

# 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 ...?

#### **CILIP Update**

The October issue<sup>1</sup> includes a brief report of the CILIP AGM and Libraries Change Lives Award-giving [pp12-13].

#### **Museums Journal**

The October issue includes:

- “Still so much work to do on disability issues” (Editorial), which, in celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Disability Discrimination Act<sup>2</sup>, looks briefly at some of the work being undertaken to make museums more accessible, and puts out a call for contributions on this topic for the next issue of the *Journal* [p4]
- Patrick Steel “How museums react to the news agenda”, which looks briefly at some of the issues involved in putting on an exhibition with topical relevance, such as the National Maritime Museum’s current focus on migration. (Sharon Heal, the Director of the MA, is quoted as saying that “[...] museums should be tackling difficult issues, and that, as organisations, they are well placed to host discussions and debates on these issues, and can ‘provide precisely the historical context that is needed’.”) [p7]
- Patrick Steel “Creating a vision for culture”, which looks briefly at the announcement that DCMS would be producing a White Paper on the arts in England [p9]<sup>3</sup>
- Alistair Hudson “We need to rethink what a museum can be” (“Comment” section), which argues that we urgently need to change the way the museums are perceived, to show that “the arts museums and culture are

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<sup>1</sup> *CILIP Update*, Oct 2015. Further info at:

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/cilip/membership/membership-benefits/monthly-magazine-journals-and-ebulletins/cilip-update-magazine>.

<sup>2</sup> *The Guardian*, 30 Sep 2015, had a special supplement, “Disability Discrimination Act in the spotlight”, which is a useful guide to the successes for the legislation, and also what is still left to do (especially since the merging of the DDA into the Equality Act 2010); sadly this appears not to be available in an electronic version.

<sup>3</sup> See below.

fundamental and practicable in the development of a healthy society [...]” [p14]

- Damian Hebron “Health, wellbeing and collections”, which looks briefly at the need to demonstrate the impact of museums’ work with health and wellbeing; and announces the launch of the National Alliance for Museums Health and Wellbeing [p15]<sup>4</sup>

### ***Hope Not Hate***

The latest issue<sup>5</sup> includes a “Refugee and migration special”. Articles include:

- Nick Ryan “Crisis unfolding” [pp20-21]
- Nick Ryan and Elisabeth Pop “Nations on the move: the story of the worst refugee crisis in human history” [pp22-25]
- Elisabeth Pop “Migrant crisis: the facts”, an infographic showing current ‘headline’ facts [pp26-27]
- Benjamin Ward “Europe’s response to boat migration” [pp28-29]
- Hakim Bello and Daniel Trilling “I was a Lampedusa refugee” [pp30-31]
- Ramita Navai “Ali Baba and the 300 hostages: the kidnappers who prey on desperate migrants in Europe’s border Badlands” [pp32-33]
- Ben Doherty “Europe is beginning to sound like Australia on asylum” [pp34-36]
- Rosa Roussou “Greeks fight to help refugees “ [p37]
- Adam LeBor “Budapest: refugee crossroads” [p38]
- István Tóth “Austrian government shifts goalposts” [p39]
- Anna-Sofia Quensel “Surge in solidarity with refugees” [p39]
- Tor Bach “Norway warms to refugees” [p40]
- Graeme Atkinson “Opinion: Time to learn German ...?” [p41]
- Elisabeth Pop “Victim turned perpetrator” (“Central and Eastern Europe turn their backs to the refugee crisis”) [pp42-43]
- Joe Mulhall “Fleeing terror”, meeting refugees from Syria at the Kawergosk camp in northern Iraq [p44].

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## **The DCMS White Paper**

The webpage<sup>6</sup> launching the consultation says:

### **DCMS #OurCulture Discussion – Have Your Say!**

In the coming months the Department for Culture, Media and Sport will be launching proposals for a new, far-reaching cultural strategy, the first in 50 years, that reflects the world today. This discussion platform is for

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<sup>4</sup> See: <https://museumsandwellbeingalliance.wordpress.com/>.

<sup>5</sup> *Hope Not Hate*, 21, Sep-Oct 2015. Further information about the organisation and the magazine at: <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/blog/> and <http://subscriber.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/subscribe.aspx?eid=90d17a61-6fea-4ef4-925b-3a36eb7a18e5>.

