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 and includes information on courses, good practice, specific socially excluded groups, as well as the newsletter archive.

Contents List

The Riots, August 2011 – update

Time to wake up …

The Centre for Social Justice has just produced this report[1] which has received considerable media coverage. Its premise is that gangs and gang culture lay behind the riots last year, and that the Government is allowing policy on gangs to drift.

Some of the findings were strongly picked up by the press, eg "The arrest of key gang members has left a power vacuum in some gangs which has led to an escalation of violence – urgent work is needed to mitigate this upsurge and to help younger gang members disown gang life" [p3]; this has tended to gloss over some important findings and recommendations, including:

- "There is an urgent need to improve relations between the police and young people;
- Money has failed to filter down: there was poor communication between government and charities about the availability of funding following the riots – this is being seen as symptomatic of 'a complete disconnect between what goes on at the policy level and what goes on on the ground'" [p3]

The report's conclusions are that:

> "The Government must set out a long-term commitment to defuse the problem of gangs in the UK. To do this it must build stronger families and communities, invest in thorough preventative work, and improve relations between the police and young people." [p3]

Did you see …?

CILIP *Update*

The October issue[2] has a number of interesting articles, including:

- Rob Green "Making a difference in Lancashire", which, as well as looking at branding, investing in staff, better use of design, and marketing, also includes a strong argument for getting to know your local community [pp38-40]

CyMAL

The latest issue[3] of the CyMAL bulletin includes a range of updates, eg:

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[1] *Time to wake up: tackling gangs one year after the riots – a policy paper by the Centre for Social Justice*. CSJ, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (1600 kb) from: http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/client/images/Gangs%20Report.pdf.
[2] CILIP *Update*, October 2012. Further information at: http://www.cilip.org.uk/publications/update-magazine/Pages/default.aspx.

- "Library breakfast club for the homeless", a very brief summary of the work being done at the Breakfast Club in Cardiff Central Library [p4]
- "Language and early years learning training", also a brief summary of the pilot training courses developed to support the Foundation Phase Toolkit[4] [p10]
- A brief write-up of the one-day conference hosted by Amgueddfa Cymru to discuss ways in which the cultural sector support the Welsh Government in tackling child poverty[5] [p11]

Museum Practice

The latest issue includes some good resources on homelessness, and the role that museums and other cultural organisations can play in supporting people.

The contents (and brief descriptions of the articles) are available online[6]; to read the articles in full, log-in is required.

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Social justice outcomes framework

The Government has just published this outcomes framework report[7] which follows on from the earlier report, *Social justice: transforming lives*[8], which was published in March.

The *… transforming lives* report included five themes:

- Supporting families
- Keeping young people on track

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[3] *CyMAL*, 13, Winter 2012. Available to download as a pdf (1250.94 kb) from: http://wales.gov.uk/docs/drah/publications/121102cymalmag13en.pdf.
[4] *The Foundation Phase in practice: a toolkit for museums, archives and libraries in Wales 2011*. CyMAL, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (401.92 kb) from: http://wales.gov.uk/docs/drah/publications/120221foundationtoolkiten.pdf.
[5] For further information on the Welsh Government initiatives to tackle child poverty, see:
http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/poverty/;jsessionid=hTZqQTxS8py GbV1K3LhJXTBJJpMyL9DShftv6f3zbvhzp275qRDy!545803488?lang=en.
[6] See: http://www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice/homelessness?utm_source=ma&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=mp191 02012.
[7] HM Government. *Social justice outcomes framework*. DWP, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (142 kb) from: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/social-justice-outcomes-framework.pdf.
[8] DWP. *Social justice: transforming lives.* Cm 8314. TSO, 2012 (ISBN: 9780101831420). Available to download as a pdf (2350 kb) from: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/social-justice-transforming-lives.pdf. This was reviewed in *The Network Newsletter*, 133, May 2012, pp2-10, see: http://www.seapn.org.uk/content_files/files/newsletter_ns_133.pdf.

