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

Number 187, October 2016

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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.

Contents List

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Did you see …?

CILIP Update

The October issue includes some interesting articles:

- "Health and wellbeing win for Libraries Change Lives", a brief report on the LCLA finalists [p5]
- "Library figures highlight gap between rich and poor", which reports on the latest DCMS statistics and highlights that library usage by people in the most deprived areas of England is strong [p14]
- Antony Brewerton and Becky Woolley "Helping students to 'study happy'", which outlines wellbeing activities on offer at the University of Warwick library [pp28-30]
- Bob Gann "Combating digital health inequality", which looks at work to widen digital participation through teaching digital skills for health [pp34-36]
- Alison Baud "Creating a shared sense of cultural understanding", which looks at the "Reads and Rights" campaign run by the library at Bath Spa University. This project[1] links together equality and diversity with books, reading and libraries [pp42-43]

Museums Journal

The October issue[2] includes:

- Caroline Parry "Do pregnant women suffer prejudice in culture sector?", which reflects on the Women and Equalities Committee's report[3] [p11]
- Jonathan Knott "The birds and the bees", which looks at museums' involvement in sex education (citing examples at the British Museum and in Exeter) [p41]

Access: Journal of the Public and Mobile Libraries Group

The Autumn issue[4] focuses on developments in digital services in libraries. Currently, it is available to PMLG members only, but look out for it when it appears on the CILIP webpage. Contents include:

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[1] There is a brief update and info about the project at http://www.bathspa.ac.uk/library/news/reads-and-rights-2016-17; more detailed info at: http://www.bathspa.ac.uk/Media/Library/Documents/Library%20Reads%20and%20Rights.pdf; and the digital timeline they created is available at: http://www.bathspa.ac.uk/library/news/reads-and-rights-2016-17.

[2] *Museums Journal* Oct 2016. Further information at: https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal.

[3] House of Commons. Women and Equalities Committee. *Pregnancy and maternity discrimination – first report of Session 2016–17* [HC90]. The Stationery Office, 2016. Available to download as a pdf (842.54 kb) from: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmwomeq/90/90.pdf.

- Luke Wilson "Tinder Foundation: supporting libraries delivering digital inclusion" [pp8-9]
- Sharon Wagg "Tinder's digital inclusion project" [p10]

Equality Act 2010

Acting on Equalities: are local authorities in England meeting the duties of the Equality Act 2010 and addressing sexual orientation & gender identity?

This new report[5] has been produced as part of the "Liveable Lives" project[6].

"A detailed and systematic web search supplemented with contact by email and Freedom of Information requests found that as of mid-2016 more than half of all local authorities across England […] were not demonstrating compliance with the Specific Duties of the Equality Act 2010 and associated Government Equalities Office guidance (2011). If legislative deadlines are included, this rises to more than two thirds […]"

The presumption of progress over time is challenged by this data, as the number of local authorities failing to demonstrate compliance with this legislation has increased from 24% (n. 86) in early 2015, to 53% (n. 188) in mid-2016. Local authorities are not updating their equalities

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[4] *Access: Journal of the Public and Mobile Libraries Group*, 11, Autumn 2016. Further information at: http://www.cilip.org.uk/public-mobile-libraries-group/journal-publications.
[5] Kath Browne *et al. Acting on Equalities: are local authorities in England meeting the duties of the Equality Act 2010 and addressing sexual orientation & gender identity?* Liveable Lives, 2016. Available to download as a pdf (661.63 kb) from: https://liveablelives.org/news/post/UK-equalities-report.
[6] "The Liveable Lives research project is looking at how the concept of 'Liveable Lives' plays out in experiences of everyday lives in different places, and how it might be powerful in activism. We think that the concept may have the potential to develop new ways of thinking and talking about the concerns of LGBTQ people, and might help to inform new initiatives and strategies beyond the equalities agenda.
Initially, the research team carried out a desk-based review of current legislation that aims to address LGBTQ equalities in India and in the UK. This was intended to help us understand how locations are rated against each other, and how these ratings match up to what is happening on the ground.
Between November 2014 and April 2015, the project gathered information from LGBTQ people about their experiences of liveable moments through the project's app and website. We also gathered data face-to-face with people at interactive Project Workshops. In addition, we conducted some in-depth face-to-face interviews in India to help us to understand in detail where and how lives become liveable / not liveable.
Following the data collection, the project invited LGBTQ people to design and run street theatre events in Kolkata and Brighton in summer 2015, facilitated by a practitioner well-versed in the street theatre movement in India." [Taken from: https://liveablelives.org/main/about].

