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# 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 ...?

### ***Children & Young People Now***

The early August issue<sup>1</sup> includes, as always, a range of useful and interesting updates, but of particular interest is the very brief case study, “Museums reach out to looked-after children”, which reports on Norfolk’s “Museums and Children Looked-After” programme [pp20-21].

### ***Clearway***

The latest issue<sup>2</sup> of Urban Forum’s *Clearway* magazine focuses on “After the Riots”, and includes articles by young people on what happened in Croydon (“Croydon Xpress) and Hackney (“No knee jerk reaction in Hackney”); and a couple of important reflective pieces: “Feral Underclass or Feral Overclass?” and “Lessons from the 80s”.

### **“TES Resources – cross-curricular resources for Black History Month”**

To support Black History Month, the *TES* has published this brief guide<sup>3</sup> to resources, which urges a deeper understanding of Black history.<sup>4</sup>

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## Equality Act 2010

### ***Equality objectives and public authorities: tips, hints, and bright ideas***

“There will be statutory guidance in the future to inform how public authorities approach this. However, it is worth considering the approach you want to take in advance of that. The earlier you start to consider equality objectives, the more opportunity you will have to refine them based on evidence and make them work for your authority.

This short guidance document offers some advice on that.” [p4]

This very practical guidance document<sup>5</sup> sets out a simple, step-by-step approach to fulfilling some of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011<sup>6</sup> which came into force in September.

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<sup>1</sup> *Children & Young People Now*, 9-22 August 2011. The case study is available online at: <http://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/1083825/Good-Practice-museums-Norfolk-reaching-looked-after-children/?DCMP=ILC-SEARCH>.

<sup>2</sup> *Clearway*, 75, Autumn 2011, “After the Riots”. Available online at: <http://www.urbanforum.org.uk/clearway/latest-clearway/>.

<sup>3</sup> See: <http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/TES-Resources-cross-curricular-resources-for-Black-History-Month-6112989/>.

<sup>4</sup> Thanks to CILIP *Weekly Information World*, 28 Sept-4 Oct for this.

<sup>5</sup> *Equality objectives and public authorities: tips, hints, and bright ideas*. brap, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (361.54 kb) from: <http://www.brap.org.uk/index.php>.

<sup>6</sup> See: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/2260/contents/made>.

The four steps are:

- Step 1: Know what you're talking about
- Step 2: Identifying the objective
- Step 3: Action!
- Step 4: Keeping people in the know

'Step 1: Know what you're talking about' includes

- Evidence/data-gathering
- Covering users and staff
- Collate information on the protected characteristics
- Assess who is/is not already engaged with your service
- Making the best of your existing data.

'Step 2: Identifying the objective' includes:

- Understanding and drafting appropriate objectives
- Issues to bear in mind, eg your existing goals, national and local context, impact
- Communicating your objectives
- Getting feedback and help.

'Step 3: Action!' includes:

- Setting SMART objectives
- Overcoming barriers

'Step 4: Keeping people in the know' includes:

- "The current emphasis on transparency and the Big Society means organisations are increasingly expected to help individuals and community groups develop the skills to scrutinise and hold public bodies to account. To ensure that the relevant people have the skills to analyse your data effectively, you may want to invest support/resources in developing the skills of local community groups in areas such as: ... communication skills, such as public speaking skills ..." [p12]
- Making your data as jargon-free as possible.

This guide is brief, but will be a very useful checklist if you are not quite sure where to start. Recommended.<sup>7</sup>

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## Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

### ***Tackling homelessness and exclusion: understanding complex lives***

JRF have just published a "Round-up"<sup>8</sup> which draws together evidence from four research projects about "the prevalence of mental health issues, traumatic

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<sup>7</sup> Source: *Equality and Diversity Forum Newsletter*, 11 October.

<sup>8</sup> Teresa McDonagh. *Tackling homelessness and exclusion: understanding complex lives*. JRF (Round-up), 2011. Available to download as a pdf (253.91 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/homelessness-exclusion-services-summary.pdf>.

childhood experiences and suicide attempts amongst people accessing low-level homelessness support services.”<sup>9</sup>

As the introduction to the summary states:

“For some people, homelessness is not just a housing issue but something that is inextricably linked with complex and chaotic life experiences. Mental health problems, drug and alcohol dependencies, street culture activities and institutional experiences (such as prison and the care system) are often closely linked with the more extreme experiences of homelessness.

