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.

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Did you see …?

Conservation Bulletin

The latest issue[1] of English Heritage's *Bulletin* looks at broadening access to the historic environment of England and includes many articles on current projects by a range of community and heritage organisations, as well as "how to" guides and links to resources. It includes reports on some fascinating developments across the country (for example, the growing links between Kedleston Hall near Derby and the local Indian community).[2]

Capital in culture

Just in case you missed this article[3] in *The Guardian* by Blair McPherson, Director of Community Services for Lancashire County Council – stressing the importance of museums, arts projects and libraries, he says:

> "Investing in culture and investing in an area's cultural infrastructure requires local authorities to see the links between culture, regeneration, community cohesion, social inclusion and wellbeing. It requires recognition that, far from being the icing on the cake, culture is a fundamental ingredient in making for a better place to live, work, visit and invest in."[4]

"Something to shout about"

Indeed! The *LGC*[5] recently featured libraries in their culture & arts coverage, looking at how some services are transforming, and citing:

- Nottingham's Citycard
- East Ayrshire's "Read Yourself Well" programme
- Kingston upon Thames's Hook Centre
- Camden's work placements as part of WTYL

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[1] *Conservation Bulletin*, 55, Summer 2007. Available to download as a series of pdfs from: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.11241.

[2] Thanks to Rachel Hasted (English Heritage) for alerting me to this.

[3] Blair McPherson "Capital in culture", *The Guardian* 26 June 2007. See: http://society.guardian.co.uk/localgovt/comment/0,,2108281,00.html.

[4] Thanks to Fiona O'Brien at LLDA for drawing my attention to this.

[5] Victoria Hoban "Something to shout about", *Local Government Chronicle*, 14 June 2007, pp14-15.

- Merton's revitalised home visit services.[6]

Young people not in education, employment or training [NEET]

You may have seen a recent announcement[7] that the number of young people aged 16-18, who are NEET, has dropped from 10.9% in 2005 to 10.3% in 2006.

However, estimates of the numbers seem to vary greatly. According to notes on the then DfES website:

> "Estimating NEET is done by subtracting the number of young people known to be in education and training from the total population. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is then used to estimate what proportion of the residual group are NEET. Given NEET estimates are reliant on the LFS, a sample survey, an error margin of around +/- 0.6 percentage points is estimated around the 16-18 NEET figures. Connexions data also shows a fall in the proportion of 16-18 year old NEET young people which adds further evidence of a real decline."

This appears therefore to include, for example, young people on their gap year.

More analysis is also required to compare these figures with those given in the SEU report, *Transitions[8]*, which includes:

- In autumn 2004, there were around 5.5 million people aged between 16 and 24 in England. Of these, around 750,000 were not in employment, education or training.

Tackling social exclusion – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

More than potato prints …

This new report[9] from the Arts Council highlights how arts activities are being used in Sure Start Centres (and elsewhere) in the West Midlands:

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[6] Thanks to Mike Clarke at LLDA for alerting me to this.
[7] See: http://www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=294704&NewsAreaID=2.
[8] *Transitions: a Social Exclusion Unit interim report on young adults.* ODPM, 2005. Introduction only now available to download as a pdf from: http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/seu/downloaddoccf3f.pdf?id=703.
[9] *More than potato prints: making the most of the arts in early years settings.* Arts Council England, West Midlands, 2007. (ISBN-13: 978-0-7287-1343-7). Available to download as a pdf (452 Kb) from: http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/documents/publications/phpwmvHG5.pdf.

"to ensure that the arts are central to family life from the earliest stages, and that they are able to reach to the heart of some of this country's most deprived communities."

One of the case studies is of a joint piece of work by Worcestershire Libraries and Sure Start.

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Being the gay one

This new report[10] by Stonewall for the DOH looks at "the ways in which harassment and homophobia against employees manifest themselves in the health and social care sector." [p3]

Although looking at the health sector, the report raises issues of critical concern, which could give valuable pointers to MLAs.