information, and in some cases have removed data and information from their websites.
Although there is a requirement for 'publicly available' information on actions arising from the Equality Act 2010, this research found that in many cases information was difficult to locate and not available on local authority webpages.

This indicates a decline in equalities work and some local authorities indicated that shrinking local authority budgets have impacted directly on their work on equalities. Some authorities are resistant to equalities work. Regardless of the cause, it is clear that there is a need to boost endeavours if the much-lauded Equality Act 2010 is to be fully implemented.

There were examples of LGBT-specific work from local authorities who did not demonstrate compliance with the Specific Duties, and many published information on Civil Partnerships and Same-Sex Marriage. However, 31% […] of those councils fully promoting same-sex marriage and civil partnerships either are doing no LGBT work or only very limited LGBT work.

Thus, evidence of action on LGBT equalities work contrasted with the wider availability of information about civil partnerships and same-sex marriage. The data here showed a notable improvement in providing such information between 2014/2015 and 2016 – as of 2016 only 24 (16% of eligible councils) did **not** provide full information on about same-sex marriage, civil partnerships and conversion of the latter to the former, improving on 62 (41%) in early 2015." [p3]

This report is shocking, in that there are still councils that claim not to know they have obligations under the Equality Act. Even when local authorities do undertake action:

"Public sector workers themselves are critically aware that actions to comply with legislation may be performed as a bureaucratic 'tick box exercise', and that even when undertaken with the 'spirit' of the policy in mind they may still fail to genuinely identify and tackle LGBT equality issues […]" [p19]

Finally, the report argues that:

"Despite claims of legislative advances, for decades academics and activists have been critical of same-sex marriage as a driver for change for LGBTQ people, seeing this as part of systematic efforts to privilege certain groups over others (see for example Bernstein & Taylor, 2013; Duggan, 2003; Warner, 1999). This data indicates that their fears may be well founded, where other LGBT work is not undertaken by local government that publicise information regarding same-sex marriage." [p20]

On the whole, our sector has developed strong, integrated provision for LGBTQ people, and it is vital that this work is reported to and noted by local authorities –

if for no other reason, this could boost the recognition of the cultural sector's role.[7]

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

Library support for homeless people: responses to a call for information, October 2016

In the footnote to the item on this in the previous Newsletter[8], we noted that Lord John Bird had brought a debate on public libraries to the House of Lords[9].

CILIP have just published their Briefing Note[10] which stresses the role that libraries play in promoting literacy skills, as well as:

- "Helping people improve their education and learning

- Supporting better health and wellbeing, including relieving pressure on local health services

- Enhancing people sense of place and belonging to a community

- Improved attitudes to reading and improved reading ability" [p4].

In terms of literacy:

> "In order to compete in the global economy the UK's success hinges on a workforce with advanced skills. Yet we are failing to develop basic literacy skills amongst young people.
>
> Public libraries provide everyone with equal opportunities to develop a love of reading, access books, and learn new skills. They directly improve the life-chances of the communities they serve by providing cost-effective services. Since 2010, however, the public library network has been largely neglected. The number of libraries has fallen by over

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[7] Source: Equality and Diversity Forum *eNewsletter*, 15 Oct 2016.

[8] *The Network Newsletter*, 186, Sep 2016, pp6-13, available to download as a pdf (296.19 kb) from: http://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Newsletter-NS-186.pdf.

