

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 ...?

Information Professional

The Dec 2017/Jan 2018 issue¹ includes:

- “Diversity could unlock new CKG awards potential”, a summary of the interim report of the Diversity Review² [p9]

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

Museums in the UK 2018 report

The MA has just published its annual survey results³.

Inevitably, the results reflect the current position in the UK, but also with a positive note:

“The results reflect many of the trends that we have seen develop in the sector since the beginning of the decade – the damaging impact of austerity on local authority and former local authority museums; the loss of museum staff; the hollowing-out of skills and expertise in museums; growing maintenance and documentation backlogs; and the difficulties faced by many museums that have moved recently to independent status.

This year sees uncertainty over Brexit added to the concerns for museums, as many in the sector fear for the future of European colleagues in UK museums, EU funding, and the future of cultural and scientific exchange with European museums.

But there are also findings that reflect growing positive trends in the sector. The majority of museums report growing or stable visitor numbers and many are hoping to capitalise on the weakening of the pound by attracting more overseas visitors. Elsewhere, museums report growing levels of work targeted at specific communities and groups, such as BAME and LGBTQ+ groups, and on specific themes such as health and wellbeing. They appear to be prioritising work with schools and educational organisations, as well as maintaining high quality events programmes that are crucial in making museums valued by wide audiences.” [p4]

¹ *Information Professional*, Dec/Jan 2018. For further information, see:

<https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/magazine>.

² See: <https://archive.cilip.org.uk/research/topics/equalities/cilip-carnegie-kate-greenaway-independent-review>.

³ *Museums in the UK 2018 report*. Museums Association, 2018. Available to download as a pdf (261.85 kb) from:

<https://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1244881>.

The overall context part of the report is extremely important to note.

For our purposes, the focus is on the 'social impact' work:

“The potential for museums to make a positive social impact across a wide range of areas is attracting increasing interest, in part through initiatives such as the MA’s Museums Change Lives campaign. The survey confirms that museums undertake work with many different groups and communities in their public-facing activities.

The groups that museums were most likely to engage with were schools, which more than three quarters (77%) of respondents had worked with. The survey also found a large proportion (74%) of museums working with local community groups. And more than half of respondents had also worked with museum friends or supporters associations (59%) and youth groups (55%).

Large percentages of museums said they had worked with health and wellbeing providers (46%) and disability groups (47%) in the past year.

Smaller but significant proportions of respondents said they had worked with black, Asian and ethnic minority communities (23%), environmental groups or campaigns (18%), LGBTQ+ groups (19%), refugees or asylum seekers (15%) and gender equality groups (12%).

Although the data sets are not directly comparable, the percentage of museums saying they work with many of these groups has increased significantly since last year’s Museums Survey. The largest increases were for museums working with disability groups (rising from 13% to 47%), LGBTQ+ groups (8% to 19%) and environmental groups or campaigns (8% to 18%).

Other groups that museums reported working with included prisoners and former offenders, victims of crime groups, under-fives, enthusiast groups, care homes, churches, universities, and a pagan moot.” [pp22-23]

In the MA News report⁴, there is a brief outline of the findings, plus a statement from the MA’s Director, Sharon Heal:

“The MA will use the information in this survey to make the case for museums and the vital role that we can play in enhancing health and wellbeing, creating better places for us for us to live and work and providing space for debate and reflection over the course of 2018.”

This is good news – but also must be placed in the wider social, political and economic context, as the report demonstrates. Recommended.⁵

⁴ See: https://www.museumsassociation.org/news/31012018-social-impact-work-is-thriving-finds-museums-survey?dm_i=2VBX,MWW9,27LU0M,2DF61,1.

⁵ Source: Museums Association email updates, 1 Feb 2018.

