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

Number 58, June 2006

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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.

Did you see …?

MLA-funded traineeships for black and minority ethnic communities

In case you haven't seen this elsewhere, through the "Renaissance in the Regions" programme, MLA have committed over £200,000 to enable four middle managers from black and minority ethnic communities to train for mid- and senior-level positions in museums (through the Museums Association). Each traineeship will last 18 months, with two in 2006/7 and two more in 2007/8.

The traineeships will take place at Leicester City Museums and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, and will involve taking responsibility for managing programmes and budgets and working closely within a team on a significant project, and learning about the museums sector. They will be full-time and will also involve a limited amount of tailored museum studies and management training.

The Museums Association is hoping to recruit for the traineeships in the autumn of 2006. Details will be posted on their website at: www.museumsassociation.org , as they become available. For more information, contact: lucyshaw@museumsassociation.org.[1]

"Libraries Are Key To Renewal Says Minister"

You have probably seen announcements of this breakthrough, but just in case you've missed it:

> "The Government has announced that public libraries are to be considered in future policy initiatives to combat social exclusion and

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[1] Taken from MLA News eBulletin 182, 26 May 2006.

promote neighbourhood renewal.

The announcement follows a meeting at the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) between the Minister for Neighbourhood Renewal, Phil Woolas MP, the Director General of the DCLG's Tackling Disadvantage Group, Joe Montgomery, and representatives of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Libraries and Information Management.

The Minister asked the All-Party Group to make policy recommendations for the forthcoming Local Government White Paper, which is expected to be published in the autumn. The White Paper will set out Government's priorities for local government reform, sustainable communities, and neighbourhood renewal. The DCLG will also be working with the All-Party Group to commission a research study into the role libraries play delivering wider policy goals on literacy, training, regeneration and social cohesion".[2]

Adults Learning

The latest issue of the NIACE journal[3] has a number of articles of interest, including:

- Rachel Thomson "It's a vision thing" [p7] which looks at the core purposes of Adult Learners' Week, including challenging "providers to engage the most isolated and excluded learners …"
- Peter Lavender and Jane Ward "The trouble with ESOL" [pp8-9] which looks at how provision is lagging well behind need
- Paul Stanistreet "'This isn't special treatment, we're just looking after our community'" [pp11-13] which looks at the learning needs of migrant workers, based on a project in South Lincolnshire (this article also has a useful introductory panel which sets out definitions of migrant workers, asylum-seekers, refugees, etc)
- Robin Blake "Finding new pathways" [pp16-17] which introduces the findings of Ofcom's literacy audit
- Andy McNab "'The only reason you can't read is because you don't'" [p20] a brief introduction to the "Quick Reads" series.

Values and vision: the contribution of culture

The vision and action plan[4] for the cultural sector (produced jointly by Arts Council England, the National Museum Directors' Conference, MLA, the

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[2] Taken from *Managing Information News* 14 June 2006, at: http://www.managinginformation.com/news/content_show_full.php?id=4975. Thanks to Helen Carpenter for this reference.
[3] *Adults Learning* 17 (9) May 2006.
[4] *Values and vision: the contribution of culture*. National Museum Directors' Conference, 2006. Available to download as pdfs (part 1: 860 Kb; Part 2: 859 Kb;

Association of Independent Museums, the Group for Large Local Authority Museums, the Museums Association and the University Museums Group) was published in early June and gained media coverage[5].

> "Today, cultural institutions across the country – representing the visual arts, music, dance, theatre, literature, museums, galleries, libraries and archives – have joined together for the first time to unveil our vision for the future, outlining the contribution we can make to life in Britain over the next 10 years.
>
> Our mission is to ensure that Britain's culture, already internationally celebrated for its creativity and style, remains a world leader. In the future, Britain's economic prosperity and well-being will not depend on industrial prowess, natural resources or cheap labour but on developing, attracting, retaining and mobilising creativity. In this 21st century, goods, services and industries driven by knowledge and creativity will define Britain's competitive edge. This can only happen if its economic strategy is fed by social changes that make culture and creativity part of everyone's life. We are well placed to achieve this. Arts, archives, museums, libraries and galleries form the infrastructure that will provide this necessary step-change in cultural participation. In many ways, these cultural assets are the greatest in the world and our cultural institutions take the lead internationally in access, learning and innovation. But, without continued support, we risk being overtaken by others." [p1]

Tackling social exclusion – Libraries, Museums and Archives

Working with visually impaired readers toolkit

This new toolkit[6] has been prepared by Sheffield, Hull, Doncaster, Calderdale and Wakefield Libraries as part of the "Speaking Volumes" Project.