[9] See: http://www.thebookseller.com/news/house-lords-libraries-and-bookshops-debate-404111; http://www.thebookseller.com/news/government-defends-record-library-closures-and-amazon-taxation-during-lords-debate-414116; and https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2016-10-13/debates/C8C0345D-B9F6-4EF9-BFE2-A58A6618529D/LibrariesBookshopsAndBooksellers#contribution-347B64FA-20CB-41B6-A2F4-45D15688E845.

[10] *Lords Debate on the Cultural, Civic and Educational Significance of Local Libraries and Independent Bookshops in the UK*. CILIP (Briefing Note), Sep 2016, available to download as a pdf (569.85 kb) from: http://www.cilip.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/briefing_note_for_lords_debate_on_libraries_and_bookshops_13_october_2016_cilip.pdf.

6% and the number of qualified librarians has reduced by a quarter. Expenditure on public libraries in England fell by £69.1m in three years and the number of books has reduced by 20.5m in five years.

We ask the House of Lords to intervene in order to mitigate the impact of the impending literacy and skills crisis, and ensure every UK citizen has the opportunity to read, develop their skills and confidence and improve their life chances." [p1][11]

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Finally, we have posted the responses[12] to this enquiry on The Network website, and are keeping this updated.

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Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

Digital participation and social justice in Scotland

This important new report[13] from the Carnegie UK Trust looks at who is being left behind in the current "digital revolution".

It begins by setting this work in the context of the Scottish Government's digital strategy[14], stressing that:

"In our 24/7, interconnected world, few can doubt that the internet has the power to change lives."

It then considers briefly "[t]he transformative potential of digital technology for individuals, communities, businesses and societies […]" [p4], linking this to the results[15] of the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Digital Participation Inquiry, which it summarises as:

- "Enhanced education and training opportunities via online learning, enhancing skills, building employability and supplementing formal education.
- New routes to find, apply for and secure jobs.

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[11] Source: *Weekly news from CILIP*, 19 Oct 2016.
[12] See: http://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Library-support-for-homeless-people.pdf.
[13] Douglas White. *Digital participation and social justice in Scotland*. Carnegie UK Trust, 2016. Available to download as a pdf (415.65 kb) from: http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/carnegieuktrust/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2016/09/v3-2697-CUKT-Digital-Participation-summary.pdf.
[14] *Digital participation: a national framework for local action*. Scottish Government, 2014. Available to download as a pdf (1440 kb) from: http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0044/00448804.pdf.
[15] *Spreading the benefits of digital participation*. Royal Society of Edinburgh, 2014. Available to download as a pdf (6160 kb) from: https://www.royalsoced.org.uk/cms/files/advice-papers/inquiry/digitalparticipation/RSE%20Digital%20Report%20Web%20Version.pdf.

- Greater flexibility in working practices and remote working, making people's lives easier (while also potentially supporting the sustainability of rural communities and small towns).
- Improved levels of health, as a result of better connections with healthcare professionals and a technology-enabled shift to remote monitoring and the delivery of care in the home.
- New channels and opportunities to increase social interaction.
- Access to a vast swathe of information and resources, supporting the acquisition of knowledge." [p4]

After these introductory, scene-setting sections, the report gets into the 'meat' of the subject: the next section is "The relationship between digital exclusion and social deprivation". What is known is that:

"At present those households or individuals who are most likely to be digitally excluded are the same households who are also most likely to be identified as disadvantaged or excluded according to a range of other socioeconomic indicators […]" [p5]

We also know that:

"[…] many of those groups who are currently digitally excluded could benefit disproportionately from the benefits of being online." [p6]

and this leads the report's authors to conclude that:

"Digital participation is now an issue of social justice." [p6]

The research then highlighted key factors that make it likely that someone is connected to the internet:

- "Households with a working couple are the most likely to have internet access while non-working single adult households are the least likely to have internet access.
- The more qualified the respondent is, the more likely the household is to have internet access.
- The younger the highest income householder, the more likely that a household will have internet access." [p7]

However, this analysis does not explain much about why people participate digitally – or do not – so the research goes on to look at other factors that have an impact. This shows that:

"Those who use the internet are more likely to have:

- Access to a car
- Taken a flight in the past 12 months
- A driving licence
- Been to a cultural event or place (cinema, library, live music) in the past 12 months
- Taken part in sport in the past 12 months

- Undertaken activities such as reading, dancing, singing, playing a musical instrument in the past 12 months
- Used council services in the past 12 months
- Volunteered
- Visited outdoors for leisure and recreation at least once a week" [p8]

It then suggests that:

"Conversely, those without internet access are more likely to have:

- Used a doctor once a month or more
- Used a post office once a week or more
- Used public transport once a week or more" [p9]

As an aside, I found this aspect of the research rather weak, as I fall into all the categories that might lead to not having internet access, and carry out few of the activities that suggest I do!

