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

Number 243, May 2021

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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 …?

Information Professional

The Apr/May 2021 issue includes:

- "Race report condemned for failing to reflect reality of racial inequality in Britain" (news story), which reports the release of the CILIP/CILIP BAME Network joint statement[1] on the Sewell Report [p12]

- Ayub Khan, Eman Bushulaibi, Victoria Varley and John Vincent "International relations: cultural diplomacy at its best", which highlights the "Working Internationally for Libraries Conference" on 25 June [pp26-29]

- Bridget McKenzie, interviewed by Rob Green "The intersection between culture, community and the environment", which looks at the work of the Climate Museum[2], sets out why libraries are important in the response to climate change; and begins to set out some actions we can take to minimise our impact [pp35-37]

- Jay Sullivan, interviewed by Toni Velikova "Living stealth: a description for transgender people who, after beginning their transition, do not readily tell others about their transgender history", a focus on the CILIP LGBTQ+ Network [pp38-40]

- Barry Houlihan, interviewed by Rob Green "Survivor stories: preserving the past for future generations", which outlines the involvement of the Archivist at the Hardiman Library (National University of Ireland, Galway) in the work to preserve the stories of those affected by the Tuam Mother and Baby Home scandal[3] [pp46-48]

Museums Journal

The May/June 2021 issue has a lot of interesting articles, including:

- "Sector can help tackle isolation" (Editorial), in which Simon Stephens outlines some of the ways the sector is helping to tackle loneliness and urges museums to continue to bring people together [p3]

- Geraldine Kendall Adams "Pushing for change", which assesses how far the sector is making headway in tackling racism and boosting diversity. It summarises initiatives by some museums, and features comments from Arike Oke (Director, Black Cultural Archives) and Errol Francis (Director, Culture&) [pp4-5]

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[1] See: https://www.cilip.org.uk/news/news.asp?id=559636.
[2] See: https://climatemuseumuk.org/.
[3] See, for example: http://www.nuigalway.ie/tuam-oral-history/#.

- Simon Stephens "High street hopes", which looks at examples of where museums are setting up in high streets that have been abandoned by retail[4] [pp6-7]

- Geraldine Kendall Adams <u>and</u> Francesca Lister-Fell "Restitution gathers pace", which looks at recent developments, and outlines what a number of museums that hold Benin bronzes are doing/aiming to do [pp8-9]

- "People" column – interview with Zandra Yeaman, "the curator of discomfort at the Hunterian", which looks at how her work aims to challenge and support people to come to grips with White supremacy, for example[5] [p11]

- Emily Miller "We need a space where people can reflect and share experiences"[6], which outlines the Migration Museum's work in its new shopping-centre setting[7] [p13]

- David Anderson "The sector is no longer unified on the subject of the British empire" ("Comment" column), which asks a fundamental question:

  > "As institutions of public memory, are we willing to publicly acknowledge the historical crimes committed by the British empire, from which our nations' economies still benefit? […] If not, the growing tensions between the government-compliant museums in England, and museums across the four nations […] that strongly reject their position, may become a permanent schism." [p15]

- Maggie Gray "Where are all the women?", which looks at work to address the gender imbalance in collections [pp16-21]

- Holly Hotchner "Building our rightful place in history", which looks at the work of the National Women's History Museum[8] to ensure that women's history is clearly told [p23]

- Caroline Gausden "Sisterhood stories", which looks at some of the work of the Glasgow Women's Library [pp24-25]

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[4] You may also be interested in the short DCMS blogpost, "Libraries and high streets", DCMS, 20 May 2021, https://dcmslibraries.blog.gov.uk/2021/05/20/libraries-and-high-streets/.

[5] Zandra Yeaman is on secondment from the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights: "CRER is a Scottish strategic racial equality charity, based in Glasgow. We are focused on working to eliminate racial discrimination and harassment and promote racial justice across Scotland. Over the years CRER has had a key role in advocating, campaigning, and influencing developments to promote racial equality." [Taken from: https://www.crer.scot/].

[6] The article is available at: https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/opinion/2021/05/we-need-a-space-where-people-can-reflect-and-share-experiences/?utm_campaign=1954626_14062021&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Museums%20Association&dm_i=2VBX,15W76,27LU0M,4HN5V,1.

[7] See: https://www.migrationmuseum.org/.

[8] See: https://www.womenshistory.org/.

