

SOCIAL EXCLUSION PAG REPORT

THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

**Report of The Policy Advisory Group on
Social Exclusion**

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SOCIAL EXCLUSION POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Chair's Foreword

This report is indebted to excellent work on social inclusion already done both within and outside the library and information sector, and acknowledges much activity in this area with excellent examples of good practise.

We do, however, also see caution, introspection and widely differing degrees of commitment and achievement in combating social exclusion within the sector.

The report is driven by our belief that librarianship is a profession with social justice values where our skills and resources should be used in the service of social and community development and the empowerment of groups and individuals.

We also advocate needs-based planning and service delivery as the one sure way, if done comprehensively and authentically, of ensuring truly inclusive services.

The report includes no new research as this was outside our remit and resources, and we have concentrated on producing a framework for change rather than describing a more comprehensive set of issues.

We have been keen to stimulate this urgent debate and we look forward to the work of the proposed Policy Implementation Group, with which we would like to stay involved to see what progress is achieved.

The report tries to say something useful to the circumstances of each of the Home Nations. We have opted to put generic issues into the report using a representative range of examples where they were available to us, with further information in the appendices which we hope will be found useful for more detailed exploration of the issues.

We were established as the Social Inclusion PAG but we recommend that we use instead the idea of Social Exclusion because this helps give a more transparent focus on those groups and individuals who feel excluded and with whose needs and aspirations we need to start. We fear that Social Inclusion may become social conditioning/control if driven by a particular moral agenda.

I would like to thank the Members of the PAG and other consultees and particularly Guy Daines who has supported me unflinchingly.

Terry Turner
Chair, Social Exclusion Policy Advisory Group

THE REPORT OF THE SOCIAL EXCLUSION POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

1. Introduction

1.1. The Policy Challenge

Just before its demise the Library and Information Commission published “Libraries: the Essence of Inclusion”ⁱ, which stated, “... libraries and information services already embody the values necessary to contribute to a socially inclusive society”. At a conceptual level this might be true but we question whether it is mirrored in the realities of service provision. Only 30% of the UK population are regular users of public libraries, with a heavy weighting in frequency of visits to those in the top socio-economic groups. Similarly it is only recently that the NHS has prioritised information for patients, and libraries across all sectors have much to do to make widening participation in learning a reality. We still face the legacy of those we have failed in the past – the 20% of adults with literacy problems for instance – and a number we risk failing in the future – children in care for instance. As one respondent to an earlier draft of this report commented: “This is a wake-up call for the profession”.

1.2. Defining Social Exclusion

The PAG recognises conceptual differences between social inclusion, exclusion, cohesion, equal opportunities, neighbourhood renewal and anti-poverty, but takes the view that a Library and Information Sector response to social exclusion should be pragmatic and include them all. Action should be based on an underpinning commitment to social justice, and a practical approach to identifying the causes and facts of exclusion and developing strategies to confront them, dealing with divides in information, learning opportunities, health, economic activity and quality of life.

In tackling this subject we have endeavoured to report in generic terms that will be applicable across the UK. The principles lying behind social inclusion are essentially the same in most of the Home nations – although Northern Ireland diverges most – as, for the moment, the Labour Party either has full power or shares power with another party in each of the other administrations. It is likely that policies and priorities will increasingly diverge and it will become more difficult to generalise across the UK. However, Social Inclusion has been identified as a priority in all the Home nations, and this report aims to make recommendations that will be relevant to the entire United Kingdom.

1.3. Who may be Excluded?

Those suffering from poverty and related deprivation, those disempowered on grounds of social class, race, gender and sexual orientation, disabled people, those discriminated against and marginalised by mainstream society, those deprived of life chances. Often deprivation will be multiple, concentrated in urban neighbourhoods, or scattered in pockets in rural areas.

The involvement of people who experience exclusion must be a key component in any strategy to address that exclusion – if they feel excluded then the nature of their exclusion and ways of overcoming it will need to be explored with them. An analysis of those who don't use the library or information service may reveal other excluded groups. Others will be more hidden and revealed only by research. Some - the most difficult to cater for effectively – may be amongst the most stigmatised in society and will often be viewed with hostility by their local community. These groups will include: refugees, travellers, the homeless, people with mental health issues and ex-offenders. Examples of listings of excluded groups, from public libraries and lifelong learning, are given in Appendix 1.

The Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health, chaired by Sir Donald Achesonⁱⁱ, took a slightly different approach. It looked at all types of determinants of health including socio-economic, age or life cycle related and ethnicity and gender. The Acheson report demonstrated the close relationship between socio-economic classes IV and V and higher morbidity and mortality rates; it recognised the need to alleviate the heavy impact of poverty on a third of children in UK if health inequalities were to be rectified in the future; it identified the isolation and poverty of many women who had extensive caring responsibilities, often without the support of a partner; and it highlighted the fact that a greater proportion of minority ethnic families are living below the official poverty line of half average income than white families – up to 80% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi households compared to just under 30% of white households. Acheson, as other reports, demonstrates the complexity of social exclusion and its Hydra-like invasion across most areas of human life.

1.4. Barriers to Library Use

As well as identifying the individuals and groups that are “excluded”, it is also important to understand the barriers that prevent many from using the library and information services we provide. This is not simply about opening hours or appropriate physical access, but also about culture, the nature of services and the manner in which they are delivered. The barriers also include, for instance, racism, xenophobia, and sexism, as well as lack of access to power and resources. Examples of potential barriers to use are given for two services, public libraries and post-16 learning, in Appendix 1

1.5. The Community Dimension

The PAG held an early workshop on forecasting future community and societal scenarios with a SWOT analysis of Library and Information provision in this context. Two further issues are worth mentioning here. These are spatial marginalisation and individual communication behaviours

Spatial marginalisation

Contrasts between high value property areas and poorer areas are increasing. The former are often characterised by secure residential areas and privatised commercial complexes where a subtle but real separation is communicated. Less affluent areas are run-down with poor service infrastructure. These trends create cocoons or ghettos which work against integration and positive diversity.