It includes:

- An example of how to perform a community profiling and consultation exercise
- How to conduct an accessibility audit in relation to visually impaired library users

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version without pictures: 246Kb) from:
http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/values_and_vision.html.
[5] For example, Louise Jury "Britain's future lies in creative industries, say arts leaders", *The Independent* 9 June 2006 (synopsis at:
http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/this_britain/article753703.ece).
[6] Available to download in sections from:
http://www.mlayorkshire.org.uk/webdav/harmonise?Page/@id=175&Section/@id=4550&Document/@id=23891&Session/@id=D_6DoGio0e82ofVb1kSgQw&parent=group_1.

- Guidelines on planning an event for visually impaired people
- A dissemination model on how to set up and run a visually impaired readers group
- Guidelines on working with an artist.[7]

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

"Social exclusion: the challenges ahead"

On 20 May, Hilary Armstrong (Social Exclusion Minister) gave a key speech[8] to ippr North, "The invisible generation: from picking up the pieces to predicting and preventing", in which she highlighted the priorities for the next year.

> "What I want to focus on now, and in this coming year, are the very most excluded. I want to argue that, as the tide of poverty and disadvantage has been decisively turned back, those who are the most excluded stand out even more starkly. The 60,000 children in care at any given time. The 180,000 seriously mentally ill and on benefits. The 40,000 teenage pregnancies in the next year. People in deep trouble. In trouble in their own lives, and often in trouble with the community around them …

> Various forms of financial exclusion – not just low income – also hold back the most excluded. But it is also the level of debt that distinguished the most excluded. One of the cruellest twists of financial disadvantage is that those with the least money are the ones that are forced into paying the highest rates of interest for the money that they need to borrow. A survey in Liverpool found that APRs charged to clients in debt to pawn shops and home-collected credit providers (i.e. loan sharks) on a six month loan ranged from 69 per cent to 365 per cent.

> In sum, it seems that while we have succeeded in improving the lot for the vast majority – and even for many of the traditionally excluded – there are a small minority, who often remain largely invisible to public services, who have been left behind …

> As unemployment and poverty has fallen, our attitudes to those in need have hardened. In 1994, around 30% thought that the reason people lived in need was social injustice, but by 2003 this had fallen to around 19%. At the same time, the proportion of people believing that need was the result of laziness or lack of willpower rose from 15% to 28%.

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[7] Taken from the MLA Yorkshire website, www.mlayorkshire.org.uk.
[8] Available at:
http://www.ippr.org/uploadedFiles/ipprnorth/events/hilary%20armstrong%20speech%20200506.doc.

These changed attitudes partly come from the compacting of these problems in a smaller group of the population. People feel with lower levels of unemployment, people should look after themselves more and make their own choices.

Across countries, it has been found that around 2 to 3 percent of young people end up with multiple problems in their teenage years, such as alcohol abuse, early sexual activity, conduct disorder, and / or contact with the police. To turn that into numbers, that would be about 20,000 of Britain's children born every year. These troubled youth tend to show problem signs early in life, and their problems also tend to persist well into their 30's and 40's. Their horizons have been shortened early in their lives, and they just don't think the world has much to offer.

These same individuals are disproportionately represented as the clients of state services – as children with special needs, as teenagers in the care system, as benefits claimants, as adults with mental health or drug problems, and as offenders in the criminal justice system. So there is no doubt that they cost us dear.

But they cost themselves dear too. They face lives of unemployment and low income, victimisation as well as offending, of custody and instability.

Let me be clear. We need to ask ourselves some tough questions about how well our public service systems that were built to address mass problems – be they poverty, ill-health or crime – are suited to addressing these much smaller, but difficult and complex segments of our population. Because at the moment they don't seem to be working …"

DCLG

A discussion paper[9] on proposals for the organisation of the new Department has just been published. Obviously, this is all still at the planning stage, but it does give some indications of thinking – eg the establishment of new Programme Executives for each major area of work, as:

- Cities and Regions
- Housing and Planning
- Local Government Futures
- Communities
- Thames Gateway and Olympics
- Fire and Resilience

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[9] *Building the Department for Communities and Local Government: a discussion paper*. DCLG, 2006. Available only to download as a pdf (447 Kb) from: http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/469/BuildingtheDepartmentforCommunitiesandLocalGovernmentaDiscussionDocument_id1500469.pdf.