- The importance of work
- Supporting the most disadvantaged adults
- Delivering Social Justice.

The outcomes framework gives a brief summary of the current position of each theme, and then selects an indicator or two per theme, which are going to be used to monitor progress. As the report says:

> "The indicators within the Outcomes Framework are not a set of targets. Rather, they have been designed to help the Social Justice Cabinet Committee shape future policy by highlighting priorities, identifying where good progress is being made and where more work needs to be done." [p3]

The indicators are:

Key indicator 1 – stable family relationships

- The proportion of children who have a stable family free from breakdown, and the proportion of such families that report a good-quality relationship.

Key indicator 2 – realising potential in the education system

- The extent to which children from disadvantaged households achieve the same educational outcomes as their more advantaged peers.

Key indicator 3 – stopping young people falling into a pattern of re-offending

- The percentage of young offenders who go on to re-offend.

Key indicator 4 – tackling entrenched worklessness

- The proportion of benefit claimants who have received working-age benefits for at least 3 out of the past four years, focusing on those capable of work or work-related activity.

Key indicator 5 – improved outcomes for those receiving treatment for drug or alcohol addiction

- Of those who have entered drug or alcohol treatment in the past three years:
    - the proportion who have exited successfully and not returned during that time
    - the proportion who were in employment on the date that period ended
    - the proportion who had not been convicted with a criminal offence by the date that period ended
    - the proportion who achieved all three of the above.

Key indicator 6 – improved outcomes for ex-offenders

- The proportion of ex-offenders who do not re-offend within 12 months and the proportion who are in work 12 months later.

Key Indicator 7 – The Social Investment Market

- The size of the social investment market.

Indicators 1-6 are areas where we might possibly be able to link some of our own work (eg the support we can offer young offenders, which would contribute to a successful outcome in Indicator 6).

Indicator 7 strikes me as rather strange, given all the potential areas for developing improved approaches to social justice (some of which, such as social mobility, are mentioned elsewhere in this report). It seems not to fit completely with the rest of the framework (and is a clear indicator of the direction of travel for some in Government):

> "The Government is allowing for greater innovation in commissioning and delivery so that it suits local needs and allows social organisations to deliver public services. The use of services procured on a payment by results basis gives an incentive to providers to focus on social outcomes, rather than inputs or processes." [p23]

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

Valuing the impact of adult learning …

NIACE have published this new research[9] which starts to build a base for analysing and valuing impact – in this case, of adult learning, but it could easily be applied to our sectors too.

> "We are entering an age where social value is moving to centre stage in appraisals of all public spending. This means that we need to be able to articulate and quantify what adult learning provides over and above the basic contractual requirements. We need to know the contribution that adult learning makes to health and well-being if we are to influence the local public health changes and the new health and well-being boards; equally, we need to know the impact on community and civic engagement if we are to influence the localism agenda. We need to quantify the first steps on the journey to employability. As we do this we must engage with the new and often unfamiliar language of other key stakeholders." [p v]

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[9] Daniel Fujiwara. *Valuing the impact of adult learning: an analysis of the effect of adult learning on different domains in life.* NIACE, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (592.17 kb) from:
http://shop.niace.org.uk/media/catalog/product/v/a/valuing_the_impact_web_final.pdf.

