

# 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 ...?

### **Information Professional**

Apologies, I have got a bit behind with these ...

The Apr/May issue includes the following items of interest:

- “Books in food banks” [news story] which reports that:

“Food banks and community groups have been supplied with 40,000 books in the first stage of a £5m book gifting scheme in Wales.

The books were provided as part of the Welsh Government’s book-gifting scheme, which is being delivered by the Books Council of Wales [...]” [p10]
- “Food for thought in the library” [news feature] which looks at Kent Libraries’ positive involvement with the Holiday Activities and Food Programme in the Thanet area of the county [p14]
- Nick Poole “CILIP, social justice and equity”, which looks at how CILIP is putting these issues at its core via the new “We Are CILIP” strategy [pp16-17]
- Yvonne Morris “New Changing Lives Action Plan and Hub” – accompanying Nick’s article is this summary by Yvonne of CILIP’s changing approach towards equality, diversity and inclusion (including a handy timeline of developments) [p17]
- Regina Everitt and Jess Crilly “Decolonising the curriculum: making space for new narratives”, which summarises some of the current work around decolonising and introduces the new book they have edited<sup>1</sup> [pp20-23]
- Rob Green interviews Sayf Al Ashqar (Director of the Central Library at the University of Mosul) about what happened when Mosul was taken over by ISIS [pp25-27]
- Rob Mackinlay “Do you need some totipotency?”, which looks at the community engagement project, “65 High Street”, in Nailsea<sup>2</sup> [pp29-32]
- Jay Sullivan “CILIP LGBTQ+ Network Committee – opportunities to get involved!” (“Insight” column), which outlines the work and achievements of the Committee and invites people to apply for a number of roles [p40]

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<sup>1</sup> Jess Crilly and Regina Everitt (eds) *Narrative expansions: interpreting decolonisation in academic libraries*. Facet Publishing, 2021. Further info at: <https://www.facetpublishing.co.uk/page/detail/narrative-expansions/?K=9781783304974>.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example: <https://www.nailseatown.com/65-high-street/>.

- Hannah Ishmael “Black Cultural Archives: a ‘ruby’ in Brixton”, which outlines the history of the BCA and its current focus<sup>3</sup> [pp41-43]
- Martyn Wade “CILIP – standing up for intellectual freedom”, which introduces the current consultation around intellectual freedom (and stresses why this is such a key issue at the moment)<sup>4</sup> [pp44-46]
- Catherine McClaren and Morag Clarkson “Amplifying voices” (“Insight” column), which outlines recent developments by the CILIP Disability Network<sup>5</sup> [p47]
- Nick Cavender “Celebrating equality, diversity and inclusion in the school library” (“Insight” column), which looks at the CILIP School Libraries Group and how schools can practically implement a diversity strategy, for example by recognising that “Some diversities are hidden; many students with dyslexia or ADHD are undiagnosed, and we probably do not know how many students identify as LGBTQ+ [...]” [p51]

The June issue includes:

- “Book banning battle heats up” (news article) which outlines some of the recent developments particularly in the US and particularly against LGBTQ+ books and provision [p12]
- There is a number of articles about sustainability and the launch of the Green Libraries Partnership:
  - Kate Robinson “Sustainability at the CILIP Cymru Wales Conference” (“Insight: President’s View” column) [p15]
  - Rob Green “*We are CILIP* – supporting sustainable choices”, which introduces the Green Libraries Partnership as part of the new CILIP strategy<sup>6</sup> [pp16-17]
  - Rob Mackinlay interviews Emma Noyce “Are we too lazy to save ourselves?”, which looks at how libraries can help tackle the climate emergency (and also highlights Emma’s session at the CILIP Conference) [pp22-25]
  - Rob Green interviews Diana Edmonds “Taking steps to a sustainable model”, which looks at what GLL have been developing [pp39-41]

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<sup>3</sup> See: <https://blackculturalarchives.org/>.

<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/intellectualfreedom>.

<sup>5</sup> See:

[https://www.cilip.org.uk/members/group\\_content\\_view.asp?group=237768&id=950584](https://www.cilip.org.uk/members/group_content_view.asp?group=237768&id=950584).

<sup>6</sup> See:

<https://www.cilip.org.uk/news/news.asp?id=593630&hhSearchTerms=%22green+and+libraries%22> and

<https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/AboutGreenLibraries?&hhsearchterms=%22green+and+libraries+and+partnership%22>.