"Discrimination occurred in a variety of contexts. All participants commented on the **general culture** of the sector. Staff learnt that their place of work was homophobic when they:

- Heard homophobic language
- Witnessed explicit derision of lesbian, gay and bisexual people (including patients).
- Recognised that preventing homophobia was not a priority of their employer.
- Realised homophobia was not reflected in policy statements, training programmes, or part of organisational culture.
- When managers ignored, or contributed towards, homophobic comments and incidents.

Participants reported cases of **direct harassment** where they experienced discrimination because of their sexual orientation. They experienced:

- Unequal treatment, for example, when entering a civil partnership.
- Discrimination in relation to their career progression.
- Exclusion by their colleagues.
- Inappropriate questions or comments.

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[10] Ruth Hunt, Katherine Cowan and Brent Chamberlain. *Being the gay one: experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual people working in the health and social care sector.* DOH, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (101 kb) from: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_075568.

- Were subjected to, or overheard, homophobic language.

The participants all developed various **strategies** to counteract the affects of discrimination. They:

- Don't disclose their sexual orientation to anyone.
- Modify their CV and omit any references to anything that could indicate they are lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- Become advocates and spokespeople for lesbian, gay and bisexual rights, even though this can "become quite tiring".
- Leave the place of work and seek work where they will experience less discrimination.
- Leave the sector entirely.

The participants were very clear about what needed to happen to **prevent discrimination**. They wanted:

- Better training.
- More robust and accessible policies.
- An increase in visibility of gay people, and access to role models.
- Effective disciplinary procedures where they would not be victimised if they made a complaint.
- Their managers to understand the law, and the duties they have to protect staff.
- Networks set up and supported on a local and national level so they felt less isolated.
- The sector to recognise the impact that discrimination against staff will inevitably have on effective patient care.

The participants made a series of **recommendations** to the Department of Health that are summarised here:

- Investigate the nature and quality of training being delivered to the sector.
- Explicitly and proactively tell the sector (particularly managers) that homophobia is unlawful in the workplace and the duties they have to protect staff.
- Inform employees of their rights and what they should expect from employers.
- Support and celebrate existing local and national networks and encourage further development.
- Work towards a single equality scheme that places legal duties on the sector that are similar to race, gender and disability.
- Raise the profile of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff working in the sector.
- Acknowledge and address the extent and nature of perceived conflicting freedoms within the sector and make policy recommendations about how to address it.

- Identify and promote areas where the sector is doing well.
- Inform the sector about forthcoming legislation relating to goods and services discrimination and patients.
- Engage directly with identified employers within the sector and help them become exemplars of best practice." [pp4-5 – emphases theirs]

Care matters: time for change

The White Paper[11] (which builds on responses to the Green Paper, *Care matters*[12]) focuses on how services for looked-after children and young people can be improved. This includes sections on:

- Corporate parenting: getting it right
- Family and parenting support
- Care placements: a better experience for everyone
- Delivering a first class education
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Transition to adulthood
- The role of the practitioner.

After the initial enthusiasm in the Green Paper for reading (and the learning from the Paul Hamlyn "Right to Read" work), the White Paper has much less on this, although it does include a glowing write-up of Knowsley's "Right to Read" project and also mentions MLA NE/Yorkshire's MAX Card.

One Wales

Labour and Plaid Cymru have agreed in principle to form a coalition Welsh Assembly Government, and have produced a power-sharing document, *One Wales[13]*. This includes references to social justice, and also has some positive policy statements regarding libraries:

> "Wales's libraries will be dramatically improved so that they can develop free access to cultural materials for all, fit for the 21st century." [p35]

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[11] *Care matters: time for change*. Cm 7137. The Stationery Office, 2007 (ISBN-13: 978-0-10-171372-6). Available to download as a pdf from:
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/timeforchange/docs/timeforchange.pdf.

[12] *Care matters: transforming the lives of children and young people in care*. Cm 6932. The Stationery Office, 2006 (ISBN-10: 0-10-169322-2). Available to download as a pdf (1.21 Mb) from:
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/6731-DfES-Care%20Matters.pdf.

[13] *One Wales: a progressive agenda for the government of Wales – an agreement between the Labour and Plaid Cymru Groups in the National Assembly*. Available to download as a pdf from:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/27_06_07_onewales.pdf.