In the research, they "assess and value the impact that adult learning has on four different domains or areas in life: (i) health; (ii) employment; (iii) social relationships; and (iv) volunteering" [p1], and come to some calculations of the benefits, for example:

> "This study finds that, for adults, participating in a part-time course leads to:
> - improvements in health, which has a value of £148 to the individual;
> - a greater likelihood of finding a job and/or staying in a job, which has a value of £224 to the individual;
> - better social relationships, which has a value of £658 to the individual; and
> - a greater likelihood that people volunteer on a regular basis, which has a value of £130 to the individual." [p2]

We may find that putting a financial estimate on the value of our work raises new issues, but the BL has been arguing this case (pretty successfully) for some while, so it may be valuable to see how we can use these methods to build up arguments to support our own work.[10]

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Older people's learning in 2012: a survey

NIACE have also just published the results of their 2012 survey[11]. The key findings include:

- "Around one older person in five reports some form of learning in the last three years. This is unchanged since the 2005 survey, but what they are learning, where and why has changed markedly.
- It is possible that the rise of independent online learning is adding an entirely new form of learning, and cohort of 'learners', which is masking an overall fall in traditional forms of learning.
- Employment status is more influential than age itself in determining how likely people are to be 'learners', the subjects chosen, the reasons for learning, and the benefits achieved. As retirement patterns become more complex, age may become less relevant.
- Social class, and the age at which an individual left initial education continue to have a major bearing on the likelihood of learning, and on what is learned, whereas the influence of gender is much less …
- The location of learning has changed significantly since 2005. The numbers of older people learning with the major public providers (further education [FE] colleges and universities) has fallen, and they are more likely to be learning in work-related settings, while the proportions learning in adult education centres has risen.

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[10] Thanks to Jo Ward for alerting me to this research.
[11] Stephen McNair. _Older people's learning in 2012: a survey._ NIACE, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (839.31 kb) from:
http://shop.niace.org.uk/media/catalog/product/o/l/olderpeopleslearningin2012_full_web.pdf.

- There has been a large growth in independent learning, both individually and in groups, and a marked growth in the numbers reporting learning online, even among the 75+ age group. Independent learners are older, more likely to be male, and better educated …
- Most non-learners do not know where to go for advice about learning. For those who do, the internet is now the dominant source, followed by public libraries, attracting contrasting clienteles." [pp7-8]

The report suggests some priorities for public policy:

- Strengthen the bridges between employment and retirement, to encourage the wide range of people who learn for work-related reasons to continue with learning in retirement.
- Encourage people to recognise the learning which they do, and to see the potential benefits of extending this.
- Support a wide range of learning opportunities, recognising that the social and personal benefits of learning are only loosely related to course titles and ostensible motivations.
- Review the implications for social inclusion of the shift from public to private services.
- Review the implications for social cohesion of the growth of individualised learning models." [p9]

There is quite a lot of references to public libraries (sadly not to museums and archives), including:

- "… those over 74 are much more likely to be learning independently alone (29%), in a local community facility (24%, including libraries, churches and so on), or at an adult education centre/WEA class (16%)." [p25]

These findings are quoted at length, as they seem to highlight some interesting information about library users (and non-users):

"Among those who could identify a source of advice, two dominated: the internet and the public library, attracting two contrasting clienteles.

- **The internet** was mentioned by fewer than 2% of respondents in 2005, but is now the most widely quoted source for all but the oldest (and even by 4% of the 75+ group). Here the pattern clearly reflects the changing distribution of digital skills in the population. Among the 50–54 year-olds this was much more popular (33%), as it was among the higher social classes (30%), and those who finished initial education after 18 (36%). It was also more often chosen by men than women (21%/15%), by those in employment (33% of full-timers and 26% of part-timers), and by those who expected to continue learning (31%). It was significantly lower in the East Midlands, the South West, and in Scotland and Wales.

- **The public library** has traditionally been a major source of information about learning for adults, and it has only now been pushed into second place by the internet. 15% of older people cited

this as the first choice for finding out about learning. The responses for libraries are the mirror image of those for online sources: with the library being nominated particularly by women (17%), older people (17% of those 65+), the retired (17%) and those without internet access (18%). There was no difference between social classes, reflecting the very broad social appeal of the public library service generally, but libraries were much less likely to be chosen by those who completed initial education after the age of 20 (9%). Libraries were most often chosen in the East of England (19%) and the West Midlands (18%), and were least likely to be chosen in Scotland (11%)." [p34]

Some useful research here for us to pursue in terms of exploring and planning services.[12]

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Expectations of social exclusion and self-regulation

"Why might people who expect to be socially excluded act in socially undesirable ways?"[13]

The Equality Trust have recently published a "Research Update"[14] which suggests that "expecting to be excluded or rejected by other people causes a decline in a person's self-regulation."