- Caroline Roche “Defending the rights of LGBTQ+ students” (“Insight” column), which looks at the key and important role that school libraries have in this increasingly-contested area of work [p51]

### ***Museums Journal***

The May/Jun issue includes:

- Simon Stephens “All victims of war need our support”, which summarises initiatives to support Ukraine, but also reminds us that:
 

“All of this support for Ukrainian refugees, museum staff and cultural heritage is fantastic to see, but we should not forget the plight of arts workers in other areas of the world that have been hit by conflict. How are those in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Yemen being supported? War devastates lives and destroys cultural heritage, and people deserve our support wherever they are in the world.” [p3]
- Geraldine Kendall Adams “Capital offence”, which looks more deeply into the relationship between education, exam grades and museums [pp4-5]
- Simon Stephens “No time to waste”, which introduces the MA’s climate emergency campaign<sup>7</sup> [pp6-7]
- Victoria Ryves “History can connect isolated people and make them feel good about themselves” (“Comment” column), which looks briefly at museums, wellbeing and community engagement [p12]

The Jul/Aug issue includes:

- Geraldine Kendall Adams “Feeling the pinch”, which looks at some of the ways that museums and galleries are dealing with the impact of rising costs [pp7-8]
- Carolyn Baguma “Working life”, which looks at her involvement as Senior Community Manager with “The World Reimagined”<sup>8</sup> [p10]
- Louisa Dawes and Carl Emery “Policy and practice must be based on responses to poverty that empower” (“Comment” column), which looks at what museums could do differently to help tackle poverty [p12]
- Serena Iervolino and Domenico Sergi “Museums are failing to address of [sic] working class experiences”, which highlights the lack of focus on working class experience in museums and reports briefly on the project

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<sup>7</sup> See: “Museums for Climate Justice”, <https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/museums-for-climate-justice/>.

<sup>8</sup> See: <https://www.theworldreimagined.org/>.

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

### “Mental health and loneliness: the relationship across life stages”

Published in June:

“This report [<sup>10</sup>] presents the findings from a qualitative study exploring the experiences of loneliness among those who had experienced a mental health condition. Previous research has shown there is a link between experiences of loneliness and poor mental health. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) commissioned this study to explore this issue across four key life stages as part of developing the evidence base for work on tackling loneliness.”

The report is divided into the following sections:

- “Chapter 2 describes the participants across the four key life stages including their experiences with mental health and how it affected their lives.
- Chapter 3 presents the main findings on how participants felt that loneliness and mental health interact.
- Chapter 4 presents findings related to how participants felt that the social stigma associated with mental health and loneliness impacts on their experiences of loneliness and affects their ability to get support.
- Chapter 5 explores how key life events affect experiences of loneliness and mental health across life stages.
- Chapter 6 explores the support and interventions participants accessed and provides recommendations on how these could be improved.”

This is a valuable summary of the current position, in terms of outlining those people who are particularly affected by loneliness and its connections to mental health – these are very useful for us to think about when working in public spaces.

In relation to those most affected:

- “Young people between 16-34 were found to be particularly at risk, with research showing they were at five times greater risk of chronic

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<sup>9</sup> See: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/opinion/2022/07/museums-are-failing-to-address-working-class-experiences/>.

<sup>10</sup> “Mental health and loneliness: the relationship across life stages”. DCMS, 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-loneliness-the-relationship-across-life-stages/mental-health-and-loneliness-the-relationship-across-life-stages#contents>.

loneliness than those aged 65 or older. Drivers of loneliness in young people were identified as negative social experiences, such as bullying from peers and siblings and arguments with parents.

- People with a disability or long standing health condition were 2.9 times more likely to experience chronic loneliness, and were less likely to move out of loneliness than those without a disability.
- Those in the LGBTQ community were also disproportionately affected, with people who identified as gay or lesbian 1.4 times more likely to be lonely, and people who identified as bisexual 2.5 times more likely to be lonely.
- Those in the lowest income quintile were 50 per cent more likely to experience chronic loneliness when compared with the wealthiest quintile.”<sup>11</sup>

Recommended.<sup>12</sup>

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## Health & Wellbeing issues – Other Agencies

### ***The power of potential: supporting the future of 'NEET' young people in the labour market***

This important new report<sup>13</sup> has just been produced by the Learning and Work Institute and Prince’s Trust (supported by HSBC UK).