The Public Libraries' role as public space in communities, potentially available to all, mostly free at point of use, offers the opportunity for social interaction in a neutral setting, linked through the local authority to political accountability.

Communication behaviours

Projections in the use of mobile communications technology suggest a focus on interaction based more on common interests and less on neighbourhood. Again, such forces work towards a kind of social cohesion, but against diversity. They suggest a role for public agencies like libraries to promote serendipity and integration in the public sphere.

1.6. Role of Library and Information Services

We believe that library and information services in all sectors, but especially publicly funded services, can and should make a real difference for the better to the lives of socially excluded individuals and communities. A few services may already be achieving this but the “Open to All?”ⁱⁱⁱ research has demonstrated that this is far from being the norm in public library services, and there is no evidence to show that things are better in other sectors. If the library and information community is to reach its potential in tackling social exclusion then:

- There needs to be a cultural transformation in institutions providing library and information services so that social inclusion becomes integral to the planning and delivery of their services
- There needs to be a policy development infrastructure to support the cultural transformation required
- Social inclusion needs to be mainstreamed not only at the institutional level but also into national thinking to ensure that the programme is sustainable and inclusive of the whole nation.

The rest of the PAG report explores these three themes in greater depth.

2. Cultural Transformation

Library and Information organisations need to reflect their commitment to providing socially inclusive services by the development of:

- Clear and specific statements of intent
- Appropriate internal capacity to do what is required
- Practical and sustainable developments in the targeting of resources
- Innovative best practice including experimentation and risk-taking
- A skilled and motivated workforce with effective leadership.
- Purposeful, meaningful and equal partnerships with appropriate agencies
- A robust monitoring and evaluation framework

If “Open to All?” has a predominant message it is about the need for cultural transformation and change in policies, practices and service culture.

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Library Services should embrace a number of basic principles in providing their services. These principles include:

2.1. Needs-based decision-making

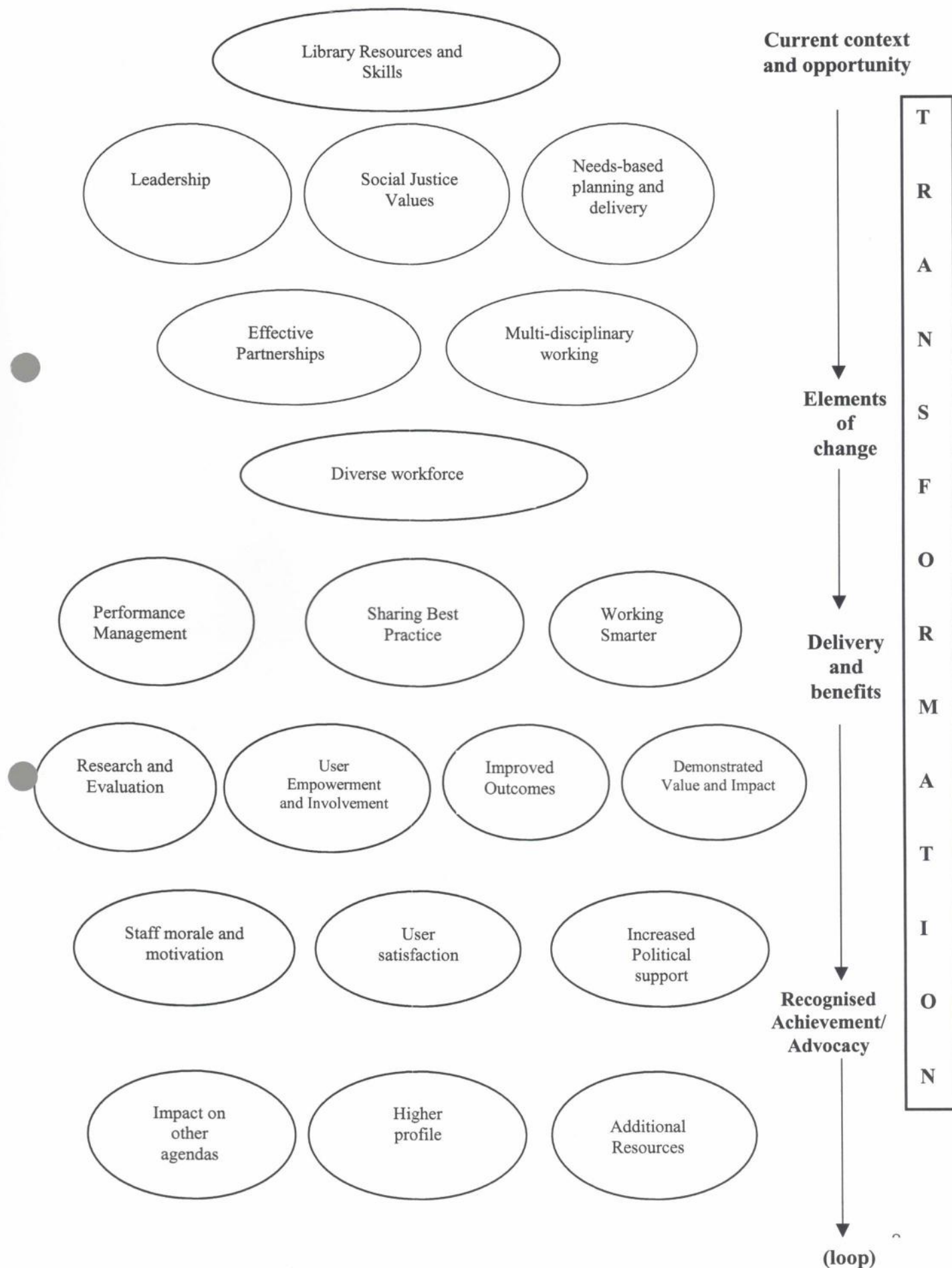
- Planning of services should be based on accurate and thorough assessment of needs through activities such as community profiles, consultation, community development processes and the use of modern management information techniques.
- Decisions about service planning should, through the publication of proposals, transparently reflect such needs-assessments.
- The process of service prioritisation should again be explicit and involve the user community, other stakeholders, elected Members (or others representing the governance of the service if not a local authority) and staff.
- Socially excluded people should be actively engaged in the needs-based decision making process.
- Service standards should express minimum and aspirational levels of provision, tested against specific access (in the widest sense) criteria, and developed in consultation. The ultimate test of their effectiveness is whether each group or individual in a user community accepts that services are available to meet their particular needs in a reasonable way.
- The process by which such standards are developed should be managed so that the user community understands the resource and organisational constraints and choices of the service.
- Service performance should be regularly reported with meaningful data and "plain-English" (translated as necessary) clarity.