- Geraldine Kendall Adams "Telling a shared history", which looks at work by Northern Ireland's museums to tell history from both sides [pp26-29]

- James Steward "A brush with fame" ("Reviews"), which looks at the impact of @background_bob's exhibition[9] [pp46-47, 49]

Books for Keeps

The May 2021 issue[10] includes:

- "Ten of the best books for young environmental activists" [pp10-11]

- Karen Sands-O'Connor and Darren Chetty "Powerful Politics: the right to speak up in British children's books" (the latest in their "Beyond the secret garden" series) [pp14-15]

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

A practical guide for local authority implementation of the Socio-Economic Duty in England

> "This guide is intended for local and combined authority officers, local councillors and metro mayors in England interested in tackling socio-economic disadvantage. It has been developed by a number of organisations leading on efforts to address socio-economic disadvantage locally and nationally […]" [p1]

As the guide[11] says in its introduction:

> "The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the consequences of socioeconomic inequalities into sharp focus, highlighted the intersecting nature of inequalities, and the way socio-economic disadvantage compounds inequalities across gender, ethnicity, disability, and sexuality." [p3]

The Duty is not in force in England, but some English local authorities have adopted it or are taking steps to tackle socio-economic disadvantage.

The Guide outlines what adoption of the Duty should mean, including:

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[9] See: https://firstsite.uk/event/background_bob-and-his-amazing-friends/ and https://colchesteripswichcharity.org.uk/supporters-events/backgroundbob/.

[10] *Books for Keeps,* 248, May 2021, http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/248.

[11] *A practical guide for local authority implementation of the Socio-Economic Duty in England.* Just Fair, 2021, https://justfair.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Socio-Economic-Duty-Guide-Final.pdf.

- Meaningful impact assessments to understand the consequences of socio-economic disadvantage:

  "Adoption of the duty should involve formally incorporating poverty and socio-economic disadvantage, alongside the existing nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010, in equality impact assessments, equality plans, and the broader decision-making process and strategies." [p5]

- Using data effectively as a tool for decision-making and accountability

- Encouraging strong and visible leadership

  "A commitment to tackling socio-economic disadvantage should survive changes in political administration, council leadership, corporate strategy, and national policy agendas. This should be achieved through a cultural shift that embeds the priority to tackle socio-economic disadvantage within all levels of decision-making in the local authority." [p6]

- Principles of working in partnership with people with lived experience of socio-economic disadvantage, eg:

  "Recognise that knowledge about how best to tackle poverty and inequality by enacting the socio-economic duty is held by those in communities who have lived experience of socioeconomic disadvantage." [p7]

- Engaging with residents, civil society, and voluntary and community sector organisations

- Ensuring access to justice and monitoring impact and compliance:

  "Collecting evidence about the impact of implementing the duty is important. It can help to build an evidence base about the duty and identify what works when it comes to tackling unequal outcomes that are caused by socio-economic disadvantage." [p9]

Finally, the Guide lists the advantages to local authorities:

"Adoption of the duty by local authorities can deliver a number of benefits, including:

- Improving outcomes for local people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.
- Supporting cross organisational and cross departmental working.
- Raising awareness of socio-economic inequalities within organisations and among partners.
- Ensuring widespread organisational commitment to, and consideration of, socio-economic inequalities.

- Supporting the participation of low-income residents in decisions that affect them, especially in the context of (proposed) cuts to services.
- Achieving greater consistency in practice – and an increased likelihood of maintaining such consistent practice across political administrations and between changes of individual leadership and turnover of staff.
- Improving systematic approaches to equality impact assessments and assessment of policy and practice more broadly.
- Strengthening systematic data gathering and analysis, especially in the conduct of equality impact assessments, thereby strengthening accountability.
- Supporting the effective and efficient allocation of resources." [p10]

Useful basic guide to taking forward this 'missing' Duty.[12]

Health & Wellbeing issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

Heritage, health and wellbeing: a Heritage Alliance report

This report[13] was published in Sept 2020, but I had not seen anything about it until Nicky Boyd's email.

> "This report aims to demonstrate the immense potential of our sector to make a positive impact on mental health and the pleasure of being together in places that encourage thought and reflection and activity and friendship." [p1]

The report is divided into three sections:

1. "A brief overview of the intersection between heritage and wellbeing and the work that has been completed to date, and a summary of our findings.
2. A set of case studies to illustrate the huge amount of work taking place that promotes wellbeing across the heritage sector.
3. A series of recommendations for the heritage sector, the health and care sector, and government to properly celebrate and embrace the role heritage can play in boosting wellbeing." [p4]

The first section includes a look at what wellbeing means and an outline of the policy context, stressing the importance of wellbeing. It then looks at some broad examples of the ways that heritage supports wellbeing, and outlines their findings – these include:

[12] Source: Just Fair *Newsletter*, Jun 2021.