- Equalities
- Corporate Modernisation
- Climate Change and Buildings.

These proposals would mean that two new Programme Executives would be established:

- The Equalities Programme Executive would integrate at programme level policy responsibilities for race, faith, women, equality and diversity.
- The Climate Change and Buildings Programme Executive would give a sharp focus to our work to contribute towards the Government's Climate Change agenda and the sustainability of the built environment.

In addition, the Communities Programme Executive would replace the Social Inclusion and Neighbourhoods Programme Executive, its remit expanding to include community cohesion [taken from p6].

Social Exclusion Taskforce

On 13 June, the Social Exclusion Minister, Hilary Armstrong, announced the next steps for the Government's drive to tackle deep-seated disadvantage, primarily the establishing of a Social Exclusion Taskforce which will be based in the Cabinet Office.

The priority is "to reach the one million people at risk of persistent social exclusion, who have not yet benefited from opportunities the majority of people can now take for granted.

The new Social Exclusion Taskforce will concentrate on identifying the most at-risk and focus on specific hard-to-reach groups including children in care, people with mental health problems and teenagers at risk of pregnancy."

An Action Plan, "expected this autumn and setting out how the Government will reach the most excluded in society, will focus on key groups and issues including:

- improving the early identification of the most at-risk households, individuals and children so that interventions can be targeted more effectively at those most at risk - to themselves or to others
- raising the outcomes and aspirations of children in care
- accelerating current progress in reducing the rate of teenage pregnancies
- ensuring that people with mental health problems receive effective services, with a particular focus on making sure that the cross-cutting review on mental health finds new ways to allow people with mental health problems to find and retain work
- supporting ongoing work by the Respect Unit, with improved programmes to help prevent the problem families of tomorrow.

The Minister will also:

- chair the new Cabinet Committee on Social Exclusion
- take forward a Ten-Year Strategic Review of the long term trends and drivers of social exclusion and the systemic changes needed to address them
- work closely with the Treasury and other Departments to help secure the best possible outcomes for excluded people and groups in the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review
- begin a programme of visits to investigate examples of good practice around the country as part of her goal of ensuring an Action Plan on Social Exclusion leads to real change at the frontline."[10]

Rural disadvantage: priorities for action

The Commission for Rural Communities (part of the Countryside Agency) has just published this new report[11] which focuses on four key topics: people, places, perceptions and processes.

Its main recommendations in each topic relate to:

- People – tackling poverty, reducing transport costs, improving ICT, etc
- Places – improving employment opportunities, affordable housing, transport provision
- Perceptions – challenging the myth of the rural idyll, and tackling the stigma of rural disadvantage
- Processes – reflecting rural issues in resource allocation, considering rural disadvantage in all stages of policy design and implementation, set minimum standards.

Reaching Out …

The NIMHE has just published a brief report[12] which evaluates three pilot projects which aimed to find ways of reducing suicide in young men ("Over 1,300 young men in England take their own life each year. It is now the commonest cause of death in young men under 35").

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[10] Taken from a press release, "Tackling deep-seated social exclusion: Hilary Armstrong announces next steps and new arrangements in government", 13 June 2006, at:
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2006/060613_se.asp.
[11] *Rural disadvantage: priorities for action.* Commission for Rural Communities, 2006. Available to download as a pdf from:
http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/data/uploads/CRC29-RuralDisadvantage-Prioritiesforaction.pdf.
[12] *Reaching out: evaluation of three mental health promotion pilots to reduce suicide amongst young men.* NIMHE, 2006. Available to download as a pdf from:
http://kc.nimhe.org.uk/upload/Reaching%20Out.pdf.

The pilot projects were held in Bedfordshire, Camden and Manchester. For us, the main implications are the findings that demonstrate "the important role played by non-statutory and youth-oriented agencies in supporting young men's mental health in an informal way."

Community Cohesion case studies

The IDeA Knowledge website now has a number of new case studies – which includes the one from "Welcome to Your Library", just in case you haven't looked at it!

See: http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=79007.

Children and Young People Funding

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has announced that £61 million will be made available over the next two years through the "Children and Young People Funding" package.

