

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.

For a general overview of work to tackle social exclusion, see the CILIP Community Services Group site at <http://www.cilip.org.uk/groups/csg/si/index.html>.

Supporting the hardest-to-reach young people ...

DfES have just published¹ the assessment by NFER of the Neighbourhood Support Fund (three-year project funding to test what works in engaging hard-to-reach/at risk young people).

Its findings are very pertinent to our work:

“Projects were successful in engaging hard-to-reach young people through outreach work, building a positive reputation within their neighbourhood and in establishing good links with other local experts to enable the target group to overcome barriers to achieve their potential. For example, 51 per cent of the young people were attracted to the NSF project through direct contact with project staff or by the activities offered. Informal methods of referral, such as word-of-mouth, emerged as an important means of engaging this group ...

Young people were attracted to the projects by the activities being offered. Many young people joined projects in order to prepare and plan for their future. For example, in one survey 60 per cent of young people wanted to find out about their future options and, in a second survey, 37 per cent thought involvement would help them to get a job. Young people continued to participate in NSF because the projects provided social support and the opportunity to meet with their peers.”

The pilot projects did work with agencies other than schools – youth services, the police, etc – but none seems to have made links (or, at least, these are not reported)

¹ Sarah Golden *et al.* *Supporting the hardest-to-reach young people: the contribution of the Neighbourhood Support Fund*. DfES (Research Report RR535), 2004. Available at www.dfes.gov.uk/index.

with libraries, museums or archives. Yet, given what their partners were identified as offering, we could have been in there too:

- “referral and recruitment of young people – this could include the agency representative having ongoing contact with the young person while they attended the NSF project
- identifying other provision in the area and ensuring that there is no duplication
- linking into specialist local networks to help address a new priority in a project
- partnership working and professional development, especially where project staff are lone workers
- sharing resources or facilities – for example, some young people from one NSF project attending a residential run by a second project
- supporting a neighbourhood objective – for example, working with the police in areas with high crime
- funding and strategic development
- identifying potential progression routes for young people
- supporting transition for young people – for example, through establishing a link between a young person and a Connexions Personal Adviser when they leave the NSF project.”

Given the Government’s focus on people who are hardest-to-reach (proposing to redefine what social exclusion may cover), perhaps we ought to be seeking opportunities to get involved with these sorts of projects, particularly as they appear to have been highly successful.

Mental health and social exclusion

The SEU have just produced their report², outlining how to tackle mental health issues (and their relationship with social exclusion).

The report has been drawn from a detailed review of existing literature and research; a written consultation (which received 900+ responses); seven consultation events around England, which engaged with some 500 people; four local area research studies (Bromley and Penge in London; Peterborough; Liverpool; and Northumberland); over 50 visits to schemes that are already working in this area; and close liaison with other Government departments and stakeholders. In addition, as the inside cover blurb states, “... the project has drawn on lessons from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and is likely to be relevant throughout the UK.”

The report begins in Chapter 1 by highlighting key issues (including the impact of mental health problems on the individual, on society and on the economy.

Chapter 2 identifies the “cycle of exclusion” that mental health problems may bring, and looks at what’s needed to break the cycle – this includes:

- Building inclusive communities
- Early intervention

² *Mental health and social exclusion: Social Exclusion Unit report*. ODPM, 2004 (ISBN: 1851127178).

- Empowerment and people's right to individual choice
- A focus on employment
- Promoting broader social participation
- Securing basic entitlements (eg decent housing, basic financial and transport services)
- Acknowledging people's social networks and family relationships
- Building confidence and trust.

The framework for change that is required begins with challenging the stigma and discrimination, and is underpinned by getting right the basics – the core includes health and social care, employment and supporting families and community participation (p23).

Chapter 3 then looks at stigma and discrimination in more depth, starting by looking at their impact, dealing with some of the myths about mental health problems, and then gives some examples in which discrimination and stigma are being challenged (including brief case studies).