2.2. Innovation

Services need to consider, and change as necessary, their existing organisational shape and character to become relevant and useful to a wider range of users and potential users by, for instance

- Working in partnerships and multi-disciplinary teams, both strategic and delivery, to combine resources, share skills, add value and combine professional practices as necessary to achieve 'what works' – such partnerships will include not only other library sectors, museums and archives but a much wider cross-section of agencies including, for instance, health, social services, youth, arts, and community organisations;
- Involve the user community as much as possible (and not just those with whom the service and staff are in a comfortable relationship) in the planning of operational services;

The Transformation Process



- Promote the best involvement of all staff as appropriate; and resources in the community through the use of volunteers to support the growth of local social capital, community empowerment and the democratisation of local services through local involvement. Volunteers are definitely part of the solution in terms of social inclusion, as are strategic partnership arrangements for library services with voluntary sector organisations.

2.3. Staff development

Evidence through activities such as those of the Social Exclusion Action Planning Network suggests that the sector faces a major challenge in raising, in the workforce as a whole, understanding of the issues of social exclusion, and building capacity to provide effective inclusive services.

- All services should through their Service Plans and training programmes specify how social inclusion awareness and skills training will be provided with adequate resources, and staff performance in these areas should be evaluated and developed through appraisal systems.
- This will involve the development of suitable job descriptions and competencies against which staff can be recruited, trained, developed and appraised.
- Library employers, with the Library Association, should review their requirements in these areas and specify necessary changes to qualifications to the ISNTO (and its successor body) and Departments of Information and Library Studies.
- Staff attitudes and behaviour to socially excluded people should be challenged, if necessary, and remedial action taken.

2.4. Leadership

Effective Leadership is a key to organisational transformation. In this context, effective leadership is both the championing of social inclusion by management and politicians, and also the devolved and distributed empowerment of staff. Both elements are necessary for an organisation to be able to mainstream and sustain effective social inclusion strategies.

- Government, Local Authority organisations and political parties need to renew their commitment to social justice and inclusion through actions and the committing of additional resources as well as the redirection of existing resources.
- Social inclusion criteria for leadership competencies should be developed.
- The profession/employers should develop leadership programmes, with social inclusion as a specific element.
- Organisations should develop empowerment strategies so that front-line staff feel able and supported to offer local service improvements to meet local needs.

We recommend that:

- 1) The LA commissions the development of models illustrating needs-based planning, innovation and effective leadership within library and information services across a variety of organisations and contexts;
- 2) The LA works with other bodies – ISNTO (and its successor), Healthworks, DILS, and SEAPN amongst others – to develop a skills programme relevant to the social inclusion agenda

3. The Policy Context

3.1. National

Whilst social inclusion is a key issue for all the home nations, each has developed different policy documents that reflect differing structures, organisations and circumstances. The key documents that have been published by the home country administrations are listed (together with URLs) in the Libraries and Inclusion web site developed by the Community Services Group. These are instructive, indicating the differing approaches as well as the many common elements in policy and practice.

One of the common developments has been the development of area-based social inclusion policies – for example the Action Zones in England and Wales, and Social Inclusion Partnerships in Scotland. This has contributed to the development of an increasing number of mandatory plans, and many authorities are – not surprisingly – arguing that this burden should be reduced.

There are a number of positive features in area-based social inclusion policies. These might be summarised as:

- The high political priority and profile given to the issue;
- The substantial investment of public money directed at tackling social exclusion; the accent on partnership and multi-agency working as the best way to tackle social exclusion;
- The greater emphasis put on involving the deprived communities themselves in regeneration activities.

However the pitfalls are now also obvious and The Library Association needs to be aware of them in its dealings with Government.

- Plethora of initiatives – There are simply too many schemes, sponsored by a wide range of Government Departments, that lack coordination and cause confusion
- Challenge Funding – Much of the funding is short-term in nature and because it is “challenge” funding may reward the most skilful in putting together bids rather than address problems in the most needy areas

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- Limitations of area-based initiatives – Until recently area-based meant urban-based and therefore was of little relevance to rural communities. It also risks excluding groups where locality is not of such great significance – for instance, disabled people, travellers, or ex-offenders - as well as those who happen to be poor in a prosperous area or live outside the main settlement areas of their minority cultural group.
- Limitation of poverty-based initiatives – These do not necessarily help those who are not poor but who are socially excluded due to race, sexuality and other forms of prejudice and discrimination
- The Moral Agenda – Many of the Government schemes are dressed in a moral framework that may, in itself, act as a barrier to inclusion. This is perhaps most evident in issues to do with drugs

Although not a United Kingdom wide document, the Social Exclusion Report "Preventing Social Exclusion" (2001)^{iv}, listed a number of problems with previous Government programmes for tackling social exclusion that have a broader relevance. These can also provide lessons about the Library and Information Sector's own approach.