It looks at the impact that Covid has had, particularly economically and on young people, and highlights a new worrying trend:

“The UK faces a recruitment crisis, with employers struggling to hire the staff they need for vital jobs. Despite record levels of job vacancies, employment rates are lower than pre-pandemic and levels of economic inactivity (people not involved in the labour market) have risen.

Although the UK’s NEET (not in education, employment or training) rate has recovered from its post-pandemic peak, the number of NEET young people who are economically inactive (not looking for work) continues to rise despite the job vacancies. This means that there is a growing, potentially untapped, resource of young people who risk being locked out of opportunities with long-term costs for them and the country.

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<sup>11</sup> “New Government research identifies clear links between loneliness and mental health distress” [Press Release], 12 Jun 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-government-research-identifies-clear-links-between-loneliness-and-mental-health-distress>.

<sup>12</sup> Source: NCVO *Government policy and funding news*, 16 Jun 2022.

<sup>13</sup> *The power of potential: supporting the future of 'NEET' young people in the labour market.* , [https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-policies-reports/the-power-of-potential-supporting-the-future-of-young-people?utm\\_source=Twitter&utm\\_medium=Social+Media&utm\\_campaign=Power+of+p+otential](https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-policies-reports/the-power-of-potential-supporting-the-future-of-young-people?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=Social+Media&utm_campaign=Power+of+p+otential).

This report investigates the characteristics, circumstances and challenges faced by young people who are NEET – both those who are economically inactive and those who are seeking employment, but have been unable to secure jobs. It is based on secondary data analysis of labour market data, a poll of 200 NEET young people and two youth voice activities.” [p6]

Its key findings include:

“New analysis of latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) data from 2021 shows **a quarter (25 per cent) of young people who are NEET experience some form of mental health problem, compared with 9 per cent of those in employment.** A wider analysis of Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) data suggests this figure is growing and could be higher. Since 2011 the number of NEET young people reporting a mental health problem has increased from one in ten (11 per cent) to **almost a third (30 per cent) in 2022.** This is significantly more than young people who are in education, employment or training (2 per cent in 2011 and 10 per cent in 2022).

The report also asks NEET young people why they are struggling to secure a job or not looking for work, with the most common response being due to a mental health problem or disability (39 per cent).

The polling also suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic may have exacerbated these issues, with **almost half (46 per cent) of young people stating they had additional mental and physical health issues or caring responsibilities due to the pandemic** which meant they were out of work.

In addition to mental health, a quarter (25 per cent) of young people polled said that applying for lots of jobs without success was stopping them from securing work, and **over a fifth (23 per cent) said low confidence was a key factor.** Almost one in five (18 per cent) said they struggle with the job application or interview process.

Latest Annual Population Survey (APS) data shows that the number of unemployed young people combined with inactive young people who would like to work, reveals **almost half a million (484,000) NEET young people who are able to and want to work.**” [taken from web summary<sup>14</sup>, emphases theirs]

The report draws a series of “implications” for providers of support services for young people who are NEET, and for employers, including:

- The importance of tailored support to meet individual needs of NEET young people

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<sup>14</sup> See: [https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-policies-reports/the-power-of-potential-supporting-the-future-of-young-people?utm\\_source=Twitter&utm\\_medium=Social+Media&utm\\_campaign=Power+of+p+otential](https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-policies-reports/the-power-of-potential-supporting-the-future-of-young-people?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=Social+Media&utm_campaign=Power+of+p+otential).



- Integrating employment and mental health and wellbeing support
- “With confidence building being the third most common reason why it was difficult for NEET young people to gain employment, confidence building has to be a feature of support for young people who need it, especially in certain parts of the UK such as the Midlands and Wales where this was a particularly prevalent barrier.” [pp52-53]
- “Caring responsibilities: Young women are substantially more likely than young men to be economically inactive due to family responsibilities. It is therefore important that providers offer their services flexibly, provide advice and support around childcare, and can work with employers to create flexible work placements and jobs.” [p53]
- The importance of work experience and qualifications and training support
- Location of work/support with travel costs
- “Employer engagement: This research shows that the key considerations for young people who are NEET, when looking for employment, are flexibility in hours, location and pay level. Providers should support local employers to create viable opportunities (work placements, jobs and apprenticeships) for young people that meet their skills needs.” [p53]
- In-work mental health support
- “Feedback: Many young people report applying for jobs, but being unsuccessful, and often not hearing back from employers. Employers should provide feedback from interviews and work with providers to meet identified skills needs.” [p53]
- “Employers should look to provide flexible work, in terms of hours and location and at a suitable level of pay, in order to attract and recruit NEET young people into their workforce.” [p54]