Chapter 4 looks at “the role of health and social care services in preventing social exclusion”, Chapter 5 at “mental health and employment”, and Chapter 6 at overcoming barriers to employment – these three chapters have case studies too.

In Chapter 7, the report highlights the importance of social networks, family support and the role of the community, including learning, and includes a quote from someone with mental health problems:

“Activities such as cinemas, parks, coffee shops ... are all important to people with mental health problems. Libraries are essential – I use the Internet there and it gives me somewhere to go during the day.” (p74)

More of that in a minute.

Chapter 8 looks at “the basics”, and Chapter 9 spells out the Government's action plan.

Finally, there is a number of Annexes, including: a summary of consultation findings; a table of social and financial costs; indicators to monitor progress; case study contact details; acknowledgements (details of responses and visits); and extensive references.

This is an extremely important report, setting out the Government's targets for dealing with one of their priority socially excluded groups. It's ambitious (as, looking at the examples of discrimination, for example, it needs to be), and the action plan gives key milestones against which progress can be measured.

So what role does it see libraries, museums and archives playing? Apart from the quote noted above and the sentence that follows this on p74:

“People who do not have access to the Internet at home, such as those on low incomes, will often use libraries or other public places to go on-line.”

there is, as far as I can see, no other reference to our sector at all. Even the arts and leisure are covered very thinly, with a reference to people with mental health problems wanting more leisure activity (p83) and a couple of short, rather doubting, paragraphs on the arts (“Arts are believed to have a therapeutic role as well as helping people reintegrate into wider society ...” p83).

In the action plan, the only reference is:

“The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in partnership with the Department of Health (DH) will give priority to undertaking research to establish the health benefits and social outcomes of participation in arts projects and the characteristics of effective local projects.” (p106)

This is disappointing, particularly as none of the major libraries and museums projects is mentioned – the bibliotherapy projects in Kirklees and Calderdale or the Open Museum in Glasgow, for example. Did no one from our sector respond to the initial consultation document? In the list of bodies consulted, MLA/Resource, the Museums Association and CILIP are noticeably absent. It’s clear that, for whatever reason, our role is not recognised as being important – what can we do to rectify this?

Line managers’ resource ...

Mindout for Mental Health have recently produced a practical guide³ for employers, which includes advice on recognising signs of distress, taking early action to prevent problems building up, supporting an employee who is off sick, and planning a successful return to work.

The educational needs of mixed heritage pupils

DfES have just published a research report⁴, looking at the performance of mixed-heritage pupils, which found that White/Black Caribbean pupils fared worst of all, primarily because of invisibility – as some of the schools interviewed said, they had been concentrating on their African or African-Caribbean pupils, and had not really taken account of the needs of mixed-heritage students.

The report contains recommendations for overcoming some of these barriers, as well as strategic recommendations for Government and schools.

³ *Line managers’ resource: a practical guide to supporting mental health in the workplace.* Mindout, n.d. Available free from 0870 443 0930, or as a pdf from www.nimhe.org.uk/antistigma/downloads/LineManagersResource.pdf.

⁴ Leon Tikly *et al.* *Understanding the educational needs of mixed heritage pupils.* DfES (Research Report 549), 2004. (ISBN: 1-84478-264-6). Also available as a pdf (794k) at: www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR549.pdf.

Street-based youth work

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has just produced a report⁵, looking at the effectiveness of street-based youth work.

Although primarily mapping coverage (and the vast differences between different parts of the UK) and looking at the relationships between street-based youth work and Connexions, nevertheless this report is a timely reminder of the need to get out there to reach some of the hardest-to-reach young people.

Listening to the past ...

Listening to the Past, Speaking to the Future is the title of a new report issued earlier this year by MLA (the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council). The report is the outcome of an Archives Task Force set up at the invitation of DCMS to "carry out an in-depth analysis and review of the state of the UK's unique and diverse archives".