<sup>6</sup> See: <https://dcms.dialogue-app.com/>.

you to share and discuss your ideas under each of the strategy's main themes and challenges below.

From the arts to museums, galleries and heritage, [DCMS](#) is the government department that brings together all aspects of culture to ensure **#OurCulture** contributes to vibrant and healthy communities across the UK.

Want to know more? Read about the upcoming White Paper and its key themes in the Culture Minister [Ed Vaizey's blog](#).

### **Get involved**

We want you to have your say. You can do this by posting your ideas and comments against each of the four main challenges as we share them in the coming months:

- **Places:** Throughout September we're looking for ideas on how culture brings together communities across the UK.
- **Funding:** October's theme looks at building financial resilience in cultural organisations and new funding models.
- **People:** In November the focus will be on how people engage with culture and how to ensure everyone can access and experience culture.
- **Cultural Diplomacy:** Our final theme for December explores working with our cultural institutions to promote Britain abroad.

You can join the conversation in the first challenge below [see webpage], which looks at **Places**.

We want to hear what matters to you and we're seeking innovative proposals that spark lively debates and conversations, which demonstrate your passion for our culture and heritage and how we can ensure they are equipped to adapt and thrive for future generations.

You can also join the conversation and share your postings on your own social media channels, using the **#OurCulture** hashtag.”

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## **Tackling social and digital exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government**

### ***Is Britain fairer? The state of equality and human rights 2015***

This new report<sup>7</sup> from the EHRC asks:

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<sup>7</sup> *Is Britain fairer? The state of equality and human rights 2015*. EHRC, 2015. Available to download as a pdf (3750 kb) from: [http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/uploads/IBF/Final-reports/EHRC\\_IBF\\_MainReport\\_acc.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/uploads/IBF/Final-reports/EHRC_IBF_MainReport_acc.pdf). The Executive Summary is also available (2410 kb) at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/uploads/IBF/Final->

“[...] whether England, Scotland and Wales provide more equality of opportunity, experience greater freedom from unlawful discrimination and harassment, and better protect human rights since last measured in 2010 and 2012.

To do this, we have taken the most comprehensive evidence possible including thousands of data sources and analysed them according to our measurement frameworks. You can explore the evidence by domains - such as health or education – and find detailed information on a range of indicators.

Our Measurement Framework assesses equality and human rights across a range of areas or 'domains' relevant to twenty-first century life in Britain.

These domains are:

1. Life
2. Health
3. Physical security
4. Legal security
5. Education
6. Standard of living
7. Productive and valued activities
8. Individual, family and social life
9. Identity, expression and self-respect
10. Participation, influence and voice”<sup>8</sup>

The evidence used for each domain is also available<sup>9</sup>.

For each domain, the report includes “Areas of progress” and “Challenges”. From the Executive Summary, these include:

### **Education and learning**

Progress:

- general improvements in educational attainment in schools; in England, a narrowing of the attainment gap between White pupils and Pakistani/Bangladeshi and African/Caribbean/Black pupils
- more effective use of pupil premium funds
- good educational outcomes in secure training centres

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[reports/2904530\\_EHRC\\_IBF-ExeSummary\\_Eng\\_acc.pdf](#). Links to an Easy Read, version, and the report in Welsh and British Sign Language are at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/key-projects/britain-fairer/great-britain-report>.

<sup>8</sup> Taken from: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/key-projects/britain-fairer/britain-fairer-introduction/how-have-we-measured-progress>.

<sup>9</sup> See: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/key-projects/britain-fairer/britain-fairer-supporting-evidence>.

- rising levels of participation of 16–18 year olds in education and training, and
- falling percentages of men and women with no qualifications of any kind.