> "We will, through working with local authorities, establish a major programme of capital investment and refurbishment of our public library network." [p36]

> "We will continue to invest in improving ICT in libraries, including maintaining free, universal public access to the internet, to help bring them into the 21st century." [p36][14]

(You may also have seen the news that 15 Welsh libraries have been given nearly £1.5m between them to re-furbish and upgrade their buildings.[15])

Our shared future

The report[16] of the Commission on Integration & Cohesion has just been published.

It sets out practical proposals for building integration and cohesion at a local level, based on four key principles:

- "Firstly, the sense of **shared futures** which we believe is at the heart of our model and our recommendations – an emphasis on articulating what binds communities together rather than what differences divide them, and prioritising a shared future over divided legacies
- Secondly, an emphasis on **a new model of rights and responsibilities** that we believe will be fit for purpose in the 21st century – one that makes clear both a sense of citizenship at national and local level, and the obligations that go along with membership of a community, both for individuals or groups
- Thirdly, an ethics of hospitality – a **new emphasis on mutual respect and civility** that recognises that alongside the need to strengthen the social bonds within groups, the pace of change across the country reconfigures local communities rapidly, meaning that mutual respect is fundamental to issues of integration and cohesion
- A commitment to equality that sits alongside the need to deliver **visible social justice**, to prioritise transparency and fairness, and build trust in the institutions that arbitrate between groups." [p7, emphases theirs]

Chapter 1 sets out the context in which the Commission was operating – "since the end of the Second World War, we have seen the kind of social changes that can prompt significant challenges to these models of fairness and equality." [p14]

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[14] Source: Wales Current Awareness Service 356.

[15] See: http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/presreleasearchive/1528233/?lang=en.

[16] *Our shared future*. Commission on Integration & Cohesion, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (1.11 Mb) from: http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/upload/assets/www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/our_shared_future.pdf. Also, a selection of case studies and other documents are available at: http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/Our_final_report.aspx.

Chapter 2, "Analysis", looks at just how integrated and cohesive English society is. Overall, it suggests that "the national picture is a positive one – perceptions of cohesion are good in most areas" [p22].

However, "[h]ow cohesive an area is will depend upon a series of interacting factors about that area and the people who live there, so that the story of cohesion in each local area will be different" [p24], and the analysis then looks at the complex relationships between integration and cohesion and:

- Deprivation
- Discrimination
- Crime and antisocial behaviour
- Level of diversity
- Immigration.

In addition, the report also suggests two new areas of concern:

- Perceptions of fairness of allocation of public services
- The influence of the global on the local – "super-diversity" (migrants arriving in the UK from all over the world); multiple identity ("people are moving away from single identities to multiple identities not just based on race or ethnicity, but differences in values, differences in life-style, consumption, social class, differences across generations, gender etc." [p34]); and trans-nationalism (meaning that "the UK is far more plugged in to events around the world …" [p35]).

Chapter 3 then takes this analysis and forms a new definition of integration and cohesion:

> "An integrated and cohesive community is one where:
> - There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country
> - There is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn
> - Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, access to services and treatment
> - There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny
> - There is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common

- There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods." [p42]

Chapters 4-7 then take the four underlying principles and look at how best to effect change in national and local policy.

Developing shared futures

"… from now on both local and national identities need to be about shared futures." [p47]

The Commission recommends that "central Government sets out a clear statement of integration and cohesion policy" [p47] that:

- "Includes a recognition of the need to play a longer game rather than being driven by crises …
- Is driven by a whole community approach" [pp47-48].

In addition, they recommend that "Government invest in a national shared futures programme from 2008 to 2012, leading from the European Year of Intercultural Education up to the Olympics and using the themes of both to underpin key messages." [p48]

At the same time as there are these national initiatives, the report also places huge emphasis on the need to develop local approaches which include:

- Developing a shared vision at local level
- Ensuring that every area in England has an integration and cohesion strategy/plan
- The role of the local authority in 'place-shaping'
- Mapping local communities and using that map to identify tensions and opportunities
- Monitoring local authorities' work on integration and cohesion
- Mainstreaming "integration and cohesion into their Sustainable Community Strategies, LSP management and wider service delivery, particularly for youth provision." [p52]
- Developing a new local performance framework
- Developing strong local leadership.