This Round-up looks at evidence collected as part of the Multiple Exclusion Homelessness (MEH) Research Programme. The programme provides a statistically robust account of MEH in seven UK cities, alongside evidence from the life histories and accounts of people with first-hand experience of MEH and reflections from front-line workers, managers and commissioners.” [p2]

Illustrated with powerful, brief case studies, this Round-up shows that:

- “There is a strong overlap between experiences of more extreme forms of homelessness and other support needs, with nearly half of service users reporting experience of institutional care, substance misuse, and street activities (such as begging), as well as homelessness.
- ‘Visible’ forms of homelessness – including the use of services like hostels or applying to the council as homeless – commonly happen after contact with non-housing agencies, for example mental health services, drug agencies, the criminal justice system and social services. They also occur after periods of ‘invisible’ homelessness such as sofa-surfing.
- Traumatic childhood experiences such as abuse, neglect and homelessness are part of most street homeless people’s life histories. In adulthood, the incidence of self-harm and suicide attempts is notable.
- Most complex needs were experienced by homeless men aged between 20 and 49, and especially by those in their 30s.
- Where homelessness and housing support agencies take on primary responsibility for supporting people with multiple and complex needs, workers can often feel isolated and out of their depth. It has been suggested elsewhere that housing support workers are now filling the gap left by the retreat of social workers from direct work with adults.
- People with complex needs are at serious risk of falling through the cracks in service provision. There needs to be an integrated response across health, housing and social care.” [p1]

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<sup>9</sup> Taken from: [http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/tackling-homelessness-and-exclusion?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Homelessness+-+12+September+2011&utm\\_content=Homelessness+-+12+September+2011+Version+B+CID\\_18762c1491983b848fbf1bdbd1f434e8&utm\\_source=Email+marketing+software&utm\\_term=Tackling+homelessness+and+exclusion+Understanding+complex+lives](http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/tackling-homelessness-and-exclusion?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Homelessness+-+12+September+2011&utm_content=Homelessness+-+12+September+2011+Version+B+CID_18762c1491983b848fbf1bdbd1f434e8&utm_source=Email+marketing+software&utm_term=Tackling+homelessness+and+exclusion+Understanding+complex+lives).

This summary of evidence also reinforces work previously undertaken by the SEU<sup>10</sup> and SETF<sup>11</sup>, and highlights the importance of an integrated approach to working with adults in need – and also the key role that organisations that work with people’s individual needs can play:

“Evidence from the [Multiple Exclusion Homelessness] research programme strongly supports the argument that there is a very high degree of intersection between homelessness and other complex social issues. Some people, especially those with very complex and multiple needs, do not fit neatly into existing service compartments. A shift is needed to focus on outcomes for the whole person rather than designing services and responses around client groups.” [p16]

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

### ***Hidden in plain sight ...***

This new report<sup>12</sup> from the EHRC has already hit the headlines. It was set up, following the deaths of Fiona Pilkington and her daughter, to establish just what was happening in terms of the harassment of disabled people.

As Mike Smith, the Lead Commissioner at the EHRC says in his Foreword:

“For me, two things come out of this inquiry that are far more shocking than the 10 cases that we cover in more detail, awful as they are. The first is just how much harassment seems to be going on. It’s not just some extreme things happening to a handful of people: it’s an awful lot of unpleasant things happening to a great many people, almost certainly in the hundreds of thousands each year.

The second is that no one knows about it.” [p5]

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<sup>10</sup> *Transitions: young adults with complex needs – a Social Exclusion Unit final report*. ODP, 2005. Available to download as a pdf (871.91 kb) from: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social\\_exclusion\\_task\\_force/assets/publications\\_1997\\_to\\_2006/transitions\\_young\\_adults.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/publications_1997_to_2006/transitions_young_adults.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> See, for example: *Understanding the risks of social exclusion across the life course*, [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100407010852/http://cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social\\_exclusion\\_task\\_force/life-course.aspx](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100407010852/http://cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/life-course.aspx), and the Adults Facing Chronic Exclusion programme, [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100407010852/http://cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social\\_exclusion\\_task\\_force/adults.aspx](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100407010852/http://cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/adults.aspx).

<sup>12</sup> *Hidden in plain sight: inquiry into disability-related harassment*. EHRC, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (3980 kb) from: [http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/disabilityfi/ehrc\\_hidden\\_in\\_plain\\_sight\\_3.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/disabilityfi/ehrc_hidden_in_plain_sight_3.pdf).

The report begins by setting out the legislative and policy framework (this in itself is a very useful summary of the different legal/policy documents). It then looks briefly at ten specific cases, drawing out key issues.