Challenges include:

- some persistent and in some cases widening educational attainment gaps (for example, among Gypsy and Traveller pupils, children from poorer backgrounds and particularly White boys, children with special educational needs and children in the care system); within the context of an overall fall, higher exclusion rates for some children (for example, children with special educational needs)
- higher rates of bullying carried out against some children (for example, disabled children and lesbian, gay and bisexual children)
- lower participation of disabled young people in education, employment and training
- women were more likely to have no qualifications than men, in contrast with the situation in higher education, where women more than closed the gap with men [...] and
- while more Black pupils in England went on to study at a higher education institution, they were less likely than White, mixed and Asian pupils to go to higher-ranked institutions. [Taken from p2]

## **Work, income and the economy**

Progress:

- increasing recognition (in, for example, the Modern Slavery Act 2015) of the human rights violations arising as a result of trafficking, forced labour, servitude and exploitation
- a narrowing of the gender gap in employment rates
- a voluntary target for the FTSE 100 of 25% female board representation was met, and
- in England, fewer adults and children lived in substandard accommodation; homelessness in Wales and Scotland fell.

Challenges include:

- a rise in reported trafficking (and an increase in the proportion of victims who were UK nationals)
- a lower overall employment rate [...]
- men were more likely to be unemployed than women, but women were more likely to be in part-time work; the numbers of women in part-time work who wanted to be in full-time work increased
- women and people from some ethnic minorities remained less likely to be in both executive and non-executive directorships
- 16–24 year olds had the lowest employment rates, and the employment gap between the oldest and the youngest age groups

increased [...] unemployment rates increased for disabled people  
[Taken from p3]

## Health and care

Progress:

- a narrowing of the gender gap in life expectancy
- a fall in the infant mortality rate in England and Wales for White, Pakistani/Bangladeshi and African/Caribbean children
- a decrease in the proportion of men and women who currently smoke in England, and in men who exceed low-risk drinking guidelines
- a decrease in the suicide rate in Scotland (although the overall rate in Scotland remained higher than in England and Wales), and
- in England and Wales, substantial funding available for psychological therapies; Scotland was the first country in Britain to introduce a target to ensure faster access to psychological therapies; positive developments in the availability of high-quality mental health care.

Challenges include:

- self-reported health status for some people with specific characteristics (for example, Gypsies and Travellers and disabled people) was worse (in the 2011 Census); lower life expectancy for people with serious mental illness or a learning disability, Gypsies and Travellers and homeless people
- increased suicide rate in England and Wales, resulting in a widening of the gap between men and women, with middle-aged men particularly at risk
- worse end of life outcomes for people in more disadvantaged socioeconomic positions
- concerns about access to palliative care for children with cancer
- increased risk of poor mental health among adults in England, with high risk for people identifying as gay/lesbian/bisexual/other; Black/African/Caribbean/Black British people had the highest rate of contact with specialist mental health services; Black people were more likely to have been compulsorily detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 as part of an inpatient stay in a mental health unit; serious concerns about access to mental health services for children and young people; care of prisoners with mental health needs was inconsistent across establishments
- increased number of people in England with health problems requiring both health and social care and with 'complex health needs', within a context of an overall fall in social care provision
- people with learning disabilities and/or autism placed in inappropriate settings for too long and a long distance from their family and home

- some people – for example, transgender people and people from migrant communities – experienced problems accessing healthcare services, and
- legal safeguards provided by the Human Rights Act 1998 to prevent inhuman or degrading treatment were not as widely used as they should have been; a number of inquiries highlighted serious flaws (and sometimes abuse) in the care of vulnerable patients, such as those with learning disabilities, older people and patients with dementia. [Taken from p4]

## **Justice, security and the right to life**

### Progress:

- a fall in several serious crimes affecting personal safety and the right to life across or in parts of Britain, and
- a number of significant legislative reforms and policy initiatives, including an increase in the volume of referrals from the police of 'honour-based' violence-related offences for prosecution; increased legal protection for 17 year olds in police custody and increases in the number of applications for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards; a strengthened procedural obligation to investigate any deaths for which the State may have a degree of responsibility; and the setting of international human rights standards for the treatment of women prisoners, which were incorporated into the regulatory inspection framework.