There is also further analysis of the different types of area where there may be issues of integration and cohesion, and the need for specific actions to deal with these:

- "Changing less affluent rural areas – typically areas experiencing complex patterns of immigration for the first time, with Eastern European migrants coming to work in agriculture or food processing. [p58]
- Stable less affluent urban areas with manufacturing decline

- Stable less affluent urban areas without manufacturing decline
- Changing less affluent urban areas
- "Towns or suburban areas which are not deprived, but in which there is a single issue such as terrorism arrests or a proposed centre for asylum seekers which is causing tensions." [p59]

Strengthening rights and responsibilities

> "Our proposal therefore is that we use integration and cohesion policy to generate a working sense of citizenship that is based on a set of rights and responsibilities appropriate for the changing UK of the 21st century, and one that chimes at a national as well as local level." [p62]

Recommendations include the further development of national citizenship (including "an ambitious response to the Ajegbo report on Citizenship Education[17]" [p63]; strengthening of the role of citizenship ceremonies; the setting up of a "new programme of voluntary service for young people expressly linked to local citizenship" [p64]; work towards shared values); and the setting up of "a national body to manage the integration of new migrants, sponsored by Communities and Local Government, but independent of Government" [p68] and further work to integrate new arrivals.

This new body's priorities would be:

- "To clarify the objectives of a strategy for new migrants: target groups (temporary and permanent; family members, labour migrants, refugees, students); right areas of focus (employment, social and democratic engagement, good community relations, access to essential services; cultural diversity not assimilation).
- To baseline the evidence: clarifying the current situation and building an evidence base of local population changes with new data and research; working with ONS and others to improve our understanding of migrants work patterns and motivations, and address issues with existing sources of information like National Insurance.
- To consolidate and take forward the good practice work currently being developed by the IDeA: setting up a helpline for local practitioners to access advice, and staffed with specialist support teams who could be called out to areas to offer support – eliminating duplication and reinvention, and addressing the issue whereby the best performing areas are currently spending lots of their time mentoring other areas.
- To provide guidance on how to work with settled communities in areas experiencing high levels of migration: building on the work being done by New Link in Peterborough, for example …

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[17] *Curriculum review: diversity & citizenship.* DfES, 2007 (ISBN-13: 978-1-84478-883-5). Available to download as a pdf (1.827 Mb) from: http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/Diversity&Citizenship.pdf. For a brief outline of this report, see: *The Network Newsletter*, 68, February 2007, p3.

- To explore whether asking new migrants (from the EU or elsewhere) to attend the local town hall to pick up local welcome packs when they arrive might address some of the data tracking issues …
- To secure buy-in and joined up policy making from Whitehall and the third sector: acting as a catalyst for policy development, and an independent voice both for new migrants and those settled communities experiencing rapid change." [pp68-69]

The report also recommends developing:

- Welcome packs for all new migrants
- Partnership-working to deliver 'cultural briefings'
- Enhancing the role of employers in dealing with integration and cohesion
- A review of ESOL provision ("We recognise that finite resources means that we need to be creative in how we deliver ESOL support …" [p73]).

Building mutual respect and civility

"We argue that to build integration and cohesion properly, there needs to be a wider commitment to civil society, and respect for others." [p77]

The Commission proposes:

- An increased focus on young people
- Working across generations
- Working with women
- Working with faith communities
- Building stronger communities – community development and capacity-building
- Tackling antisocial behaviour and resolving tensions.