According to ContinYou:

> "The overall objective of the funding package will be to reduce underachievement and improve the life chances of children and young people by enhancing their educational development and fostering their health, well-being and social inclusion. In meeting this objective the funding package will address the themes of extended schools; extended early years provision; looked after children and young adults; youth provision; child protection; and children with special needs and disabilities. ContinYou's Extended Schools Support service is already providing support to cluster coordinators as they begin the work of developing extended services around schools in Northern Ireland."[13]

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

Waiting for the future …

Shelter have recently published a book of poetry[14] which explores the issues surrounding the facts that 3.5 million children live in poverty in the UK, and over a million children in Britain live in bad housing.

Young people and children in secondary and primary schools wrote the poems as part of End Child Poverty's Children Write campaign, which was supported by the Poetry Society and the National Association of Writers.[15]

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[13] Taken from ContinYou's *Extended Services* E-newsletter, 13, May 2006. (see: http://www.continyou.org.uk/tesss).
[14] *Waiting for the future: poems by children on poverty and bad housing.* Shelter/End Child Poverty, 2006 £6.75 (ISBN: 1-903595-56-8). Further information available at: http://england.shelter.org.uk/home/home-906.cfm/book/11053/.

Unaccompanied refugees and asylum seekers turning 18 …

Although this guide[16] is intended for "social workers and other professionals", it gives a lot of valuable background information – for example, the legal and policy context. It also focuses on "triple-planning", ie the need to work with young people to prepare them for staying in the UK, for remaining temporarily, or to be returned to their country-of-origin.[17]

SEN Press

SEN Press[18] is a new publishing house specialising in producing books that are accessible to young people (14-19 years) with special educational needs, operating at or around Level 1 (some of you may recall having received some information a while ago when Peter Clarke was trialling the texts).

The first 10 titles have just been published in the following categories:

- Work experience
- Everyday challenges
- Scary things
- Simple meals
- Ups and downs.

Child poverty in large families

The JRF have just published a report[19] which investigates the prevalence and characteristics of poor children in large families (three/four or more children) in the UK and how we compare with other countries.

Key findings include:

- "The UK child poverty rate for large families is among the highest in the OECD.

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[15] Thanks to Anne Harding for alerting me to this.

[16] *Unaccompanied refugees and asylum seekers turning 18: a guide for social workers and other professionals*. Save the Children, 2006. Available to download as a pdf from:
http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk_cache/scuk/cache/cmsattach/4100_Unaccompanied_Refugees_and_Asylum_Seekers_Turning_18.pdf.

[17] This item was taken from the Refugee Education email discussion list (refed), Digest 1214. Further information about refed from: www.refed.org.uk. Thanks to Helen Carpenter for alerting me to this.

[18] Further information available at: http://www.senpress.co.uk/index.html.

[19] Jonathan Bradshaw, Naomi Finch, Emese Mayhew, Veli-Matti Ritakallio and Christine Skinner. *Child poverty in large families*. The Policy Press, 2006. £12.95 (ISBN: 1-86134-876-2). Also available to download as a pdf (7 Mb) from:
http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0326.asp.

- The proportion of large families has declined over the last 60 years. Now only a third of children live in a family with three or more dependent children and only 10 per cent in a family with four or more.
- However, in 2004/5, 50 per cent of children in 4+-child families were poor compared with only 23 per cent in one-child families.
- Children in 4+-child families constitute 19 per cent of all poor children".

Also:

"The study shows that children in large families are more likely to have a parent who:
- is not in employment;
- is from an ethnic minority background - particularly Pakistani or Bangladeshi;
- had their first child at a young age;
- has a pre-school child in the household;
- has lower level of educational attainment;
- lives in London or Northern Ireland;
- is disabled."[20]

Finding the right support?

The Baring Foundation has just published a report[21] by the Norah Fry Research Centre (University of Bristol) looking at the needs of parents with learning difficulties and their children.