### Challenges include:

- a rising incidence of Islamophobic and anti- Semitic hate crime
- serious issues in relation to child sexual abuse and exploitation in England and Wales
- flaws in the police response to domestic abuse and in the use of stop and search powers
- the potential impact of legal aid reforms in England and Wales on the access of vulnerable individuals to civil and family justice
- serious concerns were expressed by regulators about the operation of safeguards to protect people from being unlawfully deprived of their liberty across Britain, and about the use of restraint affecting detained individuals in health, care and detention settings
- the Home Secretary announced an independent review of deaths and serious incidents in police custody in England and Wales. There have been 133 deaths during or following police custody in England and Wales between 2007/08 and 2014/15, and 444 apparent suicides following police custody
- concerns voiced by regulators about overcrowding in prisons across Britain, rising violence in some men's prisons in England and Wales, and the treatment of children and torture victims subject to immigration controls, and



- the lack of an immigration detention time limit in the UK remains in contrast to other European Union member countries. [Taken from p5]

## **The individual and society**

### Progress

- the introduction of equal marriage legislation across Britain; a continued rise in public acceptance of lesbian, gay and bisexual people across Britain; and evidence of decreased stigma around mental health in England and Wales
- clarification by case law of the capacity of people with learning disabilities to make their own decisions about relationships, and the freedom of individuals to express their religion or beliefs
- a number of important changes to the legal framework, including new duties and responsibilities given to local authorities in England that affect the care and support of adults, and new legislation across Britain extending the support available to young people leaving the care system
- the creation of new criminal offences relating to forced marriage, emotional and financial domestic abuse and controlling or coercive behaviour
- the strengthening of the Information Commissioner's powers to regulate the Data Protection Act 1998
- legislation introduced to encourage participation in civil society across Britain
- improvements in the diversity of the UK Parliament following the 2015 general election; though the gender balance remains better in the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales, and
- an increase in Scotland of political participation, including by young people, and the proportion of people perceiving that they can influence local decisions.

### Challenges include:

- a rise in public unease about the use of people's personal data by organisations, after a number of cases of loss/misuse
- placements far from home being allocated to people with learning disabilities, children in custody and children in care, which affect their access to social networks (as do reductions in public transport)
- bias/hostility continued to be experienced by disabled people, Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, transgender people and immigrants
- the political under-representation of young people, women and people from some ethnic minorities persisted
- young people and those from some ethnic minorities remained less likely to be politically active; compared with those in managerial and professional groups, all other sub-groups were also less politically active

- the blanket ban on prisoners voting remained in place, in violation of Convention rights
- there were concerns about covert police operations and intrusive surveillance of protests, and
- disabled people, some ethnic minorities and people aged 75 and over were less likely than others to perceive that they could influence local decisions. [Taken from p6]

Finally, the report identifies “eight key equality and human rights challenges for Great Britain over the coming years:

1. Improve the evidence and the ability to assess how fair society is.
2. Raise standards and close attainment gaps in education.
3. Encourage fair recruitment, development and reward in employment.
4. Support improved living conditions in cohesive communities.
5. Encourage democratic participation and ensure access to justice.
6. Improve access to mental health services and support for those experiencing (or at risk of experiencing) poor mental health.
7. Prevent abuse, neglect and ill-treatment in care and detention.
8. Tackle targeted harassment and abuse of people who share particular protected characteristics.” [p7]

The LGBT Foundation has commented:

“We know that lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people are disproportionately affected by a range of inequalities including health, housing, education, work and safety. *Is Britain Fairer?* reports that LGB employees were more than twice as likely to be bullied and discriminated against as heterosexual employees in the workplace. A higher proportion of non-heterosexuals were living in poverty, 25.2% compared with 19.4% of heterosexuals. Nearly a fifth of trans people reported they had been homeless at some point, while 11% had been homeless more than once.

Many of the major data sets analysed for the *Is Britain Fairer?* report did not ask respondents about their sexual orientation or trans status, however. This means that the picture of inequality in Britain is incomplete, and that the needs of LGBT people in some thematic areas will go unrecognised. We need to push for greater awareness of the role that sexual orientation and trans status can play on a person’s chances in life, and the impact of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia on the lives of our communities. So if a service provider or an employer asks about your sexual orientation or trans status as part of their monitoring, make sure you tick that box. We need to stand up and be counted!”<sup>10</sup>

The Foundation also provides a range of statistical information in its “Evidence Exchange”<sup>11</sup> that can be used to develop some of these arguments.

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<sup>10</sup> Taken from: *LGBT Foundation Bulletin*, 3 Nov 2015.