The report has a large range and number of recommendations but running through them all are two guiding ideas: first, that the complex pattern of British archives, scattered and heterogeneous as it is, gains weight and significance if it is viewed as one distributed but cohesive whole. And secondly that if we broke down the traditional boundaries of what is deemed to be an archive – a professionally staffed collection in purpose-built or adapted premises – and began to include in our definition all those collections of papers, films and pictures which are currently scattered around the country in the hands of their compilers, whether professional, amateur, individual or collective, then we would have opened the door to a much greater engagement with a range of individuals and communities which, until now, have barely featured on the radar of the archive world.

As Mark Wood, Chairman of MLA and of the Archives Task Force, put it "Archives are everywhere". And once that is realised – that everyone has the potential to be a contributor to a massive, open-ended and open-minded National Archive – then the often (in the public mind) dust-covered word 'archive' has the power to touch lives at a wholly new level.

Underlying this idea is the realisation that archives have all too rarely reached out into the hearts and minds of sections of our community which may not share the cultural 'givens' of so much of what makes up our 'hard-core' archives: a centuries-old British legal and administrative system, a slowly evolving and often difficult tradition of script, a heavy evidential reliance on the written word, an absorption of assumptions and values about the British landscape and architectural tradition.

Two recommendations of the Task Force take these ideas forward and propose positive ways of 'rolling out' archives. The first is the creation of an electronic gateway to UK archives, a portal created, not only to give quick and comprehensive access to the existing network of archive institutions and their content, but also to invite and encourage the participation of people or groups who might contribute

⁵ David Crimmens *et al.* *Reaching socially excluded young people: a national study of street-based youth work*. National Youth Agency, 2004. £15.95 (incl. p&p) (ISBN 0-86155-310-1).

access to their own personal collections and records. "Potentially, there are many people keen to develop archives that are especially relevant to modern times. We have heard from those already involved how 'belonging to the family of archives nationwide' can help them coordinate activities, enhance access to users and take better care of their collections. The Archives Gateway will draw them into the fold to the wider benefit of everybody."

A second recommendation is the creation of a network of Community Archive Liaison Officers whose task would be to bridge the gap more effectively between the professionals and the wider community; or, in the words of the Report, "to support the development of community archives and foster links between existing archives and record offices and the wider community". A sum of £300,000 is recommended to pilot such a scheme.

There are many other areas of the Task Force report, which will be of interest to those with a concern for issues of social exclusion in our sectors. There is considerable praise for the work of groups like [Comm@net](#) which are attempting to create the tools and mechanisms for communities to build their own archives and, with them, their sense of identity, cohesion and worth. There is an emphasis on the importance of film and sound archives for the impact and immediacy which they offer to audiences who would fight shy of the less immediately approachable written archive.

The Task Force Report comes to press at a difficult time. The Chancellor's recent announcement of the priorities for spending in the latest Comprehensive Spending Review give little comfort to the world of museums, archives and libraries. It will take a great deal of inventiveness and a massive effort of collective will to bring about the full range of recommendations in the Report. Nor will they be achieved overnight. But the Report has set out a vision of a wider and more inclusive archive world which merits a great deal of thought and will provide a number of opportunities and goals around which those concerned with social exclusion may see fit to rally their forces.

MLA has now taken on the task of building an Archive Development Plan based upon the recommendations, which will be carried forward by the Inter-Departmental Archive Committee which brings together government departments with archive interests and other concerned bodies.

Copies of the Report are available by sending an e-mail to mo@centralbooks.com .

Victor Gray
The Director
The Rothschild Archive

Out of the Past: Stories from the Archives

The launch event for a new information leaflet on gay and lesbian history sources at The National Archives (TNA) took place on Tuesday 29 June, 6.30-8.30pm. The leaflet – entitled *Gay and lesbian history at The National Archives: an introduction* – was written by Matt Houlbrook, lecturer in 20th century history (University of

Liverpool), as part of his involvement in TNA's User Advisory Group (see: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/operate/meetings/catboard/uag.htm>).