[13] *Heritage, health and wellbeing: a Heritage Alliance report*. Heritage Alliance, 2020, https://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Heritage-Alliance-AnnualReport_2020_Online.pdf.

- "Heritage organisations are already supporting the nation's physical and mental wellbeing through a huge number of projects and schemes." [p12]

- "For many, this is not an explicit goal - but the benefits are still there. Work carried out by heritage organisations is not always done so with wellbeing in mind, but the positive impact is still apparent. For example, many historic houses across the country host parkruns, weekly 5km running events that are free to enter and run by volunteers." [p12]

- "Heritage is unique in providing a sense of community cohesion, an opportunity for reflection, and an understanding of place." [p12]

- "The wellbeing benefits of heritage are amplified if participants are allowed the autonomy to guide their own learning." [p12]

- "Heritage helps individuals who would otherwise be at risk of exclusion from mainstream society by teaching them new skills. These skills stay with participants long into the future." [p12]

- "A focus on wellbeing can also improve the sustainability of heritage organisations." [p12]

- "Wellbeing should be at the heart of the strategy of heritage organisations as we rebuild the sector after COVID-19." [p13]

The second section contains the case studies – the majority also shows how it contributes to the Five Ways to Wellbeing[14]. (These are: Connect; Be active; Take notice; Keep learning; Give.)

The final section includes challenges and recommendations. The challenges include:

- Inclusivity and access
- Research challenges in the cultural sector
- Capacity
- COVID-19.

The recommendations include:

- For the heritage sector

  - Embed wellbeing into your organisation.
  - Build in evaluation from the start
  - Understand the power of partnerships
  - Work with the local community
  - Engage with the intended audience from the outset to shape the project

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[14] There is more info about the Five Ways to Wellbeing at, for example, https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/.

- Accessibility is paramount
- Ensure that your project is sustainable
- Build a compelling narrative
- Share existing expertise through training

- For social prescribing services

  - Recognise heritage's positive contribution to wellbeing
  - Build sustainable partnerships

- For health and social care commissioners

  - Integrate heritage approaches into strategy
  - Incorporate heritage approaches into training for healthcare professionals
  - Support heritage organisations to obtain the evaluation data you need

- For the UK Government

  - Prioritise wellbeing as a policy outcome
  - Promote the power of heritage in policy making
  - Ensure the right tools are in place for effective delivery

- Wider policy considerations

  - Heritage should be considered in the planning system
  - Heritage should be central to our post-COVID renewal.

This is a valuable report – recommended.[15]

Health & Wellbeing issues – Other Agencies

Build Back Fairer in Greater Manchester: health equity and dignified lives

This new report[16] makes recommendations for Greater Manchester – but they are also highly relevant to the rest of England.

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[15] Source: email from Nicky Boyd to gem@jiscmail.ac.uk, 7 Jun 2021.

[16] Michael Marmot *et al. Build Back Fairer in Greater Manchester: health equity and dignified lives.* UCL Institute of Health Equity, 2021.
Briefing note: https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/build-back-fairer-in-greater-manchester-health-equity-and-dignified-lives-briefing-note/build-back-fairer-in-greater-manchester-briefing-note.pdf
Executive summary: https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/build-back-fairer-in-greater-manchester-health-equity-and-dignified-lives/build-back-fairer-in-greater-manchester-executive-summary.pdf

It builds on last year's Review[17],[18] which looked at how to 'Build Back Fairer', applying the principles to Greater Manchester but also showing their significance UK-wide.

The recommendations are important; they are grouped under six headings, as follows.

1. **"Build Back Fairer for future generations**

   Prioritise children and young people

   - Provide further support for early years settings in more deprived areas, including additional support for parents
   - Extend interventions to support young people's mental health and wellbeing at school and at work
   - Ambition for all young people, 18–25 years old, to be offered in-work training, employment or post-18 education
   - All policies assessed to consider impacts on health equity for future generations
   - Implement all recommendations and commitments in Greater Manchester's Young Person's Guarantee

2. **Build Back Fairer resources**

   Rebalance spending towards prevention

   - Share expertise and evidence of prevention interventions across local authorities and public services, and continue to build capacity and partnerships
   - Double the budget for prevention in the total health care budget in Greater Manchester within five years and a system-wide prevention/health spending target for all of Greater Manchester to be developed by end of 2021, with incremental targeted increases over five years
   - Advocate for real terms percentage increase in the regional budget for public health

   Build Back Fairer opportunities for all

Full report: https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/build-back-fairer-in-greater-manchester-health-equity-and-dignified-lives/build-back-fairer-in-greater-manchester-main-report.pdf.