<sup>11</sup> See:

[http://lgbt.foundation/evidence?utm\\_source=LGBT+Foundation+weekly+bulletin&utm\\_campaign=2a87044c82-](http://lgbt.foundation/evidence?utm_source=LGBT+Foundation+weekly+bulletin&utm_campaign=2a87044c82-)

This is an important report that provides valuable background information to support many areas of our work.<sup>12</sup>

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## Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

### ***‘This is no place for a child’: the experiences of homeless families in emergency accommodation***

This new report<sup>13</sup> from Shelter looks at the experiences of twenty families raising their children in B&Bs and hostels.

The report gives some important background facts and figures, eg:

“At the end of June 2015, 105,000 children were homeless and living in temporary accommodation. Their families had all been accepted as statutory homeless by a local authority, who had a duty to rehouse them, however they were unable to do so immediately because of our chronic housing shortage.” [p5]

“Children in ‘temporary accommodation’ can live in a variety of types of accommodation: from flats to mobile homes [...] One in eleven of these homeless children live in ‘emergency accommodation’ [...] This includes B&Bs, hostels and other shared accommodation. These are places where families share facilities with other residents. They can be large buildings. For example, one of the families we spoke to during this research lived in one room, shared a building with forty nine other families – all strangers - a kitchen with twelve other families and a bathroom with twenty people. Some families that we spoke to had been living in this type of accommodation for over a year.” [p5]

It also looks at the impact on families and on the children themselves, for example:

“Many parents, especially those with younger children, reported that their child’s personal development was affected. This ranged from speech, toilet training and bed wetting, to setbacks in learning to walk. This was affected by anxiety but also because it was also difficult for parents to establish routines in the often-chaotic surroundings.” [p14]

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[LGBTFoundationBulletin03112015&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_43f936b912-2a87044c82-197315569&mc\\_cid=2a87044c82&mc\\_eid=a859be8b1c](http://www.lgbt.foundation/bulletin/03112015?utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_43f936b912-2a87044c82-197315569&mc_cid=2a87044c82&mc_eid=a859be8b1c).

<sup>12</sup> Source: email from the EHRC, 30 Oct 2015.

<sup>13</sup> *‘This is no place for a child’: the experiences of homeless families in emergency accommodation*. Shelter, 2015. Available to download as a pdf (176.3 kb) from: [http://england.shelter.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/1200360/Shelter\\_Homelessnes\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](http://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/1200360/Shelter_Homelessnes_Report_2015.pdf).

The report concludes with a call to build more affordable homes; however, in the meantime:

“[...] we need to assist families who are currently homeless to find a stable place to live, or those on the edge of homelessness.” [p19]

The report talks about the effects on children’s learning, and it is clear that there is a need for information and support – other than purely housing support – which our sector may well be able to offer.<sup>14</sup>

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

### ***Age and social isolation***

This new report<sup>15</sup> from the Scottish Parliament is the result of “an inquiry focusing on the potential impacts of social isolation on both older and younger people [...]” [p1]

The Inquiry:

“[...] held informal sessions, visited groups and individuals and took formal evidence from a range of organisations and professionals. In response to our call for written evidence, we received 103 submissions from third sector organisations, local authorities, health boards, health and social care partnerships and individuals.” [p1]

It has come up with sixteen recommendations – those with particular significance for us include:

- We recommend that the Scottish Government develops a national strategy on social isolation that ensures that the issue is integrated within all policy considerations so that the impact of isolation and loneliness is understood and tackled across Scotland.

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<sup>14</sup> Source: Joe Lepper “Homelessness among children rises by 15,000”, *Children & Young People Now*, 2 Nov 2015, [http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1154598/homelessness-among-children-rises-by-15-000?utm\\_content=&utm\\_campaign=021115%20Daily&utm\\_source=Children%20%26%20Young%20People%20Now&utm\\_medium=adestra\\_email&utm\\_term=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cypnow.co.uk%2Fcyp%2Fnews%2F1154598%2Fhomelessness-among-children-rises-by-15-000](http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1154598/homelessness-among-children-rises-by-15-000?utm_content=&utm_campaign=021115%20Daily&utm_source=Children%20%26%20Young%20People%20Now&utm_medium=adestra_email&utm_term=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cypnow.co.uk%2Fcyp%2Fnews%2F1154598%2Fhomelessness-among-children-rises-by-15-000).