Making social justice visible

"… by which we mean a commitment to equal and fair treatment, combined with a transparency and fairness to all communities" [p97]

The Commission therefore proposes:

"… that we should recognise that integration and cohesion are linked to a commitment to social justice and tackling inequalities in the long term. This means a sense of equality and fairness for settled communities, just as much as positive action to close the gaps in outcomes for minority ethnic groups." [p98]

To achieve this, they propose:

- Targeted action to address inequalities, with the new CEHR represented locally through a network of teams

- That any work is undertaken fairly and in a way that arbitrates between groups
- The development of a communication plan by every local authority, that would keep all communities abreast of changes
- Working with the media, including engaging them in local structures, such as LSPs
- Tackling myths ("Local Authorities should develop myth busting strategies aimed specifically at established communities … [and] Local Authorities should work with the media to actively rebut myths and misinformation, both in between and during election periods …" [p104]; "… a rapid rebuttal unit should be established jointly with partners including the CEHR, Communities and Local Government, LGA, LGiU, and that it should produce training packs for local officials and councillors dealing with positive media messaging and diversity awareness." [p105]
- Demonstrating fairness with data.

Chapter 8, "Acting in the four spheres", takes these four key principles and shows how they apply to the four "spheres of interaction highlighted in our interim statement." [p109]

These spheres are:

- Schools
- Workplace
- Sports, culture and leisure
- Shared public spaces and residential areas.

The "recommended strategy overall is to improve the value of the everyday interactions that take place in the four spheres outlined above, whilst also creating opportunities for new ones to be taken up." [p111]

The Commission then outlines the three ideas that have informed their thinking – civility, social capital and meaningful contact:

- "*Civility is about tolerance, politeness and an ethics of hospitality. It can be seen in everyday, 'banal', fleeting interactions in public spaces. People co-operate using a set of unwritten rules: by avoiding bumping into each other; by helping in response to simple and specific requests (e.g. directions), by ignoring differences and so on. There can be extreme reactions when people break these unwritten rules on purpose or by accident – hence the importance of perceptions of anti-social behaviour to cohesion, and complaints about people who do not know the local ground rules of civility.*
- *The social capital in a community … is linked to the strength of its social networks between people. There are two types of social capital: bonding social capital is about networks of similar people such as family members and friends from similar backgrounds; and bridging social capital refers to relations between people from different*

backgrounds. Both forms of social capital benefit a community and its members, but only bridging capital is about people from different groups getting on (key to our measure of cohesion) – although we have found that bonding capital can give people the confidence they need in order to bridge.

- *Meaningful contact between people from different groups has been shown to break down stereotypes and prejudice … Contact is meaningful when: conversations go beyond surface friendliness; in which people exchange personal information or talk about each other's differences and identities; people share a common goal or share an interest; and they are sustained long-term (so one off or chance meetings are unlikely to make much difference). Importantly, this theory suggests that keeping difference in the forefront of people's minds when they are interacting across groups helps them to generalise what they have experienced – so they will take from their encounter not just a revised view of an individual, but of a whole group.*" [pp111-112 – italics theirs]

Their proposals include:

- A light touch, locally-driven set of activities, supported by national events (such as the national Community Day)
- Specific work in Education
- The role of employers in building skills and tackling discrimination, and as community champions
- Shared public spaces and residential areas – the key policy priorities are regeneration and the development of community premises.

In terms of sports, culture and leisure, the proposals and recommendations are rather thin (although libraries do feature in the case studies – see below):

"**8.34** Our starting point is that Local Strategic Partnerships should invite local sports and cultural organisations to sit on their cohesion sub-groups or networks, in recognition of the role they play in building integration and cohesion. This is in the context of increasing discussion about the status of culture and sport in people's lives – as it moves from being seen as an 'optional extra' to acting as a fundamental reference point for personal and social lives, and the wellbeing of communities.
8.35 We are mindful of the Olympics, and the opportunities it affords to build integration and cohesion. Conscious that it may appear a London-centric event, we would urge DCMS to provide support to the regions in their planning – and to consider the opportunities for engaging young people in the Cultural Olympiad in particular.
8.36 We are also conscious of an existing focus on how the arts (and of drama in particular) can provide a safe space for exploration of challenging issues – allowing for active debate, disagreement, mediation and resolution with the support of skilled mediators.
8.37 Our consultations have focused in particular on the range of local opportunities provided by sports and leisure facilities and cultural

organisations, and the particular opportunities they afford for bringing together people from different backgrounds with a shared goal. Our assessment is that there is a lot of good work happening on the ground, but that good practice is not always shared, and that it is often left up to individual organisations to find their way to encouraging participation from local communities.