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

End Child Poverty

The End Child Poverty coalition⁶ “[...] has published new figures (January 2018) on the level of child poverty in each constituency, local authority and ward in the UK.”⁷

The list of the top 25 local authorities with highest levels of child poverty across the UK makes a good starting point:

Local authority	% of children in poverty 2017 (after housing costs)
Tower Hamlets	53.40%
Manchester	43.60%
Newham	43.21%
Birmingham	42.33%
Hackney	41.30%
Westminster	41.29%
Oldham	40.66%
Leicester	40.59%
Islington	40.40%
Camden	39.92%
Enfield	39.60%
Blackburn with Darwen	39.55%
Bradford	39.53%
Middlesbrough	38.25%
Nottingham	38.23%
Barking and Dagenham	37.80%
Haringey	37.18%
Luton	36.91%
Brent	36.84%
Sandwell	36.54%
Blackpool	36.52%
Burnley	36.32%
Walsall	36.21%
Newcastle upon Tyne	36.03%
Waltham Forest	35.90%

There are also tables of:

- Top 25 parliamentary constituencies with highest levels of child poverty across the UK
- Electoral wards with the highest levels of child poverty across the UK
- Top 25 parliamentary constituencies with lowest levels of child poverty across the UK (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine is top)

⁶ See: <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/what-we-stand-for/>.

⁷ Laura Valadez-Martinez and Donald Hirsch. *Compilation of child poverty local indicators, update to September 2017*. End Child Poverty, 2018. Available to download as a Word document from: <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2018/>.

- Top 25 local authorities with lowest levels of child poverty across the UK (the Isles of Scilly are top).

There is also an interactive map⁸ to allow you to explore the figures for a particular area.

It was covered in some detail in *The Guardian*⁹, with additional figures and graphics.

This research is a valuable insight into the state of the UK, and is also useful background for arguing a case for prioritising provision.¹⁰

UK poverty 2017: a comprehensive analysis of poverty trends and figures

This report¹¹, published in Dec 2017, “[...] is the first report to assess the progress the UK is making in reducing poverty rates and tackling the underlying drivers of poverty since the publication of JRF’s *We Can Solve Poverty in the UK* in 2016.”

“Nearly a quarter (24%) of the UK’s population lived in poverty 20 years ago. By 2004, this had fallen to one in five (20%) of the population. By 2015/16, the proportion had risen slightly to 22%. However, the overall trend masks large variations in the fortunes of different groups. Over the last 20 years the UK succeeded in reducing poverty significantly among those groups who had traditionally been at most risk – pensioners and some types of families with children. Very little progress was made in reducing poverty among working-age households without children. In more recent years, poverty rates have started to rise again among both pensioners and families with children.” [Full report, p3]

The report looks at the following key areas:

- Working-age poverty: until 2013, there had been a reduction in the number of families with children living in poverty. However:

“Since 2013, these reductions in poverty among families with children have gone into reverse. Their poverty rates are rising,

⁸ See: <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2018/>.

⁹ Patrick Butler. “Most children in UK’s poorest areas now growing up in poverty”, *The Guardian*, 24 Jan 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/jan/24/most-children-in-uks-poorest-areas-now-growing-up-in-poverty>.

¹⁰ Source: *Children & Young People Now Daily*, 24 Jan 2018.

¹¹ JRF Analysis Unit. *UK poverty 2017: a comprehensive analysis of poverty trends and figures*. JRF, 2017. Available to download as a pdf (“Findings” 135.55 kb; full report 6500 kb) from: https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2017?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=JRF%20weekly%20round-up%20wc%20Christmas%202017&utm_content=JRF%20weekly%20round-up%20wc%20Christmas%202017+CID_13ae3c63dda3f9b349c7a9692b0be5a2&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=Read%20the%20research.

largely due to reductions in the support offered by benefits and tax credits. Tax cuts and minimum wage rises are beneficial for some, but for many low-income families, the gains are far outweighed by reductions in the more targeted support given by the benefit and tax credit system.

The financial pressures faced by families on low incomes have been exacerbated by increases in the cost of essential goods and services. The proportion of working-age adults in the poorest fifth of the population who spend more than a third of their income (including Housing Benefit) on housing costs has risen from 39% in 1994/95 to 47% in 2015/16.” [Full report, p4]

- Pensioner poverty: “In 1994/95, pensioners had the highest rates of poverty in the UK apart from children. 28% of pensioners lived in poverty; by 2011/12, this had fallen to only 13%, driven mainly by falls in poverty among single pensioners. More recently, however, pensioner poverty has started to increase again, reaching 16% in 2015/16.” [Full report, p4]

- Housing, health and relationships:

“The proportion of homes which do not meet minimum standards of covering safety, state of repair, facilities and thermal comfort has fallen over time but those on low incomes remain more likely to live in these houses than those who are better off. In England, just over one in five of people in the poorest fifth of the population live in ‘non-decent’ homes.