Divided into seven short sections the new leaflet provides:

- background information on the historical and institutional contexts in which documentary evidence about the lived experiences of gay and lesbian people has been recorded by the state over time
- Listings of specific, resource-rich collections housed at The National Archives that provide valuable insights into gay and lesbian history and culture - such as records that detail significant legislative changes in Britain, issues of censorship, slander and libel case histories, gay and lesbian politics, and welfare state information, etc.
- step-by-step guidelines on the best ways of using TNA's online catalogue to search for relevant material on gay and lesbian history
- names of other archival collections - beyond TNA - that contain further research resources for gay and lesbian studies
- a short bibliography of suggested further reading, and
- a glossary of key terms.

The full text of Houlbrook's leaflet is available online via TNA's website at: <http://www.catalogue.nationalarchives.gov.uk/researchguidesindex.asp>.

Keynote presentation: Exploring gay and lesbian history with Sarah Waters

Writer and best-selling author Sarah Waters gave the keynote presentation at the launch event, using the setting of TNA to discuss the wide range of archival sources that had influenced her own writing about lesbian and gay history. In conversation with Matt Houlbrook, Sarah talked about the methodology used to create believable characters for her three historical novels set during the Victorian era – *Tipping the Velvet* (1999), *Affinity* (2000) and *Fingersmith* (2002). Using the opening line from *Affinity* as the focus of her talk – which states, “...any piece of history can be made into a tale” – Sarah drew comparisons between writing historical fiction and what she termed “academic historical research”. In her opinion, the former context allowed her the freedom she needed to use archival sources as the creative catalyst for emotive stories, helping her to construct a “collage of historical events - both real and imagined”.

In general Sarah cited documentary films, diaries, and collections of 19th century photographs and postcards as key sources of creative inspirations for her writing – singling out the ‘coded’ diaries of Anne Lister (1791-1840) as a particular influence on the women's lives portrayed in her most celebrated work, *Tipping the Velvet*. Books such as Neil Bartlett's *The House on Brooke Street* (1997) and Tierl Thompson's *Dear Girl: the diaries and letters of two working women, 1897-1917* (1987) were also mentioned as informative secondary sources for her research.

Research Papers

To conclude the launch event the following five research papers were presented – with each one focussing in on particular archival documents and collections that had helped to uncover previously ‘hidden’ aspects of gay and lesbian life in Britain over the centuries:

- “**And when she got there...**” *The Well and the Home Office* – a presentation about the privileged access that academic Laura Doan

(University of Manchester) was given by the Home Office to view papers linked to the 1928 obscenity trial of the novel *The Well of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall (1880-1943).

- **“Artistic and Musical”: The Prehistory of Gay Personals** – a paper analysing the ‘coded’ language used in personal ads of late 19th and early 20th century periodicals such as *The Link*, presented by Harry Cocks (Birkbeck College, University of London).
- **Lesbianism in the Ranks** – an evaluation of the use of police force and women’s military service records from the 1940s and 1950s to explore lesbian history in the forces, presented by Rebecca Jennings (University of Manchester).
- **A Tattoo, A Dress and Me: The Historian as Method Actor** – an overview of Matt Houlbrook’s recent research using TNA record series PRO CRIM 1 639 to investigate the arrest, trial and imprisonment of a group of men who attended a drag party at ‘Lady Austin’s Camp Boys’ Club’ (a private club for working-class gay men in 1930s London).
- **The Trial of Margaret Allen** – a presentation by Alison Oram (University of Northampton) about the use of historical documents to reconstruct the life of Margaret (“Bill”) Allen - a “mannish lesbian” who was convicted of the murder of Nancy Ellen Chadwick and hanged at Strangeways prison on the 8th of December 1948.

