

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

**Number 224, October 2019**

(Formerly published as *Public Libraries & Social Exclusion Action Planning Network Newsletter*, issue 1, May 1999 – issue 29, September 2001)

The Network's Website is at [www.seapn.org.uk](http://www.seapn.org.uk) and includes information on courses, good practice, specific socially excluded groups, as well as the newsletter archive.

---

## Contents List

### Did you see ...?

- *Information Professional* – page 2

### Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

- *Manifesto for a better childhood* – page 3
- *How to shift public attitudes on equality: a practical guide for campaigners and communicators* – page 4

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

- *Public libraries: the case for support* – page 6
- *Libraries Taskforce: 6 month progress report (April to September 2019)* – page 10

### Abbreviations and acronyms – page 10

---

## Did you see ...?

### **Information Professional**

The Oct/Nov issue includes:

- “Social justice to fuel the Information Profession”, a news article to announce the launch of CILIP’s new position paper<sup>1</sup> [p10]
- “LGBTQ+ Network to launch early next year”, reports on the setting up of the Steering Group<sup>2</sup> which will oversee the establishing of the new Network [p11]
- Dawn Grundy, Paula Elliott and Amanda Stevens “Bolton Health Information Partnership”, which looks at the work of the partnership between Bolton Library and Museum Services, Macmillan Cancer Information Service, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust Library Services, and University of Bolton Library<sup>3</sup> [pp24-26]
- “60 seconds with ...” – this month’s column interviews John Vincent [p31]
- Olivia Marks-Woldman “Holocaust Memorial Day: learning from the past for a better future”, which highlights the role that libraries play in HMD commemorations (with brief examples)<sup>4</sup> [pp32-34]
- Bruce Leeke interviewed by Rob Mackinlay “What are libraries worth?”, which looks at the work undertaken in Suffolk to look at the economic impact of libraries<sup>5</sup> [pp36-37]
- Dave Rowe “Should library services be cutting their most dynamic spaces?”, which argues that, with appropriate digital technology applied, mobile libraries “[...] could be the most dynamic public library spaces” [pp38-39]
- Rob Green “The case for support – why public libraries will reward investment”, which reports on the launch of the new call for public library funding [pp42-44] See also p6.
- Simon Smith interviewed by Rob Green “Community hubs keep libraries in the heart of local users”, which looks at the development of community hubs in Reading [pp45-47]:

“If and when things do pick up, I want libraries to be at the front of the queue. The more we can tell people about the work we are

---

<sup>1</sup> *Libraries, information and knowledge change lives*. CILIP, 2019. Available to download as a pdf from:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TOq6oBuGRE7dpSxjPVEiMi528E7LuIMe/view>.

Background info at: <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/changinglives>.

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/LGBTQNetwork>.

<sup>3</sup> See also: <https://boltonhealthinformationpartnership.wordpress.com/about/>.

<sup>4</sup> Further info about HMD 2020 is at: <https://www.hmd.org.uk/what-is-holocaust-memorial-day/this-years-theme/>.

“The theme for HMD 2020 is Stand Together. It explores how genocidal regimes throughout history have deliberately fractured societies by marginalising certain groups, and how these tactics can be challenged by individuals standing together with their neighbours, and speaking out against oppression.”

<sup>5</sup> This is detailed in their report: Karl Leatham, Helen Campbell and Penny Court. *Suffolk Libraries: a predictive impact analysis*. Suffolk Libraries, 2019. Available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/assets/pdf/suffolk-libraries-a-predictive-impact-analysis.pdf>.

doing, the partnerships we have and the outcomes we are bringing to Reading the better”

---

## Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

### ***Manifesto for a better childhood***

NCB have just produced this new Manifesto<sup>6</sup>, calling for a “[...] Children’s and Young People’s Strategy built on the principle that children and young people themselves must have a say in the political process.” [p4]