8.38 Recent work has highlighted the link between participation in sport and the development of shared identities and a shared purpose67. We have also seen case studies of targeted art work for high risk groups in particular.

We therefore recommend:

- **That nationally, cultural development agencies, including the Arts Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund, should require applicants for funding to demonstrate their commitment to integration and cohesion outcomes as part of its funding criteria.** This would be in addition to the current focus on equality of access and participation.

- **That this same principle should apply to local public agencies when considering the potential for "bridging" activities across communities when funding sports and arts projects.**" [pp125-126 – emphases theirs]

Chapter 9 pulls together all the recommendations in order to make monitoring of progress easier.

Annex A outlines how the Commission has worked, including a list of respondents (but, unfortunately, not including The Network, despite the fact that we had a letter thanking us for our contribution!).

Annex B sets out the new 'families' outlined in Chapter 4.

Annex C includes the Commission's response to the then DfES Duty to Promote Cohesion.

Annex D sets out the Commission's views on Single Group Funding, in which they "set out our arguments for why funding to community groups should be rebalanced towards those that promote integration and cohesion, and why 'Single Group Funding' should be the exception rather than the rule for both Government and external funders." [p160]

Finally, in Annex E, the Commission comments on translations – this is the chapter which caught full media attention. They set out their "arguments for why Local Authorities and their partners should consider moving from a position of automatic translation of all documents into community languages, towards a more selective approach – driven by need, and set firmly in the context of communications strategies for all residents." [p165]

The Commission has published a set of <u>case studies</u>[18] separately, which includes "Refugees into Libraries" (Leicester) and "Libraries Connect" (Hull).

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So, although the cultural sector doesn't feature hugely in the Commission's recommendations, nevertheless, as can be seen from the above outline, there is a huge number of areas here where we have a vital role to play, especially in using the new definition of integration and cohesion to help us develop work to fit in with the four key principles.

Reaching out: think family

This new report[19] from the Social Exclusion Task Force concentrates on the 2% of families – or 140,000 families across Britain – who experience complex and multiple problems.

The key – and vital – message from this analysis is that:

> "If we are to reach out to families at risk we need to identify and exploit opportunities to build the capacity of systems and services to 'think family'." [p4]

It is very much a starting point:

> "This report is a staging post rather than the end of the Families At Risk Review. As the first stage of our work it sets out our key emerging analysis of what families, practitioners and policy-makers have been telling us." [p5]

It looks at the sorts of issues such families face, and then goes on to investigate how best to engage families, linking to the progress that has been made in achieving the Every Child Matters outcomes.

We also have an important role to play in this work (although unrecognised by the Task Force, as yet). The report concludes:

> "We are keen to work with stakeholders and other government departments over the coming months to test out this initial analysis further and to identify areas where policy changes could make a big difference to the lives of excluded families." [p57]

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[18] *Integration and cohesion case studies*. Commission on Integration & Cohesion, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (599 Kb) from:
http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/upload/assets/www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/integration_and_cohesion_case_studies.pdf.
[19] *Reaching out: think family – analysis and themes from the Families At Risk Review*. Social Exclusion Task Force, Cabinet Office, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (530 Kb) from:
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/documents/think_families/think_families.pdf.

Let's see if we can get them involved with MLAs and the cultural/heritage sector generally.

Today's woman: your say in the future

 This new report[20] from DCLG brings together the results of the consultations carried out in 2005-6; major emphases are on the need for information to be targeted and made much more available to women, and on employment, including:

> "The public sector puts into practice the recommendations of the report, for example undertaking equal pay reviews, action to promote quality part time jobs, offering career development pathways to low-paid part-time workers and promoting gender equality among contractors." [p48]

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

Severe child poverty in the UK

This new report[21] from Save the Children looks at the extent of and reasons for 'severe' child poverty.