Disability is strongly linked to poverty – 30% of people in families with disabled members live in poverty, compared to 19% of those who do not. More broadly, adults in the poorest fifth of the population experience worse physical and mental health than those who are better off. Nearly a quarter of adults in the poorest fifth of the population experience depression and anxiety – more than twice as many as those in the richest two fifths of the population. The proportion of those in the poorest fifth in England experiencing these mental health conditions has also increased over time.

More than one in ten of working-age adults in the poorest two fifths of the population are socially isolated, compared to just over one in 20 of those in the richest fifth. Around one in six of the poorest fifth of pensioners are socially isolated, compared to only around one in 14 in the richest fifth.

Children in lower-income families are more likely to report that they quarrel with their parents and do not discuss important issues with them. The proportion of couples experiencing ‘relationship distress’ is higher in the poorest fifth of the population and decreases as incomes rise: just under one in ten of those in the poorest fifth, compared to around one in 20 of those in the richest

fifth. Couples who are on low incomes are more likely to separate than those who are better off.” [“Findings”, p3]

- Drivers of future poverty:

“This chapter examines some of the factors that can contribute to the future risk of poverty, or protect against it. First, children’s educational attainment, which is the strongest predictor of poverty in adulthood, then changes in the qualifications held by working-age adults across the UK. The chapter then sets out the extent to which people in different groups have savings, which can help them to meet unexpected costs or weather income shocks. Likewise, the proportion of people who have problem debts can be both an indicator of financial strain, and lower living standards, even when incomes rise. Finally, the chapter sets out the proportion of people who are building up a pension, which can protect against poverty in later life.” [Full report, p85]

The report concludes:

“Over the last 20 years the UK has succeeded in reducing poverty significantly among those groups traditionally most risk – pensioners and families with children.

These reductions were achieved in three main ways:

1. the choices of successive governments to increase the support given to these groups
2. through benefits, tax credits and pensions
3. rising employment
4. increasing home-ownership [...]

Solving poverty in the UK will require urgent action in five areas:

1. Reform of Universal Credit so people keep more of what they earn and a lifting of the working-age benefits freeze so incomes keep up with prices.
2. Reduce the cost of living, particularly housing, for those on low incomes.
3. Improve education and skills, especially among children from low-income backgrounds and adults in low-paid work.
4. Work with employers and business to create more and better jobs where they are needed, and to offer more opportunities and better pay to people who currently struggle to enter and gain from work – particularly disabled people, those caring for adults or children, and part-time workers.
5. Work with communities and service providers to improve health, family relationships and social support to reduce the damage done by poverty and improve prospects.” [Full report, pp99-100]

LGBTQ issues – Other Agencies

LGBT in Britain: trans report

This new research report¹³ from Stonewall highlights “[...] the profound levels of discrimination and hate crime faced by trans people in Britain today.”¹⁴

“Stonewall commissioned YouGov to carry out a survey asking more than 5,000 lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) people across England, Scotland and Wales about their life in Britain today. This report, part of a series based on the research, investigates the specific experiences of the 871 trans and non-binary people who took part, across a range of areas of life in Britain. The study looks at the discrimination trans people face in their daily lives. It also looks at their home life and access to medical support for transition.” [p5]

The key findings include:

- “Two in five trans people (41 per cent) and three in ten non-binary people (31 per cent) have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity in the last 12 months.
- More than a quarter of trans people (28 per cent) in a relationship in the last year have faced domestic abuse from a partner.
- One in four trans people (25 per cent) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.
- One in eight trans employees (12 per cent) have been physically attacked by colleagues or customers in the last year.
- More than a third of trans university students (36 per cent) in higher education have experienced negative comments or behaviour from staff in the last year.
- Two in five trans people (40 per cent) adjust the way they dress because they fear discrimination or harassment. This number increases significantly to half of non-binary people (52 per cent).
- Two in five trans people (41 per cent) said that healthcare staff lacked understanding of specific trans health needs when accessing general healthcare services in the last year.
- Three in five trans people (62 per cent) who have undergone, or are currently undergoing, medical intervention for their transition are unsatisfied with the time it took to get an appointment.