These are then looked at in more detail in the third section, “The wider problem”:

“The most important finding of this inquiry, however, is that disability-related harassment is experienced by many disabled people each year and is not confined to just a few extreme cases. The incidents which reach the courts and receive media attention are just the most public manifestation of a profound social problem.

For many disabled people, harassment is a part of everyday life. Many come to accept it as inevitable, and focus on living with it as best they can. Harassment can take many forms. It ranges from name calling in the street to bullying at school; petty violence to full-on physical assault; theft and fraud; sexual assault; domestic violence and damage to property. It can be perpetrated by strangers, but equally it can happen in the context of the family, friendships or relationships.” [p57]

In addition:

“Using data on various areas of life it is possible to build up a picture of how harassment interacts with a pattern of discrimination, underachievement, poverty, poor mental health and poor life outcomes for disabled people.” [p59]

The report then examines the route that many disabled people take in the face of harassment: first reactions (eg keeping a low profile); telling someone. This is followed by more analysis of the types of harassment:

“Types of harassment described by disabled people during research conducted for this inquiry included being ignored or overlooked; stared at; called names; asked intrusive questions, offered offensive advice, patronising comments or jokes; threatened or actual physical harassment including invasion of personal space, touching, pushing, being spat at or hit or being the target of thrown objects; sexual harassment and assault; damage to property; and actual or attempted theft or fraud.” [p66]

The report goes on to look at the prevalence of harassment, the likelihood of becoming a crime victim and the impact that being a victim of crime has; and also at where harassment takes place.

Unfortunately, organisations such as the police and public authorities do not always choose to recognise harassment for what it is, and the report looks at some examples, plus the impact this has on disabled people themselves. It also looks at examples of ‘good reporting’ and ‘bad reporting’.

The fourth section looks at ‘Responses to harassment’.

“In this chapter we considered evidence from organisations including the police, local authorities, the courts, schools, housing providers and public transport operators. We asked them to tell us how they work to prevent disability-related harassment and to deal with it when it is reported. Although we identified some pockets of good practice, we found a number of common problems.” [p111]

It then goes on to look at why agencies need to take action, including the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Drawing on the results of submissions to the Inquiry, the report highlights the role of schools, local authorities, housing providers, healthcare providers, safeguarding and adult protection services, public transport operators, the police and prosecution services, the courts, the law – and also briefly looks at media representations of disabled people.

Part 5 draws together conclusions and recommendations. The recommendations aim to deal with three critical aspects of harassment:

- Recognition: “Addressing this will involve raising public awareness of disability-related harassment; training staff in relevant agencies to recognise it and record it; encouraging staff at senior level in these agencies to show leadership in addressing it; and all agencies collecting data to improve our understanding of why and how harassment happens and what can be done to tackle it effectively” [p165]
- Prevention
- Redress.

The report has seven core recommendations:

- “There is real ownership of the issue in organisations critical to dealing with harassment. Leaders show strong personal commitment and determination to deliver change.
- Definitive data is available which spells out the scale, severity and nature of disability harassment and enables better monitoring of the performance of those responsible for dealing with it.
- The criminal justice system is more accessible and responsive to victims and disabled people and provides effective support to them.
- We have a better understanding of the motivations and circumstances of perpetrators and are able to more effectively design interventions.
- The wider community has a more positive attitude towards disabled people and better understands the nature of the problem.
- Promising approaches to preventing and responding to harassment and support systems for those who require them have been evaluated and disseminated.
- All frontline staff who may be required to recognise and respond to issues of disability-related harassment have received effective guidance and training.” [pp166-167]

This is followed by targeted recommendations. Those for ‘Local agencies and partnerships’ include:

“Local agencies and partnerships need to ensure that staff are fully aware of how to identify harassment and are able to communicate their concerns within, and to other, local agencies. They must also ensure that they put in place effective mechanisms to both prevent and recognise harassment and, in instances where it does occur, are able to communicate and act together in ways that produce a swift resolution.

It is worth noting that all public bodies have had a statutory responsibility to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and yet our inquiry has found little evidence that they are currently working together effectively to do so.” [pp175-176]

Those for local authorities include:

- “Local authorities should play a lead role in driving local partnerships to deliver on preventing and tackling disability-related harassment.
- They should invest in awareness campaigns aimed at encouraging victims of disability-related harassment to come forward.
- They should ensure that good quality accessible, independent advocacy is available to disabled people, enabling them to get the support that they need.” [p177]

In addition, the EHRC has links on their website<sup>13</sup> to Briefings, eg for local authorities<sup>14</sup>. This outlines the key areas for improvement by local authorities under the following headings:

- “Provide leadership in partnerships and within the community
- Promote positive attitudes to disabled people
- Increase reporting of harassment
- Recognise that anti-social behaviour may be motivated by hostility or prejudice against disabled people
- Intervene effectively to prevent escalation
- Develop a corporate approach to safeguarding
- Improve joint working with other agencies.” [p1]

There are also links to:

- An easy-read<sup>15</sup> version
- A BSL version
- An Executive Summary for Scotland<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/inquiries-and-assessments/inquiry-into-disability-related-harassment/hidden-in-plain-sight-the-inquiry-final-report/>.