> "Our recommended measure of severe child poverty incorporates both low income and material deprivation.
>
> > *Children are classified as being in 'severe' poverty if they are in households with very low income (ie, below 50 per cent threshold), in combination with material deprivation (deprived of both adult and child necessities, at least one of which shows some degree of severity, ie, two or more items). Those in households below 70 per cent of median income, in combination with some form of adult or child deprivation are classified as being in non-severe poverty. The remaining are classified as not being in poverty.*
>
> Based on the above definition, 10.2 per cent of children in the UK (1.3 million) are classified as being in severe poverty. This sub-group of children shows relatively high levels of deprivation on each of the specific child-related or adult-related necessities.

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[20] *Today's woman: your say in the future*. DCLG, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (2.20 Mb) from:
http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/publications/Todays_woman_final_publication.pdf.
[21] Monica Magadi and Sue Middleton. *Severe child poverty in the UK*. Save the Children, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (252 Kb) from:
http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk_cache/scuk/cache/cmsattach/4622_sevchildpovuk.pdf.

There are significant regional variations in the experience of severe child poverty in the UK, ranging from around seven per cent in the South (the South-East and South-West) of England to 17 per cent in London.

The analysis of characteristics of children in severe poverty largely conforms to expected patterns, increasing our confidence that the recommended measure is identifying the most disadvantaged. The results show a relatively high likelihood of severe poverty among children: living in London, Wales and Northern Ireland; with workless parents; whose parents have low educational attainment; living in rented accommodation; whose parents have no savings/assets; in large families of four or more children; from ethnic minority groups, especially of Asian origin; and in families with disabled adult(s)." [p24 – italics theirs][22]

The school report …

This new report[23] from Stonewall highlights the extent of homophobic bullying in UK schools.

As the summary suggests, there is a major problem here:

"Homophobic bullying is almost epidemic in Britain's schools. Almost two thirds (65 per cent) of young lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils have experienced direct bullying. Seventy five per cent of young gay people attending faith schools have experienced homophobic bullying.

Even if gay pupils are not directly experiencing bullying, they are learning in an environment where homophobic language and comments are commonplace. Ninety eight per cent of young gay people hear the phrases 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay' in school, and over four fifths hear such comments often or frequently.

Ninety seven per cent of pupils hear other insulting homophobic remarks, such as 'poof', 'dyke', 'rug-muncher', 'queer' and 'bender'. Over seven in ten gay pupils hear those phrases used often or frequently.

Less than a quarter (23 per cent) of young gay people have been told that homophobic bullying is wrong in their school. In schools that have said homophobic bullying is wrong, gay young people are 60 per cent more likely not to have been bullied.

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[22] Source: Institute of Race Relations Weekly Digest, 22 June 2007.
[23] Ruth Hunt and Johan Jensen. *The school report: the experiences of young gay people in Britain's schools.* Stonewall, 2007. Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/school_report.pdf.

Over half of lesbian and gay pupils don't feel able to be themselves at school. Thirty five per cent of gay pupils do not feel safe or accepted at school." [p2]

Particularly worrying was the quote from one school student:

"I told the librarian about it, she told me it was my fault for admitting to being bisexual. I pointed out she wouldn't tolerate racism or religious bullying and she said it was 'totally different'." [p9]

Velvet Magazine

"*Velvet Magazine* is a general interest, quarterly magazine for lesbian women. We have a lot of interviews with writers (Sarah Waters, Sandi Toksvig, Louise Welsh for eg). However, it is not exclusive and we have some non-lesbian subscribers. It was started in August 2004 to fill the gap for more mature, non-scene lesbians. It aims to be more 'intellectual' and issue based than what's otherwise on offer, but we don't take ourselves too seriously. Humour, particularly from regular columnist V G Lee is always included, as are articles dealing with lesbian specific issues, book and film reviews, parenting, health issues, poetry and short fiction.

Velvet is entirely run by volunteers and is currently non-profit making (we just break even on the publishing costs). Research has shown that 70% of our readership are over 40 with many being over 60. We feel many people in this age range would use libraries, so this would be a good outlet for people to find out about Velvet, and to provide it as a resource to those who could not afford to buy it …

More information is available at our website: www.velvet-mag.co.uk."[24]

Embracing diversity: guidance for managers

The Chartered Management Institute has just published this useful, brief introduction[25] to dealing with diversity in the workplace.