¹² Source: *JRF Round-up special: the highlights of 2017*, 15 Dec 2017.

¹³ Chaka L Bachmann and Becca Gooch. *LGBT in Britain: trans report*. Stonewall, 2018. Available to download as a pdf (1500 kb) from: <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/lgbtinbritain-trans.pdf>.

¹⁴ Taken from: http://www.stonewall.org.uk/lgbt-britain-trans-report?utm_source=Stonewall%20Newsletter%20-%20January&utm_campaign=e30b5e3b15-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_01_18&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4dd7c10a47-e30b5e3b15-209602993&mc_cid=e30b5e3b15&mc_eid=bfb9d438cb.

- More than one in ten trans people (11 per cent) have gone abroad for medical treatment to alter their physical appearance, including buying hormones over the internet from other countries, with many citing the barriers they currently face in accessing medical treatment in the UK.” [pp6-7]

The report looks at “Facing discrimination and abuse”, and, in this section, includes:

- Hate Crime: “Two in five trans people (41 per cent) have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity in the last 12 months. Three in ten non-binary people (31 per cent) have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity.” [p8]
- Discrimination: “This ranges from verbal abuse and intimidation in the street and other public spaces like toilets, to being discriminated against in shops, cafés, restaurants, bars and nightclubs. Trans people also face discrimination when using public services and when looking for a house to rent or buy.” [p10]
- Work: “The lives of many trans people at work remain difficult, with many facing bullying and discrimination, including an alarming number of trans employees who have been physically attacked at work. Trans employees often deliberately hide their identity because they fear being discriminated against at work.” [p11]
- Higher Education: “More than a third of trans university students (36 per cent) have experienced negative comments or conduct from staff in the last year.

One in six trans university students (15 per cent) have considered dropping out or have dropped out of a higher education course because of experiencing harassment or discrimination from students and staff in the last year.” [p12]

- Healthcare: “A significant number of trans people face poor treatment when accessing healthcare services, despite the legal duty of all health and social care organisations to provide equal treatment and tackle discrimination” [p13]

In the section, “Under threat at home”, the report looks at issues including lack of family support, homelessness and domestic abuse.

The section on “Inadequate medical support” begins by setting out some of the issues faced by trans people:

“Not all trans people choose to access medical interventions, for example hormones and surgery, as part of their transition. However, for some medical intervention is important. The decision is up to each individual. Those that do need this support face significant barriers to accessing treatment, including waiting times that stretch into years, far exceeding the maximums set by law for NHS patients. This causes significant stress

and impact on people's lives and prevents many trans people from accessing the support they need.”

and then (following the same format as the other sections) goes on to illustrate this with brief quotations; there are also recommendations, in this case for the NHS.

In “Achieving gender recognition”:

“The Gender Recognition Act enables trans people to be legally recognised in their affirmed gender and to be issued with a new birth certificate. However, in order to gain a Gender Recognition Certificate, trans people must currently provide psychiatric assessments and other intrusive evidence requirements, such as proving they have been living in the gender with which they identify to a Gender Recognition Panel.

Trans people explain that the process is traumatic and demeaning, many can't or aren't able to engage with it, and those who do go through it say they have to fit outdated stereotypes of what it is to be trans, and what it is to be a woman or a man to secure recognition.” [p20]

There are then recommendations for the UK and Scottish Governments. Finally, there is a “Looking ahead” section which shares both optimism and pessimism about the future (and urges everyone to “come out for trans equality”); and a note on the research methods used for this report.

This is an important report – recommended.¹⁵

Abbreviations and acronyms

BAME = Black, Asian and minority ethnic

CKG = Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Awards

JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation

LGBTQ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning

MA = Museums Association

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¹⁵ Source: *Stonewall Newsletter*, 19 Jan 2018.