“The next government must renew our democratic offer and provide meaningful opportunities for all children and young people to get involved:

- Lower the voting age to 16, and support children and young people to campaign and participate in the democratic process.
- Give children and young people a say in all local decisions that affect them, including everything from how recreational spaces are designed to what services are offered by the NHS.
- Re-invest in youth centres and services, putting this vital resource back at the heart of local communities.” [p3]

In addition:

“All government departments must be accountable for work to:

- Stop children and young people growing up in poverty.
- Improve outcomes in early childhood.
- Create an inclusive education system.
- Promote and protect our children’s wellbeing and mental health.” [p4]

Each of these issues includes a number of important points – some with relevance to us are:

- “Reverse the cuts and re-invest in children’s services that provide help to the most vulnerable children and young people.
- Financially support young people trapped in poverty to access further and higher education.” [p5]
- “Commit to a children’s centre in every neighbourhood, with high quality services for all families from conception to age five.” [p6]

---

<sup>6</sup> *Manifesto for a better childhood*. NCB, 2019. Available to download as a pdf from: [https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Policy\\_docs/Reports/NCB\\_BetterChildhoodManifesto%20-%20FINAL4Nov2019.pdf](https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Policy_docs/Reports/NCB_BetterChildhoodManifesto%20-%20FINAL4Nov2019.pdf).

- “Give the wellbeing of children and young people equal weight to academic progress; ensure every setting puts the wellbeing and mental health of its children and young people at the heart of everything they do.” [p7]
- “Place a duty on all social media and digital platforms to follow child safety rules and protect children from online harm.” [p8]

Recommended.<sup>7</sup>

---

## ***How to shift public attitudes on equality: a practical guide for campaigners and communicators***

Equally Ours have just published this important guide<sup>8</sup>.

“This guide aims to equip campaigners and communicators to change hearts and minds on equality [...]

The challenge this guide seeks to address is how to make more of the British public understand inequality as structural – and therefore increase their support and advocacy for structural solutions.” [p4]

The document begins by setting out their definition of structural inequality:

“Structural inequality is the idea that inequality is embedded across societal institutions, and that this maintains inequality between different groups of people. The way these institutions operate means some people always come off worse – and people who break out and succeed, despite their backgrounds, are the exception. This could be anything from the family, to the economy, to government and the media.” [p4]

It then starts to look at more effective campaigning around inequality:

“[the guide is] designed instead to equip you to reach a segment of the British public – around 40% – that our own and others’ research shows are conflicted about a range of social issues. Crucially, this audience are open to persuasion if we can connect with the compassionate values that they already hold.” [p5]

From here, it looks at developing strategic communications, for example by identifying and changing the frames through which we view the world, and creating powerful metaphors to illustrate inequality.

One of the most useful parts of the guide is the “Ten top takeaways” as these summarise the key messages:

---

<sup>7</sup> Source: email from NCB, 8 Nov 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Alice Jennings and Kathryn Quinton. *How to shift public attitudes on equality: a practical guide for campaigners and communicators*. Equally Ours, 2019. Available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.equallyours.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Talking-about-equality-guide.pdf>.

1. “Take your audience away from the meritocracy myth [...]
2. Use the escalator metaphor to explain structural inequality. Describe an unequal society as one where some people have a mix of escalators in their path, while others have only down escalators, and have to run up them to get where they want to go.
3. Engage compassionate values like social justice, friendship and concern for others. By repeatedly activating these values, we increase support for our causes. Use ‘fairness’ with care as it’s often co-opted to reinforce the meritocracy myth.
4. Stay away from self-centred values like wealth and social status. Avoid invoking these ‘negative’ values, even if they seem to help your cause in the short term – this will only suppress people’s compassionate values and harm your cause in the long term.
5. Tell a different story instead of debunking opponents’ claims. Refuting or ‘myth-busting’ doesn’t work and can even backfire, leaving people remembering the original claims, but not your debunking of them.
6. Link personal stories to societal structures, and always pair these with solutions. Always be explicit about the structural problems behind your stories, and avoid fatalism by making it clear that we can credibly solve these problems.
7. Balance talk of structures with acknowledging agency. Don’t go too far in communicating structures – people instinctively disbelieve messages suggesting we have no control over our own fates.
8. Focus on the better world you want to create, and make it feel reachable. Don’t just talk about how to mitigate a problem – inspire people by reminding them of the better world we’re striving for.
9. Expand the definition of ‘us’. Move away from ‘us and them’ narratives, and broaden who your audience think of as their community.
10. Find messengers who are authentic and credible. Focus on messengers who can speak credibly about your issue and, if using celebrities, choose them with care!” [p10]