As the Summary states:

"The findings support the view that 'promoting a more widely inclusive society, such that fewer groups or individuals feel left out, would reduce the extensive harm and heartbreak that often result from self-regulation failure'."[15], [16]

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

Library closures

As you will have no doubt seen by now, the report of the Inquiry into library closures has just been published[17].

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[12] Thanks to Lynda Martin for alerting me to this.

[13] Taken from: http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/node/707.

[14] *Expectations of social exclusion and self-regulation*. The Equality Trust ("Research Update"), 2012. Available to download as a pdf (61.40kb) from: http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/docs/research-update-social-exclusion-and-self-regulation.pdf. There is also a summary at: http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/node/707.

[15] Taken from: http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/node/707.

[16] Thanks to Simon Wallace for alerting me to this.

[17] House of Commons. Culture, Media and Sport Committee. *Library closures: third report of session 2012-13*. HC 587. The Stationery Office, 2012.

The Network submitted written evidence[18] in January, and it is heartening to see that some of it has been used and cited.

There is certainly some focus in the body of the report on the role of public libraries in their communities and as organisations that can work towards social justice (although these come through less clearly in the recommendations).

> "Our witnesses recognised that library buildings often acted as hubs in the community. One described them as "sort of indoor parks", a safe environment for both the young and the isolated old ... Another pointed out that a relationship of trust developed between the staff in local libraries and the population, encouraging and enabling the population to use the library as a general source of information and support not just somewhere to borrow a book ... Local libraries were places to hold homework clubs, reading groups, baby rhyme times: all ways to use the library's resources and to make reading and study a more 'social' activity, while also providing a quiet and secure environment … The Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL) argued that, while electronic services were changing some of the focus of library services, the building itself was 'still a compelling and significant part of a community', adding 'In times of economic hardship, it could be argued that more people will need libraries to learn new skills, seek employment, apply for jobs, write CVs etc.' …" [p23]

What is clear is that there needs to be a renewed commitment to demonstrate that the public library service "is still much valued and has a promising future" [p43], and far greater clarity over local authorities' closure decisions. There is also some clear direction about libraries run by volunteers:

> "Councils which have transferred the running of libraries to community volunteers must above all, however, continue to give them the necessary support, otherwise they may wither on the vine and therefore be viewed as closures by stealth." [p42]

However, and I stress that this is a personal view, there seems to be a lot of optimism about the role of the Arts Council at the very time that it is making major reductions, and a faith in local authorities making informed decisions with 'light-touch' regulation, whereas I have argued strongly[19] that 'light-touch' is not always working, and that some form of national public library standards is required.

Volume I: Report, together with formal minutes, oral and written evidence. Available to download as a pdf (1900 kb) from:
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmcumeds/587/587.pdf.
Volume II: Additional written evidence. Available to download as a pdf (1570 kb) from:
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmcumeds/587/587vw.pdf.
[18] See:
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmcumeds/writev/library/lib032.htm.
[19] For example, in the briefings for Dan Jarvis MP.

The Minister has given a commitment to produce a report by 2014

> "… on the cumulative effect on library services of the reduction in local-authority provision and the growth of alternatives such as community libraries. We look forward to receiving that report. Enthusiasm over the scope for volunteer involvement, and for new models of provision, is fine, but – given the importance of library services – a systematic look at the impact of funding cuts and organisation changes is needed to assess the durability of new approaches over time." [p42]

Abbreviations and acronyms

DWP = Department for Work and Pensions
NIACE = National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
TSO = The Stationery Office

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