- insufficient emphasis on partnership
- a focus on processes rather than outcomes
- a tendency to look at averages masking the worsening position at the bottom
- short-term programmes rather than sustained investment
- focussing on the needs of service providers rather than clients
- imposing top-down solutions
- weaknesses in the collection and use of evidence

There are a number of areas in which the Library Association needs to act

- It needs to raise the profile of librarians and information specialists in social exclusion work. For example, there is scarcely a mention of library and information services in any of the recommendations from the reports of the 18 Policy Action Teams (PATs)^v established in England by the Social Exclusion Unit – apart from PAT 15 on Information Technology^{vi}. Even PAT 10 on Arts and Sport^{vii} is thin although most of the general principles and recommendations are of interest to public libraries. Despite occasional affirmations of the importance of libraries to tackling social exclusion by Ministers in the Home Nations it is clear that many professionals and community leaders are unaware or less convinced of the contribution of library and information services or the relevance of the skills of library and information staff. The Association needs to establish close links with the appropriate departments in Westminster and the devolved administrations to ensure the LIS community is fully engaged with area based urban social inclusion programmes.
- The Association must monitor developments in rural areas. The first years of the last Government were marked by a dominant concern with urban issues. There is evidence of an increasing acknowledgement of the rural dimension to issues such as social exclusion, for example with the appointment of a Minister for Rural Affairs in Scotland and the establishment of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in England. However these initiatives must be sustained and developed. In addition more research needs to be undertaken on delivering library and information services in rural areas – the last significant study was the CPI report "Library and Information Provision in Rural Areas in England and Wales" in 1993^{viii}.

- The Association needs to ensure that equality issues are not submerged by the more amorphous concern with social inclusion. Racism, sexism, classism and homophobia continue to exist and must be challenged, as should discrimination against disabled people or on the grounds of sexuality or faith. Developments such as the creation of the Disability Rights Commission or the extension of the duty to promote good race relations to all public bodies are still working themselves through the system and need to be fully supported by the library and information community. The Library Association should fully support the development of the Diversity Council as a vital component in helping it to address this agenda effectively.
- The Association needs to encourage Heads of Library Service across the sectors to be more proactive in tackling social exclusion and getting involved in agendas that are wider than libraries.

3.2. Libraries

There have been a number of important recent reports on social inclusion and libraries. Although not applying to all the Home Nations, in the absence of similar reports from every devolved administration, their relevance to libraries across the United Kingdom has been widely recognised. The key messages have all been the same – library services should be planned on a needs base and extending use or audience is most likely to be achieved by outreach work based on partnership. The reports are:

- *Libraries for All* (1999)^{ix} – this was the first DCMS (draft) policy guidance on the issue to any of its portfolio of services. It stated that social inclusion should be mainstreamed as a policy priority for all public library services and recommended a strategy based on a six-point plan to address social exclusion. Later the policy guidance was supplemented by “Libraries, Museums, Galleries and Archives for All” (2001)^x in which libraries were invited to see themselves as “agents for social change”. The British Library is also included in the later guidance.
- *Open to All?* (2000)^{xi} – A major research project assessing how effective public library services are in serving the socially excluded. It concludes that perhaps 16% of authorities have developed an effective service-wide policy addressing social exclusion, and that 24% were doing extremely little if anything. It is scarcely surprising that the researchers recommend that public library services need to be transformed if they are to be effective in tackling social exclusion and that services should be planned on the basis of need not demand. Both these conclusions are endorsed by the Social Inclusion PAG as indeed is the broad sweep of the “Open to All?” research results and conclusions.
- *Using Museums, Archives and Libraries to Develop a Learning Community* (2001)^{xii} – This Resource Draft Action Plan includes policy relating to inclusion, access and diversity. The link it makes between learning and inclusion is important as learning is widely acknowledged as being the key to unlocking the potential of excluded people and the communities they live in. The Association will need to work closely with Resource to encourage the sector to address social exclusion effectively; measure the impact libraries, museums and archives have in widening the base of users; and advocate the role of the sector in tackling social exclusion with Government and others.

- *Public Libraries, Ethnic Diversity and Citizenship* (1998)^{xiii}. This report by Roach and Morrison remains one of the few national studies into public library engagement with a particular socially excluded group. Although focused on services to minority ethnic communities, the research study and recommendations, and the “Baseline for Good Practice” developed as a later project, are a model for approaching the needs of all excluded groups. The research results demonstrated that public libraries are not meeting the needs of most minority ethnic communities and, amongst the recommendations, are a call to re-establish the principle and practice of community librarianship. The relevance and importance of the Roach and Morrison research has been highlighted more recently by the *Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*^{xiv} which illustrated the pernicious nature of institutional racism, and led to a reform in English law extending the provisions of the Race Relations Act (to the police force, for instance) and toughening its provisions in relation to all public sector services. The recommendations of the Lawrence Inquiry have also been influential elsewhere in the UK, the Scottish Executive, for instance, studying its relevance to Scottish institutions^{xv}.

Much of the guidance cited above – apart from the Resource Draft Action Plan and the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report – concentrates on public libraries. This is not to suggest that other library sectors do not have an important role to play. In the case of academic libraries they would recognise the debate as being about “widening participation” and in health, widening access to health information. To this end they work with their parent institution to increase accessibility and to support students, particularly those recruited from non-traditional backgrounds. Many academic libraries participate in collaborative schemes either between other academic institutions or across sectors. They have a high level of involvement in information skills teaching to maximise independent access to information. They provide remote, self-service access to aspects of their services often accompanied by extensive opening hours. However, the extent of their “openness” is generally constrained by funding, licensing and institutional policies, with priority being given to meeting the needs of staff and students of the parent institution and with only limited access being available to the wider population.

NHS libraries, for example, may quite literally not be open to all. Although there are expanding special services for patients and the public, notably NHS Direct and the developing patient advice services, many libraries were originally established and funded in support of medical education and training. Reducing health inequalities remains a key NHS target. As part of e-government and modernising the NHS, new multi-channel information services are being developed to meet the needs of the public and patients, their carers and advocates^{xvi}. The Information for Health Strategy and the NHS Plan focus of putting patients “at the heart of the NHS” will require patients, clinicians and service planners to have access to the information they need via library and other information services. The NHS also plans a University for the NHS. Plans are in their infancy but it is possible that work on this may look to the HE and private sectors for delivery as well as existing NHS library services.

However with the “Empowering the Learning Community” report^{xvii}, most library and information services can participate as most have an important learning function. A key recommendation in the report suggests that collaborations between library services should “bring maximum benefit to otherwise easily excluded groups”. We understand that the Library Association is keen to see the “Empowering” report implemented, a view with which we fully concur.

