlay (*Information Professional*);

Appendix B: Examples of enquiries

These are just a few examples of the enquiries received this year, all of which required some research and a detailed response:

- Enquiry about writings from trans people’s experience
- Enquiry about libraries supporting ex-offenders into work
- Follow-up discussion with the creators of the website, “The complete guide to studying and living in the UK as an LGBT student”, about their website and how to make it become more transparent
- Request for information about libraries engaging with the Armed Forces Covenant
- Request to suggest some Archives Services that are delivering innovative and inclusive outreach initiatives
- Responding to an enquiry via the Archives JISCMail list for information about using guide dogs and support animals
- Responding to an enquiry via the GEM JISCMail list for work with looked-after children and young people, and care-leavers

- Responding to an enquiry via the GEM JISCMail list for examples of wellbeing/mindfulness walks
- Enquiry about libraries as hate-crime reporting centres
- Enquiry about how a library service might weave equality and diversity through all its work
- Responding to an enquiry via the GEM JISCMail list about Public Liability Insurance providers for people working freelance
- Enquiry from the Red Cross about acquiring books in Arabic
- Enquiry from a librarian in Germany about whether UK libraries employ social workers to support vulnerable library users
- Several emails and phone calls asking about The Network's approach to GDPR

We also receive job information to circulate, and have been asked to help promote a number of events throughout the year.

Appendix C: Making the most of your subscription

Member organisations and individuals use The Network to:

- Ensure that their services are well placed to meet national, regional and local objectives
- Draw on and share expertise and good practice
- Work with other Network members to benchmark services
- Keep up-to-date effectively with new developments across the social justice field, without having to read every new document themselves as the information has already been distilled for them
- Ensure that colleagues across their service are also able to keep up-to-date via targeted emails to their desk-tops
- Ensure value for money by being able to book places on Network courses and receive in-house training at reduced cost.

When a library (or museum or archive) service from a local authority joins The Network, this automatically confers membership on the **whole local authority**.

The benefits are that:

- Council departments can share knowledge about issues that matter to them, and your service is placed at the centre of this authority-wide information-sharing
- It's a cost-effective way of stretching limited resources (and, in addition, other Council departments could contribute towards the cost of the subscription)
- Related organisations within the local authority area, such as independent and District Council museums, archive collections, schools, and others, can also share this targeted information in an extremely effective way.

Some public library services forward the Newsletter and Ebulletin (as well as other emails from our elists) to targeted contacts across the Council (thereby ensuring that the library service is contributing to corporate targets and agendas), and have also subscribed key local authority staff to some of the email lists. Information is also forwarded to contacts in the community.

They also regularly share updates on service developments with other Network contacts, and ask for advice and suggestions on service plans. In one authority, a contribution towards the cost of the annual subscription is received from other Council departments in recognition of the value of this information-sharing.