However, the research is on stronger ground, in my view, when it says that there are seven broad groupings of social inclusion:

- Convenience of local services
- Use of local services
- Active living
- Transport
- Socially connected
- Mental health
- Long-term physical and mental illness or disability

and that there are clear links between four of these (active living; transport; mental health; and being socially connected) and having internet access.

The report therefore argues that, to ensure people become digitally included, we need to:

- Reach out to those people who do have what they describe as "active lifestyles" but who are not yet digitally included
- Find new ways of reaching out to those who don't have active lifestyles – and who are also more likely to be digitally excluded. "Policy and practice need to identify the points of interaction that citizens have with a wide variety of public and charitable services and find the right mechanisms to support the development of digital skills at these points of interaction." [p10]

The report concludes:

"[…] the evidence from this analysis further highlights the role of digital participation in contributing to a number of major public policy goals. It supports the case for more activity to help everyone get online and enjoy the benefits that being digitally included can offer." [p12]

This delving deeper into the reasons behind people's digital participation is important and timely, and the findings are useful.

However, I was hoping for a bit more … for example, some ideas of <u>what</u> to do and some case studies showing what organisations had achieved.[16]

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

Edinburgh City Libraries Visually Impaired People service

Congratulations to Edinburgh who have just won a COSLA Excellence Gold Award in the 'Tackling Inequality and Improving Health' category for this service.

> "The COSLA Excellence Awards celebrate the very best in Scottish local government. Our emphasis is on rewarding the most innovative and passionate developments, and on recognising projects that are changing lives in communities across the country. We use the Excellence Awards to find those who are setting new standards for excellence and to spread their good practice."[17]

In terms of background to this service:

> "Sight loss is predicted to double over the next two decades in Scotland, affecting almost 400,000 people. Edinburgh City Libraries Visually Impaired People (VIP) service is designed with citizens at its centre, targeting people who face challenges using libraries and local services, employing technology, specially trained staff and volunteer support to support independent living.
>
> The project was developed in part to meet the ambition of the Scottish Government *Success In Sight* strategy [[18]] 'to enhance the inclusion, participation and independence of blind and partially sighted people', while working towards implementation of a UK wide initiative to improve access to library services [ie Reading Sight[19]].
>
> The impact of the service was immediate, resulting in over 150 people accessing library services, many of whom had never used libraries before and the setting up of new groups to combat social isolation [...]

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[16] Source: CILIP in Scotland *News*, 30, Oct 2016.
[17] Taken from: http://awards.cosla.gov.uk/2014/07/shortlist-for-2010-awards-announced/.
[18] *Success in sight? Scottish Vision Strategy Interim Review 2012*. RNIB Scotland, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (1440 kb) from: http://www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/success_in_sight_scot.pdf.
[19] See: http://readingsight.org.uk.

The service was co-designed and developed in consultation with visually impaired people. Library staff and volunteers support them to make the most of resources such as iPads and tablets to access information for themselves.

Partners of the project include RNIB Scotland, Edinburgh Macular Degeneration Society and Guide Dogs for the Blind."[20]

Last year, the VIP service won the International Jodi Award[21] for best use of technology to widen access to information, learning, collections and creativity for disabled people in museums, libraries, archives and heritage.

Abbreviations and acronyms

COSLA = Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
DCMS = Department for Culture, Media and Sport
LCLA = the CILIP Libraries Change Lives Award
LGBTQ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, questioning/queer

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[20] Taken from Edinburgh press release.
[21] See: http://jodiawards.org.uk/.