<sup>15</sup> Scottish Parliament. Equal Opportunities Committee. *Age and social isolation*. [SP Paper 816, 5<sup>th</sup> Report, 2015 (Session 4)]. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, 2015. Available to download as a pdf (2790 kb) from: [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4\\_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Reports/EOS042015R05.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Reports/EOS042015R05.pdf). Also available at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/93385.aspx>.

- We recommend that the Scottish Government ensures that the issues of social isolation and loneliness are built into the plans and strategies of health and social care partnerships across Scotland.
- We recommend that the Scottish Government should engage with stakeholders to design a national publicity campaign to tackle stigma on loneliness, show what communities can do and highlight the importance of social contact for everyone, no matter what their age [...]
- We recommend that the Scottish Government invests in the evaluation of existing best practice in order to develop future interventions and improve the link to preventative health spending decisions that will improve the lives of people affected by isolation and loneliness.
- We recommend that the Scottish Government commissions research on the prevalence of social isolation and loneliness in Scotland and identifies the typical profile of people who are most at risk of being socially isolated and lonely.
- We also recommend that research is taken forward to assess the physical and mental impacts of social isolation alongside an evaluation of the benefits and experiences of social prescribing [...]
- We recommend that any Scottish Government research on age and social isolation examines the potential positive and negative impacts of technology on people who are socially isolated and lonely.” [pp2-4]

## **LGBTQ issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government**

### **“Delivering real equality”**

On 21 October, Education Secretary Nicky Morgan MP, gave a speech<sup>16</sup> at the *Pink News Awards*, which outlined current Government priorities for LGBT equality.

Firstly, she reiterated her priorities for education:

- “Further work on homophobic bullying, building on the government’s £2 million investment in projects to tackle it.”
- “A clear focus on trans young people, not only addressing transphobic bullying but also making sure that trans young people get the support and information they need.”
- “High-quality PSHE which betters all young people’s understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity and at the same time ensures that LGBT young people know how to avoid risks and stay safe.”
- “Support for LGBT young people who aren’t currently in education, training or employment.”

<sup>16</sup> Nicky Morgan “Delivering real equality”, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/delivering-real-equality>.

Nicky Morgan then went on to mention the other key priority areas for the Government:

- More work to tackle hate crime
- ‘Stamping out’ gay cure therapies
- “[...] more to tackle not just violent extremism but non-violent extremism that encourages intolerance and hatred towards LGBT people.”
- Continuing “to use our influence to help LGBT people abroad.”

This is a useful reminder of what the Government is pledging to do. For us, there is a key information and support role we can play in helping work towards the education priorities.<sup>17</sup>

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

### ***Ambition & opportunity: a strategy for public libraries in Scotland 2015-2020***

A national strategy<sup>18</sup> for public libraries in Scotland has just been produced by SLIC who were asked by the CoSLA<sup>19</sup> Arts and Culture Working Group to lead the development of the strategy.

“This strategy is a catalyst for the changes which are necessary to ensure that the service remains meaningful and useful to citizens, is cost-effective and reflects the policy aims of local and Scottish Government. By addressing the particular needs of their communities, public libraries contribute to the effectiveness of local government in meeting their Single Outcome Agreements and helping to meet the national policy goals set out in the National Performance Framework.” [p13]

There are six strategic aims:

1. Reading, literacy and learning
2. Digital inclusion
3. Economic wellbeing
4. Social wellbeing

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<sup>17</sup> Source: NCB *Policy & Parliamentary Information Digest*, 2 Nov 2015.

<sup>18</sup> *Ambition & opportunity: a strategy for public libraries in Scotland 2015-2020*. CLIC/Carnegie UK Trust, 2015. Available to download as a pdf (2610 kb) from: <http://scottishlibraries.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Strategy.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> “COSLA’s purpose is to be the national voice for local government in Scotland and our high priority work areas reflect our commitment to promote the position of local government as the legitimate tier of governance closest to the people of Scotland.” [Taken from: <http://www.cosla.gov.uk/about/decision-making-cosla>]

5. Culture and creativity
6. Excellent public services.

For each strategic aim, the report makes recommendations, and links to relevant national outcomes and indicators, as follows:

### **Reading, literacy and learning**

“Strategic aim: Public libraries in Scotland promote education and learning for all, develop a culture of reading for pleasure, offer support for everyone from early years to older people, and enable people to make informed choices.