It covers:

- Definitions of what diversity is – and is not
- Outline of growing importance of diversity in the workplace
- Barriers
- Tackling resistance to diversity
- Steps in developing an effective policy
- List of sources of further information.

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[24] Source: email from Naomi Young (Editor).
[25] *Embracing diversity: guidance for managers*. Chartered Management Institute, 2007. Available to download as a pdf from:
http://www.managers.org.uk/client_files/Diversity%20Final1.pdf.

Tackling low educational achievement

New research from JRF[26] looks at the many reasons for low educational achievement. Key points from the research include:

- "Nearly half of all low achievers are white British males.
- White British students on average – boys and girls – are more likely than other ethnic groups to persist in low achievement.
- Boys outnumber girls as low achievers by three to two.
- Chinese and Indian pupils are most successful in avoiding low achievement. Afro-Caribbean pupils are the least successful on average, though their results have been improving.
- Eligibility for Free School Meals is strongly associated with low achievement, but significantly more so for white British pupils than other ethnic groups. Other indicators related to low achievement, as measured in the immediate area round the student's home, are:
    - levels of unemployment;
    - single parent households; and
    - parents with low educational qualifications.
- Poor reading and writing scores at primary school are significantly associated with later low achievement.
- Not speaking English at home is typically a short-lived handicap: African and Asian students who experience it commonly recover by secondary school.
- Disadvantaged students are more likely to attend poorly performing secondary schools, and can miss out on the best teaching as a result of the 5A*-C GCSE target.
- Looked-after children and those with Special Educational Needs often do not get the support they require …"[27]

The summary of the report concludes:

"There is an agenda which will reduce low achievement. It means reaching more fully those who most need help – children in public care, those with Special Educational Needs and those very much larger numbers who are not in desperate plight but still need considerably greater help from the education system. The agenda lies in pre-school, primary schools and secondary schools. Early-years provision has to do better in reaching the most disadvantaged, particularly to help improve parenting and early learning. In schools there is a need for some reallocation and enhancement of expenditures; reform of features of the school system which actually contribute to low achievement; and addressing the other policy priorities listed above. All these could considerably reduce the numbers of young people who

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[26] Robert Cassen and Geeta Kingdon. *Tackling low educational achievement*. JRF, 2007. (ISBN-13: 978-1-85935-584-8). Available to download as a pdf (924 Kb) from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/2063-education-schools-achievement.pdf.
[27] Taken from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/2095.asp.

currently leave school with difficult prospects. Giving far greater priority to reducing low achievement by these means would represent money and effort well spent, both for the individuals concerned and for society at large."[28]

Health issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Improving health and well-being

The Audit Commission have just produced this "Briefing"[29] which looks at the work that the Commission has been undertaking, and "shows how the issues are being tackled and how further progress could be made." [p1] The report also acts as a reminder of the Commission's "Know Your Communities Toolkit" which is available online[30].

Abbreviations and acronyms

CEHR = Commission for Equality & Human Rights
DCLG = Department for Communities and Local Government
DfES = Department for Education & Skills
DOH = Department of Health
ESOL = English for speakers of other languages
JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation
LGA = Local Government Association
LGiU = Local Government Information Unit
LLDA = London Libraries Development Agency
MLAs = museums, libraries and archives
ODPM = Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
SEU = Social Exclusion Unit
WTYL = Welcome To Your Library

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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[28] Also taken from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/2095.asp.
[29] *Improving health and well-being.* Audit Commission (Health Briefing), 2007. Available to download as a pdf either as the full report (875 Kb) or in a printer-friendly version (109 Kb) from: http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/NATIONAL-REPORT.asp?CategoryID=&ProdID=1F9DA3D9-AF0F-4381-83E2-76D8F94678E6&fromREPORTSANDDATA=NATIONAL-REPORT.
[30] See: http://www.userfocus.audit-commission.gov.uk/KycHome.aspx.