Further information

Copies of all the original documents referred to in the above-mentioned presentations were available for delegates to take away at the end of the event and, throughout the course of the closing Q&A session, information was also provided about other repositories housing relevant material on gay and lesbian histories, including:

- The Hall Carpenter Archives (comprising archival records on the history of gay and lesbian activism in Britain) – Library of the London School of Economics & Political Science - <http://hallcarpenter.tripod.com>
- Lesbian Archive and Information Centre (Glasgow Women's Library) - <http://www.womens-library.org.uk/>
- The Lesbian and Gay Newsmedia Archive - Cat Hill Library, Middlesex University - <http://hallcarpenter.tripod.com/hca/presscut.html>
- The Hall-Carpenter Archive Oral History Collection - housed at the British Library National Sound Archive - <http://www.bl.uk/collections/sound-archive/holdings.html>

For further details about this event, the new leaflet and/or future TNA User Advisory Group initiatives, please contact: Rachel Hasted, Project Manager: Social Inclusion, The National Archives, Kew, Surrey TW9 4DU; tel: 020 8392 5330 ext 2531; email: rachel.hasted@nationalarchives.gov.uk.

Notes by Carol Dixon
ALM London
05/07/04

Child poverty review

The Treasury has just published its report⁶ on the Child Policy Review (published alongside the 2004 Spending Review). The Review team have worked closely with government departments, academics, voluntary and community sector organisations and others involved in service delivery. The review includes both medium-term plans emerging from the 2004 Spending Review, and an assessment of the longer-term direction which policy needs to take in order to meet the Government's new child poverty target set out in the Spending Review.

This report gives a clear indication of future directions for prioritising working with children, and, in our areas, recognises the role of Bookstart, and mentions a couple of library examples.

Homeless places ...

The ESRC has just published a report⁷ identifying the “uneven geographies of emergency provision for single homeless people”.

Recognising that there is some lack of knowledge about provision outside London, this report surveyed England, Wales and Scotland. It received responses from managers of 212 night shelters and hostels, 165 day centres, and 63 soup runs, showing just how extensive a network of provision there is.

This provides useful background for those of you exploring the needs of single homeless people.

Including You – initial steps to a Social Inclusion Strategy for Lincolnshire Libraries

As part of re-focussing the library service in Lincolnshire, a cross-section of staff is working on an Inclusion Strategy. The group and co-leaders are advised by two sponsors who are members of the Service's Management Team.

So far, work has involved creating a project plan, making presentations to staff at all levels, circulating an accompanying questionnaire, identifying ‘critical friends’ outside libraries who can help us with our strategy, and an examination of good practice in comparative authorities.

The size and rurality of the county present additional factors amongst the more traditional issues relating to social exclusion.

⁶ *Child poverty review*. HM Treasury, 2004. Report available at: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_sr04/associated_documents/spending_sr04_childpoverty.cfm.

⁷ P Cloke. *Homeless places: the uneven geographies of emergency provision for single homeless people*. ESRC, 2004. Available at: www.regard.ac.uk/research_findings/R000238996/report.pdf.

Part of the Project plan was 'Identifying good practice'. Half of the exercise was to look at other local authorities to see what inclusion strategies they had in place; the other half was to look at what was happening already in Lincolnshire libraries. Presentations were made to as many staff as possible, outlining the need for a social inclusion strategy. A questionnaire was handed out after the presentation, and the aim was for as many staff as possible to complete it.

Five vital questions were asked:

Definition – What should a definition of 'inclusion' cover?

Good Practice – What is happening where you are?

Who to include – Are there any groups/people you are aware of who don't use our services?

Challenges – What challenges do you see, as staff, in making our services inclusive?

Training – What training/support do you need to meet these challenges?

The group now has agreement on points to be included in a definition of Inclusion for Lincolnshire:

- Raising awareness of services available and enabling choices.
- Transcending barriers – poverty, rurality, gender, sexual orientation, race, class, cultural heritage, education and skills.
- Involving all communities.

Good Practice

A vast amount of information was forwarded to us. It included work with partners such as Sure Start, general library service initiatives such as Cultural Diversity Day, and the work of individual libraries such as the Coastal learning/regeneration project at Mablethorpe. The review of the mobile library service, which began two years ago, has made mobile libraries accessible to more children who may not use a library, by visiting rural schools and providing books for their leisure reading. Integral to the service that Lincolnshire libraries offers is a Young People Service which visits nurseries, children's homes, secure units, and, together with the Travellers Education service, the children of Travellers who stay temporarily in Lincolnshire. Also the Special Needs Service which offers a postal talking book service to the blind or partially sighted, and visits many elderly or disabled residents in the county.