Recommendations:

- Ensure access to library services for all citizens using new technology.
- Develop and promote the core offer from public libraries in Scotland.

Relevant national outcomes:

- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.

Relevant national indicators

- Improve the skills profile of the population
- Improve levels of educational attainment
- Widen the use of the internet.” [p14]

### **Digital inclusion**

“Strategic aim: Public libraries in Scotland make best use of digital technologies to deliver high quality, efficient and responsive services, enabling access to information and services wherever and whenever citizens want them.

Recommendations:

- Develop Scotland-wide digital access resources.
- Ensure WiFi is available and accessible in all public libraries.

Relevant national outcomes:

- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.

Relevant national indicator:

- Widen the use of the internet.” [p18]

## **Economic wellbeing**

Recommendations:

- Develop national, regional and local partnerships with advice services, job centres and enterprise organisations.
- Mainstream activities to improve STEM skills in young children.
- Test and replicate a model of public libraries providing co-working spaces for small businesses.

Relevant national indicators:

- Increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work
- Increase the number of businesses
- Improve the skill profile of the population
- Reduce the proportion of people living in poverty [Taken from p22]

## **Libraries promoting social wellbeing**

Recommendations:

- Create strong national, regional and local partnerships with all public services and community planning partners.
- Share best practice on how to create effective and accessible public service or community hubs.
- Build on current practice to become champions of community engagement and empowerment.
- Develop guidelines on the appropriate use of volunteers to bring added value to services.

Relevant national indicators:

- Improve mental wellbeing
- Improve self-assessed general health
- Improve people’s perceptions of their neighbourhood. [Taken from p25]

## **Culture and creativity**

Strategic aim:

- Public libraries in Scotland promote their role as cultural centres, inspiring people through books and literature, music, film and theatre, and encourage creativity.

Recommendations:



- Develop and strengthen national, regional and local partnerships with arts and culture organisations.
- Pilot a collaborative venture to provide access to eBooks from Scottish publishers.
- Support librarians to become effective voices for freedom of information and expression.

Relevant national indicator

- Increase cultural engagement [Taken from p25]

### **Excellent public services**

Recommendations:

- Continue to develop methods for reporting on the impact and outcomes of library activities through How Good is our Public Library Service? (HGIOPLS).
- Develop and implement a learning and development programme for all library staff.
- Explore alternative approaches to generating financial investment.
- Engage proactively with models for efficient procurement of goods and services at national level.

Relevant national outcome:

- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

Relevant national indicators

- Improve people's perceptions of the quality of public services
- Improve the responsiveness of public services. [Taken from p33]

Each of the strategic aims is illustrated with case-studies (which themselves are a valuable resource), including, for example:

- "Appiness" (the LCLA-winner 2015) [p16]
- "Wi-Fife" (the extension of Wi-Fi access to all libraries in Fife to meet the increased demand for welfare information) [p20]
- Dundee Opportunities Hub, created "to support those seeking access, skills and support to cope with the changes to Welfare Reform." [p24]
- "Family Futures", "a partnership between Glasgow Libraries and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. The Partnership delivers an early intervention programme to increase interaction between parents and children, and develop and improve parenting and communication skills. The project involves workshops and activities across three strands:

Bounce and Rhyme (aimed at 0-3 years), Toddlers' Tales (aimed at 3-5 years) and Triple P (a positive parenting programme)." [p26]

- Dumfries & Galloway Local Heritage Projects, "Library staff in Dumfries and Galloway have been working on a project funded by the Scottish Government Public Library Improvement Fund to capture local oral histories from the Lockerbie Disaster. This project uses volunteers, working with staff from the Library and archives to interview and record memories of the disaster in the words and dialect of local people, and builds on an extensive existing database of history of the local area and some of the language and dialects used." [p31]

Having such a clear strategy and long-term plan is immensely valuable, and this paper is well worth reading.

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

DCMS = Department for Culture, Media and Sport

EHRC = Equality and Human Rights Commission

MA = Museums Association

PSHE = personal, social and health education

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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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