3.3. Information and Evidence

Libraries may appear to be well-covered by statistics but there is remarkably little of help or relevance to social inclusion. In the case of public libraries there remain problems in even determining the numbers who use libraries – the PAG has agreed that the national figure for active or core membership of public libraries at around 30% is the most reliable indicator^{xviii} – as well as the break-down of types of user. There is no information at a national level regarding use by minority ethnic people or by disabled people and the data covering class or socio-economic groups is contentious. Some information may become available through national statistics derived from the Public Library User Survey, and it looks as if benchmarking clubs, set up by local authorities under Best Value, may also tackle the issue. It is not only public library use that needs to be covered but community use of any type of library or information service – this might include schools, FE Colleges, local HE campus facilities, Citizens Advice Bureaux, other voluntary and community group services, health services or information and advice provided by local employers. This full picture is almost completely absent and is probably most useful at the neighbourhood level – it is something that the Office of National statistics (ONS) should be encouraged to look at as they develop neighbourhood statistics.

Another key area is the development of impact indicators – showing (we trust) that libraries, often in partnership with other services, do actually make a difference. This is of most importance to the marginalized groups themselves as funding needs to be focused on those things which do make a difference. It is also important to libraries as a way of establishing, and being recognised as having, a role in tackling social exclusion and gaining the resources required to do the job effectively. We commend the work that Resource is preparing to do in developing impact indicators for its sector as a whole, and look for similar work to be carried in all the Home nations. The Library Association should support this, although it will also be important to be able to extract library information from the more general data.

We recommend that:

- 3) The LA works to raise the profile of librarians and information specialists in social inclusion work by establishing close links with appropriate departments and agencies in Westminster and the devolved administrations to ensure the LIS community is fully engaged with social inclusion programmes;
- 4) The LA lobbies for a new review of library and information services to rural areas, encompassing social exclusion issues and the potential of multi-agency working;
- 5) The LA affirms the broad sweep of findings and recommendations of “Libraries for All”, “Open to All” and “Public Libraries, Ethnic Diversity and Citizenship” (Roach & Morrison), and seeks to integrate their findings into its own policy development and advocacy activities;

- 6) The LA should promote a focus on the essential elements of empowerment and inclusion, most particularly support for a fundamental right to basic literacy and information literacy, and should incorporate these into the values and ethics statement of the new professional organisation
- 7) The LA works closely with Resource and others to develop the statistical sources and impact measurements that will identify and help enhance the contribution of library and information services to tackling social exclusion. In particular the LA should encourage and support work to:
 - a) Develop community indicators embracing all library and information providers in an area
 - b) Develop impact indicators for the sector and its constituent parts
 - c) Encourage existing datasets for library sectors to include work with socially excluded groups
 - d) Ensure that best practice is shared between sectors and across the nations of the UK

4. Mainstreaming Social Inclusion

Library and Information Services operate in a wider context, which they need to understand but also need to influence so that they can maximise opportunities and impact for the sector. All library sectors have a critical relationship to wider UK, National and Regional Government structures as well as to representative organisations within their own sectors. The Local Government Association, for example, is an important representative body and has recently published 'Realising the Potential'^{xix}, providing a useful stimulus to debate and action on the impact of the cultural sector, including public libraries, on social inclusion. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities also has a positive record in regard to libraries, and has looked at school and further education libraries as well as public libraries. Likewise the Funding Councils, and representative bodies such as Universities UK or the Association of Colleges – the Association of Scottish Colleges in Scotland – can, and have been, influential on library provision within higher education and further education respectively.

Government policy and the evidence of good practice both recommend libraries working 'outside the box' to provide more rounded and effective solutions to complex and intransigent social problems. The operating environments for Library and Information Services include:

- the use of relevant 'levers for change'
- putting their services and aspirations on other people's agendas
- taking opportunities to advocate the value and impact of library and information services
- positioning their services to deal adequately with anticipated or real changes in the operating environment
- responding to challenges, and taking opportunities.

Some key issues in this operating environment are funding, the regulatory framework, sectoral best practice, and how the Library Association will lead the profession in this environment.

4.1. Funding

Much can be done to make services more inclusive from existing resources if there is the will to do so, and the research that underpins 'Open to All?' gives good examples of this, as do services honoured in the 'Libraries Change Lives' awards – many of the latter coming from the voluntary sector as well as public libraries.

However, if the proposition is that libraries have a major role to play in the Knowledge Economy and Information Society, as reflected in the People's Network and the vision of 'Street Corner Universities', or in the widening participation agenda in post-16 education or in providing impartial information on health to patients, then the issue of sustainable revenue resources cannot be ignored. In public libraries, the closures of libraries and reduction of opening hours and the negative impact on communities and library use that arise from these has been well documented, and the increasing adoption of standards across the United Kingdom has, in part, been about 'stopping the rot'. The concern expressed here is not about those library services which have closed branch libraries and redirected their resources into tackling exclusion. Other sectors may not have had the well-publicised cuts that many public library services have faced, but most will have seen core funding, especially when expressed in a ratio such as funding per student, consistently reduced, and perhaps become over-reliant on more transient funding sources.

Resource's recent consultation document – "Building on Success"^{xx} - recognises the problems of sustaining the Peoples Network initiative and the issue of capital funding and the deterioration of library buildings and facilities over time – an issue that applies throughout the United Kingdom.

Library Services have become increasingly adept at finding short-term funding for projects. However, there is clearly a basic issue of how important developments in library provision, including the People's Network' can be properly sustained in the longer term, so that the potential that libraries have to be powerful resources in communities can be fully realised.

With an eye on future rounds of Comprehensive Spending Reviews, the sector should enter fully into a debate about funding library services, including;

- the role of a standards fund for libraries, passported to ensure that extra resource is available for specific purposes
- a lottery stream for Capital
- the development of local Public Service Agreements in England and Wales where the 'stretch' in performance is related to social inclusion outcomes.

4.2. Regulation

Public Library Services now work within a regime of Best Value and Library Standards - although the implementation of both elements varies in the different Home nations. In addition, Library Plans are required in some parts of the United Kingdom.

All these must be used as an opportunity to mainstream the provision of socially inclusive services, but these various regimes must themselves build social inclusion objectives, outcomes and measures into their processes, and Library Services must develop appropriate local indicators which can sit within and enhance the regulatory framework.