<sup>14</sup> *Briefing: Hidden in plain sight – what the Commission’s Inquiry into Disability Related Harassment means for local government*. EHRC, 2011. Available to download as a Word document from: [http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/disabilityfi/sectorbriefings/local\\_government.doc](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/disabilityfi/sectorbriefings/local_government.doc).

<sup>15</sup> See: [http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/disabilityfi/dhfi\\_easy\\_read.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/disabilityfi/dhfi_easy_read.pdf).



- Summaries for Wales in English<sup>17</sup> and Welsh<sup>18</sup>.

This is an immensely important report, and one which we need to use to check that our policies and systems are fair and robust.

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## ***Registered blind and partially sighted people: year ending 31 March 2011 – England***

The NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre has just published this report<sup>19</sup> which contains the latest figures from English local authorities, compiled from a triennial return.

To summarise the key facts:

### **“Registrations**

- At 31 March 2011, 147,800 people were on the register of blind people, a decrease of 5,200 (3%) from March 2008. There were 9,100 new registrations to the register of blind people, a fall of 11 per cent compared to 2008.
- At 31 March 2011, 151,000 people were on the register of partially sighted people, a decrease of 5,300 (3%) from March 2008. There were 11,800 new registrations to the register of partially sighted people, a fall of 10 per cent compared to 2008.

### **Differences between the age groups**

- At 31 March 2011 the percentage of people aged 75 and over in the partially sighted group was 66 per cent, compared to 64 per cent for the blind group. The overall age distribution of the partially sighted register is similar to that of the blind registrations.
- The number of blind people on the register has decreased in all age groups compared to 31 March 2008 apart from the 50-64 age group which has risen slightly by 460 (3%) from 2008.
- The number of people registered as partially sighted has decreased in all age groups apart from those aged 18-49 which

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<sup>16</sup> See:

[http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/disability/dhfi\\_exec\\_summary\\_scotland.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/disability/dhfi_exec_summary_scotland.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> See:

[http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/disability/hidden\\_in\\_plain\\_sight\\_-\\_wales\\_summary.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/disability/hidden_in_plain_sight_-_wales_summary.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> See:

[http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/disability/or\\_golwg\\_yng\\_ngolwg\\_pawb\\_-\\_crynodedb\\_cymru.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/disability/or_golwg_yng_ngolwg_pawb_-_crynodedb_cymru.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> *Registered blind and partially sighted people: year ending 31 March 2011 – England*. The Health and Social Care Information Centre, 2011. Available to download as a pdf or in Word from: <http://www.ic.nhs.uk/statistics-and-data-collections/social-care/adult-social-care-information/registered-blind-and-partially-sighted-people--year-ending-31-march-2011-in-england>.

has increased by 575 (3%) and those aged 50-64 which has increased by 430 (3%).

### **Registrations of people with an additional disability**

- 49,300 (33%) of those registered blind and 50,400 (33%) of those registered partially sighted were also recorded with an additional disability.
- The most common additional disability was a physical disability, which accounted for 66 per cent and 68 per cent of blind and partially sighted registrations with additional disabilities respectively. The next most common additional disability was related to hearing which accounted for 22 per cent for both blind and partially sighted registrations.” [p5]

As David Owen says<sup>20</sup>:

“As this data is only published every three years it is worth reminding readers that these statistics understate the prevalence of visual impairment in all of the 152 councils, which are also public library authorities. The report points out that registration is voluntary but is a precondition for the receipt of certain financial benefits. This is a factor that gives more credibility to the register of blind people than the register of partially sighted people but it cannot be regarded as a definitive number of blind and partially sighted people.” [p1]

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## **Abbreviations and acronyms**

BSL = British Sign Language

EHRC = Equality and Human Rights Commission

JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation

SETF = Social Exclusion Task Force

SEU = Social Exclusion Unit

SMART = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timed

STV = Share The Vision

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<sup>20</sup> STV Bulletin, 97, 16 September 2011.