Who to include

When asking who to include, we used a valuable resource on our own doorstep – staff that live and work in towns or villages they know well. Groups identified in this part of the questionnaire were the usual groups we are aware do not use our service, men and teenagers, but it also identified many potential groups not currently using libraries, including permanently excluded pupils, deaf people or those with hearing difficulty, young carers, and the severely physically handicapped.

Challenges

Challenges also identified some problems we need to overcome to create a truly inclusive service, some we are familiar with such as staffing and opening hours, but also issues such as access in the smaller libraries, the right type of stock for the groups we intend to target, and the promotion of the services we have to offer.

Training

Over the past year, most staff have attended multicultural awareness and social inclusion training. The key training issues related to developing a truly inclusive service were:

- Frontline staff to receive training first hand,
- And, if specific groups are to be targeted, awareness of stock, and specific cultural awareness.

The questionnaire was an excellent exercise, which not only got staff thinking about social inclusion, but also showed us how much we are already doing to make our service more inclusive. It can be used as an ongoing tool to see how we are progressing.

Further work

A number of sub-groups has now been set up to look at partnerships, ICT, workforce development, publicity and marketing, performance measurement and funding and resources. This work will feed in to the draft strategy when we will call on our critical friends for input .

The final version of the inclusion strategy will be presented to senior managers in October, together with allied strategies on learning and regeneration.

Carla Bowyer and Julie Button
(Co-leaders of the Inclusion Strategic
Development Group)

July 2004

Enduring change ...

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation [JRF] have just published their review⁸ of the Social Enterprise Zone in Newham.

Just to give some background to this, an earlier report⁹ had highlighted that only 2% of public sector resources in Newham were specifically focused on regeneration, and it argued that this reflected how successive governments have treated regeneration as *additional* rather than *central* to the main task of providing public services. This

⁸ Matthew Smerdon and David Robinson. *Enduring change: the experience of the Community Links Social Enterprise Zone: lessons learnt and next steps*. Policy Press, 2004. £11.95 (ISBN: 1-86134-312-4).

⁹ *Social Enterprise Zones: building innovation into regeneration*. JRF, 1998.

meant that such initiatives were detached from the people living and working in areas experiencing multiple deprivation.

The inner-city charity, Community Links, developed the idea of Social Enterprise Zones (SEZ) in 1996. Taking the principles behind Business Enterprise Zones – designated areas freed from a range of statutory controls deemed to be obstructing local economic growth – it looked at whether this approach could be applied to the delivery of community services. In January 2000, the SEZ formed part of a 7-year Single Regeneration Budget 5 (SRB5) programme in Forest Gate and Plaistow in Newham.

The Social Enterprise Zone has the following characteristics:

- The project is based within a well-established community organisation (Community Links).
- It has developed networks of local residents, community organisations, public sector agencies and officials from central government.
- Local residents work and volunteer in the project ensuring that there is deep understanding of local issues and access to the necessary local knowledge and skills such as languages.
- Project staff bring experience in community development, policy development, research, campaigning and fund-raising. They think laterally and practically, and are willing to try new ways of doing things.
- The project is the catalyst and facilitator, enabling it to apply this approach to a range of issues.

One of the major developments of the SEZ has been the creation of a tool called “What if...?” to gather people's experience and ideas; the SEZ has involved over 1,000 local people – service-users or front-line workers – in “What if...?”. Participants have gone on to attend meetings with officials from public sector agencies and central government, to be involved in designing and carrying out research and to help deliver pilots testing SEZ proposals.

“What if...?” generates the outlines of ideas. As the SEZ began to explore ideas in greater detail it made extensive use of the government's Public Service Agreements in order to establish how ideas could help government to meet its own objectives. About 60 ideas were developed, each with a connection with a Public Service Agreement objective.

This is an exciting new development – well worth watching!

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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