It is now of pressing importance to include social inclusion activity within the various regulatory systems that apply in the home countries, with sufficient guidance to give them teeth. The IPF Benchmarking Club is focusing on social inclusion in its new programme of work which should add to the suite of local indicators that Library Services should increasingly use. In addition, Resource's work on impact and value across its three domains will also assist with this, as will the LGA Social Inclusion Toolkit currently in development and the "Social and Racial Exclusion Handbook for Libraries, Archives, Museums and Galleries" developed by Shiraz Durrani. The latter have been developed within the English context and it will be important to ensure similar work is undertaken in all the Home nations, to ensure that impact indicators are applied across the United Kingdom

The various library standards that apply within public libraries in the Home nations do not yet reflect an impact and value approach to evaluating performance. It would be extremely valuable if a combination of two approaches could be achieved - definitions of core service minimum levels which could be consistently applied to service-wide public service standard charters and provide a 'safety net' for smaller service points, and in addition support for the development of bespoke local services, providing innovative approaches with partners, and breaking the mould of stand-alone branch libraries: such local standards to be validated through evidence that they meet both local needs and explicit tests for social inclusion.

In England and Wales the Best Value inspections of Library Services to date suggest no particular view of the importance of social inclusion and no systematic way of evaluating it, and this is also an area which should be developed.

The regulatory and quality assurance processes that exist in other library sectors also need to be examined to determine how far issues of social inclusion are integral to them. In many cases library and information services still face an uphill struggle to gain the recognition necessary to be included properly in the regulatory process at all.

4.3. The Library Association

The Library Association has an important role in ensuring social inclusion within the sector. The unification process, and the creation of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, provides an ideal opportunity for the new body to undergo the type of cultural transformation that we recommend for library and information services and to put inclusion at the centre of its value system and services.

There are two areas where the professional body can make a real difference:

- As a Leader in the Profession – The professional body is in a position to influence and shape the profile of the library and information profession in the future. Therefore a key aim should be the development of a professional community that fully reflects the diversity of the UK population at every level within its structure. The library and

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information community will need access to such recruits if they are to provide the services that reflect the needs of all parts of their communities in the future. Key areas of policy and activity are involved— recruitment into the profession; the qualifications structure; the framework that supports mentoring, networking and other CPD; and the nature of governance of the professional body itself. We would hope to see:

- Social inclusion as a major feature in the development of the future qualifications structure
- Social inclusion issues dealt with effectively within the governance structure of the new professional body, with targets set to indicate progress towards an inclusive profession and progress regularly monitored and reported on.
- As an Advocate, campaigning for libraries and social justice - The professional body has great opportunities to influence the professional practice of members and others involved in the sector. It can do this by:
 - Seeking to influence other key players – Government, local authorities, regional bodies such as RDAs or Learning and Skills Councils, NHS Workforce Development Confederations, NHS Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities, and major employers – as to what the library and information community can deliver in regard to social inclusion and what support they need to deliver it
 - Seeking to influence library and information services and practitioners through the provision of standards and guidelines and the maintenance of high profile awards for innovative services or individuals who have contributed greatly to this area of work
 - Facilitating the international comparisons that can enrich domestic understanding and practice eg by examining library services that are more inclusive
 - Supporting LIS Groups and networks that encourage social change – in this area the emergence of the Diversity Council is especially welcome; the work of CSG long standing and important; and the LA should give more support to the Social Exclusion Action Planning Network, the Quality Leaders Project and Information for Social Change.

4.4. Best practice

When there is a commitment to socially inclusive service, the next set of issues can be about 'how to do it?' and 'what works?', and there are a number of useful developments in this area which could become more closely related over time, including:

IDEA Knowledge
Audit Commission Best Value Website
DCMS Annual Library Plan data
Resource value and impact studies
IPF Benchmarking Club
Libraries & Inclusion Website (Community Services Group of the LA)
Social Exclusion Action Planning Network
Libraries Change Lives Award
Quality Leaders Project for Black LIS workers
Diversity Council
Shell Better Britain
All Wales Public Library Benchmarking Club

It would be useful if some broad oversight of these could be achieved which could take a view on such issues as complementarity/interdependencies within an overall Knowledge Management framework, links to research activity and findings from a range of sources, the need for an authoritative single source for key performance data (for instance about library use), and general quality assurance of the sources.

It is also clear that the sector needs to share and celebrate achievements, to disseminate good ideas, and provide increasing confidence to those considering the need for more innovative service changes.

The Social Exclusion Action Planning Network is clearly meeting a need both for service managers and front-line staff and needs to be able to expand its capacity to support change in the sector on a more sustainable basis.

We recommend that:

- 8) The LA lobby Government to provide the resources necessary to do the job of tackling social exclusion and widening participation in education and society effectively. In particular to campaign for:
 - e) Increased core funding for public library services necessary to sustain the People's Network, restore capital investment in buildings and meet the Public Library Standards or their equivalent
 - f) The development of appropriate funding mechanisms to support library co-operative programmes under the "Empowering the Learning Community" programme
 - g) The development of mechanisms such as Public Service Agreements where the "stretch" in performance is related to social inclusion outcomes.

- 9) The LA, (and CILIP), has as a key aim the development of a professional LIS community that fully reflects the diversity of the UK population at every level within its structure. In particular we recommend that social inclusion should be a major factor in the future review of qualifications, and that CILIP adopts best practice (eg the Equalities Standard developed for local authorities) in dealing with the equalities and social inclusion agendas;
- 10) The LA continues to support the development of the Diversity Council as a key group in helping it to adapt to the needs and potentials of a socially and culturally diverse nation. We commend the Association for its recent commitments to encouraging diversity in its activities and look forward to seeing:
 - a) An award constituted to celebrate the achievements of British minority ethnic library and information staff and consideration being given to establishing similar award schemes for other groups that are key to the equality and diversity agendas;
 - b) The results of an investigation into the feasibility of establishing an initiative in the UK similar to the Spectrum initiative in the USA.