Very useful update in the light of the effects of the pandemic.<sup>15</sup>

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## **LGBTQ+ issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations**

### **Banning of LGBTQ+ books and other library materials [continued]**

As noted in the previous issue, this is getting more dangerous.

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<sup>15</sup> Source: Children & Young People Now *Early Years and Education Bulletin*, 19 Jul 2022.



“Drag queen Aida H Dee has been left fearing for her life after a right-wing mob stormed a recent Drag Queen Story Hour UK event.

Alarming video footage seen by *PinkNews* shows 25 protesters storming Reading Central Library on Monday morning (25 July) and hurling homophobic slurs at Dee, a 27-year-old author known off-stage as Sab Samuel, as well as parents, guardians and children.”<sup>16</sup>

CILIP have issued a statement<sup>17</sup> in support of Reading Libraries:

“CILIP would like to express our solidarity for the staff, children, parents and performers at the Drag Queen Story Hour at Reading Central Library yesterday and condemn the actions of the group of extremists who interrupted the event.

Physical and verbal abuse is never appropriate and is particularly distasteful at an event for children and young people. Library staff have the right to feel safe in their place of work and all users of these public spaces have the right to access them without fear of abuse.

Libraries exist to support every member of their community and to encourage people to learn about the world around them in a respectful way. Drag Queen story hour has a demonstrably positive effect on children’s reading and engagement and is a valuable way of teaching literacy skills.”

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

### “Report: ‘Oklahoma Threatens Librarians: “Don’t Use the Word Abortion”””

A recent issue of *Library Journal* carried the following news item<sup>18</sup>:

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<sup>16</sup> Josh Milton “Right-wing mob harass drag queen Aida H Dee with ‘paedophile’ chants at kids’ story event”, *PinkNews*, 26 Jul 2022, <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2022/07/26/drag-queen-story-hour-aida-h-dee-reading-protest-sovereign-citizens/>.

<sup>17</sup> “CILIP statement on Reading Central Library Drag Queen Story Hour”, 26 Jul 2022, [https://www.cilip.org.uk/news/612327/CILIP-statement-on-Reading-Central-Library-Drag-Queen-Story-Hour.htm?utm\\_campaign=386274\\_Fortnightly%20email%2027%20July%20%202022%20-%20MEMBER&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=The%20Chartered%20Institute%20of%20Library%20and%20%20Information%20Professionals&dm\\_i=6WFS,8A1U,9VBO9\\_ZBUN,1](https://www.cilip.org.uk/news/612327/CILIP-statement-on-Reading-Central-Library-Drag-Queen-Story-Hour.htm?utm_campaign=386274_Fortnightly%20email%2027%20July%20%202022%20-%20MEMBER&utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20Chartered%20Institute%20of%20Library%20and%20%20Information%20Professionals&dm_i=6WFS,8A1U,9VBO9_ZBUN,1).

<sup>18</sup> Gary Price “Report: ‘Oklahoma Threatens Librarians: “Don’t Use the Word Abortion”””, *Library Journal*, 21 Jul 2022, [https://www.infodocket.com/2022/07/21/report-oklahoma-threatens-librarians-dont-use-the-word-abortion/?utm\\_medium=email&hsmi=220874131&hsenc=p2ANqtz--](https://www.infodocket.com/2022/07/21/report-oklahoma-threatens-librarians-dont-use-the-word-abortion/?utm_medium=email&hsmi=220874131&hsenc=p2ANqtz--)

“Library workers across Oklahoma’s Metropolitan Library System (MLS) were shocked this week after receiving instructions to avoid using the word “abortion” and not to help patrons locate abortion-related information on either library computers or their own devices. Workers were warned that they could be held legally liable and face penalties under the state’s abortion laws.”

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

ADHD = Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

MA = Museums Association

NCVO = National Council for Voluntary Organisations

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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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