Amongst the key findings (and I have highlighted those with particular relevance to MLAs) are:

- A wide variety of agencies and professionals are engaging with the issues around supporting parents with learning difficulties and their children including community nurses, social workers, health visitors, midwives, psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and advocates.
- There is a range of barriers to the provision of appropriate support to parents including negative, or stereotypical, attitudes about parents with learning difficulties on the part of staff in some services.
- The provision of easy-to-understand information on all aspects of parenting and advocacy support are also critical, especially during child protection and judicial proceedings.
- Professionals working in services for adults with learning difficulties need training in child protection issues; those involved in children's – or

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[20] The two quotes are taken from:
http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0326.asp.
[21] Beth Tarleton, Linda Ward and Joyce Howarth. *Finding the right support? A review of issues and positive practice in supporting parents with learning difficulties and their children.* Baring Foundation, 2006 (ISBN: 0-9538040-6-2). Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/NorahFry/adobe_files/findingrightsupport.pdf.

generic – services need training about adults with learning difficulties and their support needs [taken from page v].[22]

Broader issues – Libraries, Museums and Archives

Capturing the public value of heritage …

The HLF, DCMS, English Heritage and the National Trust jointly organised a conference in January 2006, and the proceedings[23] have just been published.

The contents fall into four main parts:

- Public values of heritage, including
  - Heritage, democracy and public value

- Instrumental benefits of heritage, including
  - Sustainable communities
  - The impact of museums on learning
  - Public space, public value

- Intrinsic values of heritage, including
  - Community, identity and heritage
  - Capturing the opinions of people

- Values of heritage institutions.

As the conclusion states:

> "Ultimately the conference demonstrated that the heritage sector is committed to a more inclusive approach to heritage that recognises the real need to bring specialists and communities together. If public value is to be useful, it has to be more than a framework imposed from outside the sector with little understanding of what heritage is about. If it is to work, it has to enable us to share our passion for heritage with others, while at the same time helping us to engage with the realities of public service." [p99]

Broader issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Libraries Forum: "Libraries in the 21st century"

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[22] Thanks to the *Local Government Analysis and Research Bulletin* May 2006 for alerting me to this.
[23] Kate Clark (editor). *Capturing the public value of heritage: the proceedings of the London Conference 25-26 January 2006*. English Heritage, 2006 £10.00 (ISBN: 1-905624-10-7).

John Vincent was invited to attend this Forum, organised by the Shadow Culture team, at Portcullis House on 15 June. Some 90 people (including speakers) attended, and a brief summary of the main points is at Appendix 1.

Second round LAAs

The second round of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) was announced on 22 June 2005. The list of the 66 local authorities which completed copies of their LAAs (which were signed off on 23 March 2006) is attached as an Appendix.[24]

The local authorities negotiated their individual LAAs on behalf of their Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). In the case of lead county councils, this included district councils.

"New Directions for Trust and Participation"

IDeA is co-funding with DCLG a major new research project, "New directions for trust, governance and participation", to investigate the reality of trust at a local level. The research is being led by Demos and will involve Wakefield, Sunderland, Solihull and Lewisham local authorities.

Its aims are to:

- "Develop a more robust understanding of the role of trust in interactions and relationships at the local level.
- Develop this understanding through an action-led research programme focused on issues that the participating local authorities are currently preoccupied with and involved in.
- Help stimulate and lead a public conversation about the role of trust in local governance and institutional performance and its relationship with the wider well-being of communities.[25]

Broader issues – Other Agencies

Faithful cities …

This new report[26] starts by comparing Britain in 2006 with Britain 20 years ago, when the significant report, *Faith in the city*[27], was published.

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[24] Taken from: http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=1174338.

[25] Thanks to the *Local Government Analysis and Research Bulletin* May 2006 for this information.

[26] The Commission on Urban Life and Faith. *Faithful cities: a call for celebration, vision and justice*. Methodist Publishing House/Church House Publishing, 2006 £9.99 (ISBN: 1-85852-315-X). Available to download as a pdf (6 Mb) from:

Whilst there have been significant improvements in society, the report says that some people are being forced to lead their lives in destitution and on the margins of society. It is particularly concerned by the way that regeneration is being handled:

> "Yet the questions to be asked are as sharp and uncomfortable as they were in 1985. What drives regeneration – the actual needs of communities or the agenda of developers? What messages are given by the quality and character of the built environment? Are we creating new kinds of exclusion by building policies that reduce the social mix of an area? And, very importantly, how do we change the hectic atmosphere of much regeneration work, harried by rapidly changing and highly complicated government requirements and dominated by short-term and sometimes superficial or cosmetic goals?" [from the Introduction, p v]

There is also considerable debate about the term, 'social capital':

> "It has to be said that social capital is the subject of keen debate and criticism. Some see the language of 'capital' as reducing human relationships to an instrumental currency and as being bound to governmental economic and social calculations, priorities and policies. Many (not least faith and community participants in regeneration) question this. And, of course, not all social networks and the stocks of social capital that they harbour are benign – including religion itself … Nevertheless, we see 'social capital' as an essentially helpful idea." [p3]