We also recommend that:

- c) The Quality Leaders Project is looked at as a possible model to be incorporated within a UK Spectrum scheme or developed separately as a model that could be used with staff from all types of minority or disadvantaged groups;
- 11) The LA, in partnership with others, facilitates and supports the development and sustainability of a best practice network and knowledge management framework relating to social exclusion – CSG and the Social Exclusion Action Planning Network to both be key elements in this;
- 12) The LA encourages library and information services in all sectors to engage with the issues of social exclusion and to influence their parent institutions to give priority to this area. The LA should encourage the adoption of Corporate Social Responsibility policies and participation in such schemes as the CRE Leadership campaign, Opportunities Now and the numerous voluntary service opportunities that can be organised from the workplace (eg help with reading schemes for local school children).

Summary of Recommendations

We recommend that:

- 1) The LA commissions the development of models illustrating needs-based planning, innovation and effective leadership within library and information services across a variety of organisations and contexts;
- 2) The LA works with other bodies – ISNTO (and its successor), Healthworks, DILS, and SEAPN amongst others – to develop a skills programme relevant to the social inclusion agenda
- 3) The LA works to raise the profile of librarians and information specialists in social inclusion work by establishing close links with appropriate departments and agencies in Westminster and the devolved administrations to ensure the LIS community is fully engaged with social inclusion programmes;
- 4) The LA lobbies for a new review of library and information services to rural areas, encompassing social exclusion issues and the potential of multi-agency working;
- 5) The LA affirms the broad sweep of findings and recommendations of “Libraries for All”, “Open to All” and “Public Libraries, Ethnic Diversity and Citizenship” (Roach & Morrison), and seeks to integrate their findings into its own policy development and advocacy activities;
- 6) The LA should promote a focus on the essential elements of empowerment and inclusion, most particularly support for a fundamental right to basic literacy and information literacy, and should incorporate these into the values and ethics statement of the new professional organisation
- 7) The LA works closely with Resource and others to develop the statistical sources and impact measurements that will identify and help enhance the contribution of library and information services to tackling social exclusion. In particular the LA should encourage and support work to:
 - a) Develop community indicators embracing all library and information providers in an area
 - b) Develop impact indicators for the sector and its constituent parts
 - c) Encourage existing datasets for library sectors to include work with socially excluded groups
 - d) Ensure that best practice is shared between sectors and across the nations of the UK

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- 8) The LA lobby Government to provide the resources necessary to do the job of tackling social exclusion and widening participation in education and society effectively. In particular to campaign for:
 - a) Increased core funding for public library services necessary to sustain the People's Network, restore capital investment in buildings and meet the Public Library Standards or their equivalent
 - b) The development of appropriate funding mechanisms to support library co-operative programmes under the "Empowering the Learning Community" programme
 - c) The development of mechanisms such as Public Service Agreements where the "stretch" in performance is related to social inclusion outcomes.

- 9) The LA, (and CILIP), has as a key aim the development of a professional LIS community that fully reflects the diversity of the UK population at every level within its structure. In particular we recommend that social inclusion should be a major factor in the future review of qualifications, and that CILIP adopts best practice (eg the Equalities Standard developed for local authorities) in dealing with the equalities and social inclusion agendas;

- 10) The LA continues to support the development of the Diversity Council as a key group in helping it to adapt to the needs and potentials of a socially and culturally diverse nation. We commend the Association for its recent commitments to encouraging diversity in its activities and look forward to seeing:
 - a) An award constituted to celebrate the achievements of British minority ethnic library and information staff and consideration being given to establishing similar award schemes for other groups that are key to the equality and diversity agendas;
 - b) The results of an investigation into the feasibility of establishing an initiative in the UK similar to the Spectrum initiative in the USA.

We also recommend that:

 - c) The Quality Leaders Project is looked at as a possible model to be incorporated within a UK Spectrum scheme or developed separately as a model that could be used with staff from all types of minority or disadvantaged groups;

- 11) The LA, in partnership with others, facilitates and supports the development and sustainability of a best practice network and knowledge management framework relating to social exclusion – CSG and the Social Exclusion Action Planning Network to both be key elements in this;

- 12) The LA encourages library and information services in all sectors to engage with the issues of social exclusion and to influence their parent institutions to give priority to this area. The LA should encourage the adoption of Corporate Social Responsibility policies and participation in such schemes as the CRE Leadership campaign, Opportunities Now and the numerous voluntary service opportunities that can be organised from the workplace (eg help with reading schemes for local school children).

APPENDIX 1

Table 1

Excluded Groups

Open to All^{xxi}

Learning for the Twenty-First Century^{xxii}

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housebound people • Children and Young people • Disabled people • Elderly people • Racial and ethnic minorities • Unemployed people • Prisoners and families • Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexuals • Women • Refugees • Travellers • Working Class People • Homeless People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unskilled manual workers • Part-time and temporary workers • People without qualifications • Unemployed people • Some groups of women, notably lone parents and those on lowest income • Those living in remote or isolated locations • Some ethnic and linguistic minority groups • Older adults • People with learning disabilities and/or disabilities • People with literacy and/or numeracy difficulties • Ex-offenders • Disaffected young adults, and notably young men
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Note

The socially excluded groups listed under “Open to All?” is a list of groups that authorities have identified as a service priority. The list is in priority order with housebound people a priority for 82% of authorities and homeless people a priority for 5% of authorities.