[17] Michael Marmot, Jessica Allen, Peter Goldblatt, Eleanor Herd and Joana Morrison. *Build back fairer: the COVID-19 Marmot Review – the pandemic, socioeconomic and health inequalities in England.* UCL Institute of Health Equity, 2020. Available to download – summary, https://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Build-back-fairer--Exec-summary.pdf; full report, https://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/upload/publications/2020/Build-back-fairer-the-COVID-19-Marmot-review.pdf.

[18] Assessed in *The Network Newsletter*, 239, Jan 2021, https://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Newsletter-NS-239.pdf, pp6-9.

- Ensure proportionate universal funding – increase funding in more deprived communities and particular areas of public services
- Advocate for increases in local government funding and public service allocations and other regional shares of national budgets
- Establish a Build Back Fairer Investment Fund in Greater Manchester to include contributions from businesses that support the Build Back Fairer agenda
- Increase funding and support for training and apprenticeships in more deprived communities
- Request that businesses invest in a regional Build Back Fairer Investment Fund or equivalent through social value approaches and corporate social responsibility

Build Back Fairer commissioning

- Extend social value commissioning to all public sector contracts and to businesses in Greater Manchester to enhance business contributions to Building Back Fairer

3. **Build Back Fairer standards**

Standards for healthy living

- Identify the minimum income for healthy living in Greater Manchester and advocate for national resources to meet this in public sector pay and support business to pay the minimum income for healthy living
- Guarantee offer of universal access to quality services including existing public services and public health services and universal access to training, support and employment for young people
- Develop Greater Manchester minimum standards for quality of employment, environment and housing, and transport and clean air and advocate for enforcement powers and resources

4. **Build Back Fairer institutions**

Extend anchor institution approaches

- Implement Greater Manchester's social value framework and extend anchor institutions approaches to VCSE sector and businesses
- Extend the remit of anchor institutions to incorporate social value procurement and commissioning and contributions to the Build Back Fairer Investment Fund Scale up social value contracting and extend business role
- Health and social care act as leaders in social value commissioning and work in partnership across local authorities to develop local supply chain across Greater Manchester
- Embed widescale social value requirements in the Local Industrial Strategy and Good Employment Charter

- Add provision of apprenticeships for all ages to the social value framework
- Link Innovation Greater Manchester with social value framework

5. Build Back Fairer monitoring and accountability

<u>Develop Build Back Fairer equity targets for Greater Manchester</u>

- Based on the Marmot Beacon Indicators develop publicly accessible targets to monitor progress towards Building Back Fairer
- Report bi-annually on Marmot Beacon Indicators related to targets
- Invest in routine data collection to support monitoring of reductions in inequalities in wellbeing, opportunity and community cohesion within local authorities

6. Build Back Fairer through greater local power and control

<u>Build Back Fairer devolution</u>

- Advocate for increased local control of employment services, post-16 skills, labour market, social housing and early years policies and services
- Build on success of devolved services and advocate for further powers and resources to deliver local health and wellbeing needs
- Further involve communities in the design and delivery of interventions to support their health and wellbeing
- Enhance public visibility of the Build Back Fairer approach in Greater Manchester including explicit commitments and offers to the public
- Develop publicly accessible data on equity in health, wellbeing and the social determinants of health" [Briefing note, pp6-7]

The report also makes recommendations about:

- Reducing inequalities in vaccine uptake and in infection and mortality rates

- Communities and place (eg "Advocate for a greater share of resources for regions and local authorities hit particularly hard by COVID-19 and containment measures, and based on remedying shortfalls in funding from the last 10 years. [Briefing note, p8])

- Housing, transport and environment

- Early Years, children and young people (eg "Increase the provision of local youth services for young people, advocating for national resources" [Briefing note, p9])

- Income, poverty and debt

- Work and unemployment

- Public health (eg "Continue and expand existing programmes which focus on preventing mental health problems, and strengthen monitoring and evaluation for equity" [Briefing note, p11])

These recommendations clearly have UK-wide significance: as Michael Marmot said in the press release to launch the report:

"[…] if the government is serious about levelling up health inequities, equity of health and wellbeing must be at the heart of government and business strategy rather narrow economic goals […]"[19]

Recommended.[20]

Abbreviations and acronyms

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
DCMS = Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
UCL = University College London

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[19] Taken from Press release, 30 Jun 2021, https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/file-manager/PDFs/pr-marmot-framework-final-30-june.pdf.
[20] Source: *The Conversation*, 2 Jul 2021.