The report also pulls no punches, for example:

> "The experience of the faithful on the ground is that the poor – if not getting quantifiably poorer – are the losers in a widening gulf between themselves and those who were growing more prosperous. There is a supreme irony in the way that when redevelopment and regeneration take place, too often it is people experiencing poverty who are moved or stranded. Scandalously, we live in one of the most unequal countries in Europe … where the 'trickle down' promise of market forces has failed to deliver, and where a draconian asylum system consigns a small section of the population to unacceptable destitution." [p4]

Amongst its recommendations are that:

- The gap between those living in poverty and the very wealthy must be

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http://www.culf.org.uk/files/Faithful%20Cities.pdf. There is also a summary available (405 Kb) from: http://www.culf.org.uk/files/summary.pdf.
[27] Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas. *Faith in the city: a call for action by church and nation.* Church House Publishing, 1985 (ISBN: 0715137093).

reduced.

- "Social cohesion depends on the ability of people to live in harmony. Faith groups in particular must combat racism, fascism and religious intolerance at all levels of society." [p90]
- "The Government must lead rather than follow public opinion on immigration, refugee and asylum policy. Specifically, asylum seekers should be allowed to sustain themselves and contribute to society through paid work. It is unacceptable to use destitution as a tool of coercion when dealing with 'refused' asylum seekers." [p90]
- "Government and faith communities must give new consideration to the informal education of young people." [p91]
- "We recommend a review of the role and impact of faith schools on social and community cohesion in urban settings." [p91]

The importance of the neighbourhood …

"This [new] paper[28] pulls out the main messages from JRF and other research findings to suggest what central government policy can do to make the neighbourhoods agenda work on the ground. The commitment to neighbourhoods in government policy is now well established across England, Scotland and Wales. As part of this agenda, the Minister of Communities and Local Government in England has made a commitment to tackling the 'two twin challenges' of (1) improving public services and (2) bridging the gap between citizens and local democracy. The details of effective joint working – between agencies and communities – can only be worked out at local level. But government policy can create an enabling framework – or it can make the situation worse. This paper draws on JRF and other research to address some of the key challenges government will face."[29]

This includes, for example, looking at:

- The "power gap" between central government and the local neighbourhood
- Funding
- Diversity
- Engaging young people.

Bicentenary of the parliamentary abolition of the slave trade in 2007

The Heritage Lottery Fund has produced a leaflet to promote the funding opportunities through its grant programmes for projects to mark the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in 2007.

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[28] Marilyn Taylor <u>and</u> Mandy Wilson. *The importance of the neighbourhood: tackling the implementation gap.* JRF, 2006. Available to download as a pdf (240 Kb) from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/details.asp?pubID=787.
[29] Taken from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/details.asp?pubID=787.

Copies can be downloaded as a pdf from www.hlf.org.uk or ordered from enquiries@hlf.org.uk or the Helpline on 020 7591 6042 (textphone 020 7591 6255).

Can you help HLF get the message about these funding opportunities out to heritage and community groups? If you would like a supply of the leaflets to distribute, please contact Diane Platts: dianep@hlf.org.uk or 020 7591 6024.[30]

Abbreviations and acronyms

DCLG = Department for Communities and Local Government
DCMS = Department for Culture, Media and Sport
ESOL = English for Speakers of Other Languages
HLF = Heritage Lottery Fund
JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation
MLA = Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
NIACE = National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (England & Wales)
NIMHE = National Institute for Mental Health in England
OECD = Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

This Newsletter was compiled by John Vincent, and all items are written by him, unless otherwise stated. Please send any comments or items for the next issue to:

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[30] Thanks to Karen Brookfield (Deputy Director (Policy & Research), HLF) for this.

Appendix 1: Libraries Forum: "Libraries in the 21st century"

Here is a brief summary of the main points.

Mark Field MP welcomed us, and very briefly set the scene – the Conservative Party [CP] is very concerned about libraries and is intending to establish a national Task Force to look at library service provision and development.