Table 2

Barriers to the Use of Services

Libraries for All (Public Libraries)^{xxiii}

Learning for the Twenty-First Century^{xxiv}

<p>Institutional e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictive opening hours • Inappropriate staff attitudes or behaviour • Inappropriate rules and regulations • Charging policies • Book stocks not reflecting community need <p>Personal and Social e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of basic skills in reading, writing and communication • Low income and poverty • Direct and indirect discrimination • Low self-esteem • No permanent fixed address <p>Perceptions – “Libraries are not for us” e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are educationally disadvantaged • People who live in isolation from wider society • People with lack of knowledge of facilities and services and how to use them <p>Environmental e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult physical access into and within buildings • Problem estates and urban decay • Isolation problems experienced by rural communities 	<p>Physical, Financial and Attitudinal e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Time, costs, location, range and accessibility of learning opportunities” • Support for carers • Transport problems • Benefit rules for unemployed • Racism <p>Motivation e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaffected • School drop-out rates • “Neither exhortation nor pleading is the answer” • Need “to demonstrate the existence of real links between learning and personal well being” <p>Complexity e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jungle of qualifications • Lack of sufficient impartial advice and counselling <p>Organisational limitations e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental turf wars <p>Funding e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal of short-term funding <p>Needs of Under-represented Groups e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of money • Lack of confidence • Lack of outreach provision
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APPENDIX 2

Members of the Policy Advisory Group on Social Exclusion

Terry Turner (Chair)	Caroline Lang
Veronica Fraser	Kevin Harris
Jane Thompson	John Pateman
John Vincent	Margaret Chapman
Martyn Wade	Rebecca Linley
Shiraz Durran	Sue Boden
Guy Daines	Anita Sawyerr (Administrative Support)

Annie Mauger and Laverne Anderson were originally members of the PAG but stood down owing to pressure of other commitments

Terms of Reference

1. **Background**

The Government's overt commitment to policies and practices that secure social inclusion offers a major challenge and opportunity for Librarians to demonstrate that Libraries and Information Services really can make a major difference in improving the quality of everybody's lives.

Much excellent work has been done recently on Libraries and social inclusion which there is no value in duplicating or regurgitating but which gives a number of useful pointers for further work.

The Library Association has set up this Social Inclusion PAG to look ahead to communities and society over the next 5-10 years, to establish appropriate policies for the profession which will guide us in developing good practice and appropriate partnerships, and help us influence the policies of others that relate to the information and learning society, and Library and Information Services.

Best Value requires a fundamental challenge of our purpose, not a self-serving rationalisation, and the work of the PAG needs to reflect that kind of challenge.

2. **Objectives**

- 2.1 To undertake 'foresight' style scenario planning to establish the likely circumstances of society and communities over the next 10 years, to identify issues and options for Library and Information Services.
- 2.2 To review current databases of good practice guidelines and, if necessary, to propose a specification for an improved resource/product.

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- 2.3 To consider the context of influences and levers for change in which library organisations will be making decisions about socially inclusive services (e.g Government policy, regulatory framework, financial incentives) and make recommendations about these.
- 2.4 To identify lines of communication with relevant Government departments, sectoral organisations and other stakeholders to keep the role of Libraries and Information at the centre of on-going policy developments, either side of the next election.

3. **Timescales**

The PAG would intend to have a draft position statement and recommendations ready for March 2001, and a final short report ready for Summer 2001.

4. **Process**

The Group membership is (.....)

The Group will meet 4/5 times to complete its work.

An Email Group will be established for communicating between meetings.

Members of the Group are free to involve other colleagues and contacts informally as necessary to help improve the quality of the work.

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- ^{iv} Preventing social exclusion: report by the Social Exclusion Unit. Social Exclusion Unit, The Cabinet Office, 2001. Available on their website at: <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu/index/publishe.htm>
- ^v See, for instance, National strategy for neighbourhood renewal: Policy Action Teams: a summary. Social Exclusion Unit, The Cabinet Office, 2000. Available at their website: <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu/index/publishe.htm>
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- ^x Libraries, museums, galleries and archives for all: co-operating across the sectors to tackle social exclusion. DCMS, 2001. Available at the DCMS website: <http://www.culture.gov.uk/heritage/index.html>
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- ^{xii} Using museums, archives and libraries to develop a learning community: a strategic plan for action: draft for consultation. Resource, 2001 Available at the Resource website with title; “The Learning and Access Strategy”: <http://www.resource.gov.uk/information/publications/00pubs.asp>
- ^{xiii} Public libraries, ethnic diversity and citizenship. Patrick Roach and Marlene Morrison. University of Warwick, 1998. (British Library Research and Innovation Report ; 76). ISBN: 0 948303 74 3
- ^{xiv} The Stephen Lawrence inquiry :report of an inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny. Stationery Office, 1999. (Cm 4262-1). Available at website: <http://www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/4262.htm>

^{xv} See, The Stephen Lawrence inquiry: an action plan for Scotland. Scottish Executive, 1999. Available on website at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library2/doc01/sli-00.htm>

^{xvi} See, for instance, the National Electronic Library for Health at: www.nelh.nhs.uk or NHS Direct at: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

^{xvii} Empowering the learning community: report of the education and libraries task group. Library and Information Commission, 2000

^{xviii} The figure of 30% is based on the new CIPFA indicator of number of active borrowers (those who have borrowed an item from a library in the last year) expressed as a percentage of the resident population – the figure for 1999/2000 was 31.6%. This also corresponds roughly to the regular or frequent user category of library consumer surveys – the ASLIB survey in 1994 (for the Review of the Public Library Service in England and Wales) put this at 30%. However such consumer surveys, mainly conducted by Book Marketing Limited during the 1990's, also recorded a large element of occasional use, perhaps doubling the number of users to 60% or more. The PAG treated such high figures with great scepticism but further work is urgently required to clarify usage issues.

^{xix} Realising the potential of cultural services. Local Government Association, 2001. The report is available online and is divided into: an advocacy document; sector specific studies including libraries; a database of evaluated evidence; and the research agenda. See the LGA's website at: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/culture/potential.htm>

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^{xxi} Open to all?: the public library and social exclusion. Vol. 1: Overview and Conclusions. Dave Muddiman and others. Resource, 2000. ISBN: 1-902394-47-X. pp 28, Figure 7. The researchers used a selection of 13 excluded groups to assess the extent of library services' provision for excluded groups in general.

^{xxii} Learning for the twenty-first century: first report of the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning. Professor R.H. Fryer. NAGCELL, 1997. The listing is of those groups that are least represented in student body of post-16 education. See paragraph 2.28 on page 16

^{xxiii} Libraries for all: social inclusion in public libraries. Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999. see section 3: "Identifying the Barriers that keep People Away" (pp12-13)

^{xxiv} Op. Cit. xxii, pp20-23