The 'Opening Remarks' were given by **Hugo Swire MP** (Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport):

- The current picture isn't rosy (eg closures, falling issues, poor bookstock)
- The CP want to work with the people who run libraries, to make them more efficient
- They want to foster a culture where libraries are seen as a priority – therefore, the CP is going to develop a strategy, working with Conservative-controlled library authorities, to improve libraries
- Their vision for libraries includes the provision of current books, plus out-of-print books, large print, children's books, reference books – libraries house the written word, and are also the "local search engine" for information
- Emphases on reading and developing basic skills – therefore, there need to be stronger links with schools and colleges
- Key developments must include: improvement in bookstock, better buildings, longer opening hours, improvements in services
- Libraries can "lift people up from poverty".

Lynne Brindley (Chief Executive, British Library) linked the importance of the local network of public libraries with the need for other kinds of provision, including the BL itself. Key points:

- Libraries have to change, to keep ahead of the game, which needs to counter the nostalgic attachment that some people have to libraries past
- Libraries must enable people to have access to "rich and deep collections"
- There is a danger in people using the medium – books – to define reading, when, in fact, reading takes place using a variety of media
- Many public libraries are doing excellent work, and we can learn from these beacons of excellence
- We need to move to a service-driven model of provision
- As part of this, libraries need to consider whether they can be all things to all people, or whether they need to target
- Libraries are "great civic spaces" and are trusted
- What we need is for library staff to answer back their critics with one voice!

- We also need to develop future leaders to take services forward.[31]

Eric Davies (Director of LISU) then presented a series of statistics (eg issue figures, expenditure, visits) to show the 'realities of the library service'.

This was then followed by three excellent presentations by senior library managers.

Allyson Jordan (Libraries Operations Manager, Swindon) highlighted developments:

- Swindon had carried out a libraries review in 2000, which has led to a number of major developments
- Key amongst these will be the new Central Library, due to open in 2008
- They have been working hard to improve the bookstock, using stock improvement teams
- They have a new staffing structure which separates the roles of librarians from that of managing service points
- They are developing work outside libraries to reach non-users, eg via deposit collections
- They will be introducing self-service to free more time for other work
- Staff in Swindon Libraries work hard!

Jennifer Holland (Head of Libraries and Information, Norfolk) talked on 'doing more with less'. Key points included:

- They focus on all people in Norfolk, including people who are deprived and migrant workers
- Their intention was to make their buildings and mobile libraries as close to communities as possible, and open as long as possible – if you have buildings, then you need to "sweat" them
- Increasing ICT means that more people can gain access to libraries, and more people can do things for themselves – this frees staff for other work.

Michele Jones (Libraries Manager, Essex) described a bit of Essex's "journey". She emphasised:

- The need for promotional work by and on behalf of libraries
- The importance of books and reading
- Libraries were the "front door" for Council and other public services
- Essex's new structure means that their Service Development Officers can focus on the needs of communities, eg via outreach.

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[31] In her talk, Lynne Brindley recommended a report on New Zealand libraries – it's: *Public libraries of New Zealand: a strategic framework 2006 to 2016*, available at: http://www.lianza.org.nz/library/files/store_011/StrategicFramework2006.pdf.

Michael Freer (Leader of Barnet Council) then gave a very particular Council perspective!

- He criticised Beacon Status and the CPA as leading to uncritical approaches to service-provision and to high spending
- Barnet had had a 35% drop in lending – why was this?
- He thought that there were too many targets set for libraries and local authorities
- One problem was that money was earmarked for high-priority services, so little was left to allocate to libraries
- Barnet are now moving to having three tiers of libraries: large flagship buildings; smaller neighbourhood buildings; and quick-choice/use service points (eg at stations).

Louise Bagshawe (author – and member of the CP's A List) gave us a hustings speech – which was valuable for identifying some key strands:

- Libraries must support books and reading, and a diversity of titles
- Books are at the heart of libraries, not ICT or AV materials.

Finally, **Tim Coates** (here described as former MD of Waterstones) spoke about "strategic options":

- DCMS is not engaged with public library users
- Libraries lack leadership
- Local community links are vital, and libraries are not developing these
- Libraries are "essentially passive" – it's not for librarians to tell us what to read, and libraries are not educational institutions
- Libraries must re-look at resource priorities and how they fund the core services
- He felt that we had had enough of DCMS, MLA, LLDA etc – it was time for "UDI for local authorities!"
- He argued for the need for cross-borough services in London, one design-brief for libraries, better stock procurement – he estimates that, if you followed his model, libraries could save some £30-40 million a year
- However, at the moment, no case can be put to the Treasury to increase library expenditure whilst there was such a high level of waste.

There was then supposed to be a discussion involving the invited audience, but, unfortunately, there was very little time for this.

John Dolan (MLA) made some quick points, including:

- Libraries are at the heart of their communities, and we need to see how to build on this
- Technology is a benefit, not a burden
- The differences between different library authorities need to be borne

Frances Hendrix (Laser Foundation) argued that it was easy to make fine promises when in opposition, and that she hoped the CP would continue to develop these approaches and hold them were they to become the next Government.

One of the **Friends of Little Chalfont Library Group** made some points about cuts to libraries (and how they were intending to take over running the Library as a community venture).

Lesli Good (Tower Hamlets Ideas Stores) made a point about MPs' needing to get more involved in looking at what local library services provide; and **Katherine Rushton** (*The Bookseller*) started to say that, as a young person, she felt that there had been no research to find out what young people really wanted – but was shouted down!

The meeting was then closed, and Mark Field invited those present to write to him to pursue issues that there had not been time to deal with today.

Appendix 2: QAC Sight Village 2006

The QAC Sight Village 2006 is to be held on 18-20 July 2006[32].

Calibre have asked me to circulate the following:

> **Calibre's first digital audio book service to be launched at QAC Sight Village 2006**
>
> If you work with people with sight problems, a visit to Hall D at QAC Sight Village is the ideal way to find out what's new in the field of reading services for blind and partially sighted people, and meet the people who provide those services.
>
> Sight Village runs from 18-20 July at the Clarendon Suites, Hagley Road, Birmingham.
>
> At Calibre's stand in Hall D you can:
> * find out about our new digital service;
> * try out digital books and players;
> * get full details of all our services.
>
> And you can find out about the other major organisations providing alternative format books.
>
> Calibre's new service, on MP3 disk, will run alongside our existing cassette service. New titles will be available on cassette and on MP3 disk. **Members will be able to choose books on disk, on cassette, or both. Like the cassette service, the MP3 disk service will be free of charge to users.**
>
> Calibre Audio Library brings the pleasure of reading to people with sight problems and other disabilities, through a free nationwide postal service of recorded books. The library has over 19,300 members and sends out more than 2,000 books every day – one every 14 seconds.
>
> Calibre's cassette service offers a choice of over 6,000 titles for adults and 1,000 for children, all recorded unabridged. The choice includes popular fiction, the major classics, biography and travel. 1,000 of these titles will be available on MP3 disk by July, and the MP3 collection will increase rapidly thereafter.
>
> Full details of all our services will be on our website www.calibre.org.uk.
>
> Calibre will also be at the following:
> * Sight North East in Gateshead - 6 September 2006

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[32] For further information about the Queen Alexandra College Sight Village, see: http://www.qac.ac.uk/sightvillage/6-1.html.

- Sight Matters in Maidstone – 19 September 2006
- Weston Super Mare (Winter Gardens) – 10 October 2006

If you have any questions, or if you are organising an event yourself, please do get in touch.

We look forward to seeing you at Sight Village.

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Appendix 3: Local Area Agreements – list of local authorities

Barking and Dagenham, London Borough of
Bedfordshire County Council
Birmingham City Council
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Blackpool Borough Council
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
Brent, London Borough of
Buckinghamshire County Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Camden, London Borough of
Croydon, London Borough of
Darlington Borough Council
Durham County Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
East Sussex County Council
Enfield, London Borough of
Essex County Council
Hampshire County Council
Harrow, London Borough of
Hartlepool Borough Council
Herefordshire County Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Hounslow, London Borough of
Isle of Wight Council
Islington, London Borough of
Kensington and Chelsea, Royal Borough of
Kingston upon Thames, Royal Borough of
Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Lancashire County Council
Leeds City Council
Leicester City Council
Leicestershire County Council
Lewisham, London Borough of
Luton Borough Council
Manchester City Council
Norfolk County Council
Northamptonshire County Council
Northumberland County Council
Nottingham City Council
Nottinghamshire County Council

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Poole, Borough of
Redbridge, London Borough of
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Shropshire County Council
Somerset County Council
South Gloucestershire Council
South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Sunderland City Council
Surrey County Council
Swindon Borough Council
Tower Hamlets, London Borough of
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Waltham Forest, London Borough of
West Berkshire Council
West Sussex County Council
Westminster, London Borough of
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
Wokingham District Council
Worcestershire County Council