There is a lot in this guidance that can help us shape what we say about equality – and, for me, it ends with a really positive example (drawn from On Road Media’s<sup>9</sup> “All About Trans” project):

“The first time someone calls you the right pronouns it’s like ‘yay, this is right, I like this!’

– Ollie, 12” [p26]

Recommended.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> See: <https://www.onroadmedia.org.uk/>.

<sup>10</sup> Source: *Equally Ours Newsletter*, 19 Dec 2019.

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

### ***Public libraries: the case for support***

Published in Aug 2019, this “blueprint for the transformation of England’s libraries”<sup>11</sup> was produced by CILIP and The Big Issue Group, working with the Libraries Taskforce, Libraries Connected and the Arts Council.

Upfront, the paper says:

“Delivering this transformation requires a commitment to sustainable long-term funding for public libraries. Specifically, we are seeking:

- A commitment from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to enable Local Authorities to maintain core funding to their library services, and;
- A commitment from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and HM Treasury to securing up to £50m per year over 5 years to create a Library Transformation Programme that will deliver a modern, efficient library service for the future.” [p2]

The paper begins with a summary, including key facts and figures (eg “Public library use has a proven positive impact on health and wellbeing. Regular library users report higher life satisfaction, happiness and sense of purpose in life” [p3]).

This is followed by a section on “Ambition for public libraries in England”, based on the Library Taskforce’s *Libraries deliver ...* report<sup>12</sup> and highlighting the seven ‘outcomes’ supported by public libraries:

- “Cultural and creative enrichment
- Increased reading and literacy • Improved digital access and literacy
- Helping everyone achieve their full potential
- Healthier and happier lives
- Greater prosperity
- Stronger, more resilient communities” [p5]

Section 2 is “A diverse audience for public libraries”, which sets against the proven ‘reach’ of public libraries the declining investment in them. (Interestingly, this section also notes the apparent disparity between IPSOS Mori findings and those from the 2017-2018 DCMS Taking Part survey.) The paper adds to this

---

<sup>11</sup> *Public libraries: the case for support*. Office of Lord Bird, 2019. Available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.librariesdeliver.uk/report>.

<sup>12</sup> *Libraries deliver: ambition for public libraries in England 2016-2021*. DCMS, 2018 (revised version Sep 2018), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021>. The original version of the report was assessed in *The Network Newsletter*, 189, Dec 2016, <https://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Newsletter-NS-189.pdf>.

evidence from the ACE research, “Evidencing Libraries Audience Reach”<sup>13</sup>, which found that, for example:

- “Compared with other types of cultural activities, libraries reach a much broader range of age groups and social backgrounds” [p7]

and concludes that:

- “In general, the public library audience maps across to many of the key audiences that local and central Government, in common with many other national stakeholders, are seeking to reach.” [p7]

Section 3 highlights the decline in investment.

Section 4, “Place-shaping and inclusive economic growth”, argues that:

“The power of the public library in place-shaping rests in its ability to act as an open, trusted and adaptable hub at the heart of the community.” [p10]

Importantly, the paper also adds this rider:

“Managed properly, the library space and services can be configured and reconfigured throughout the day to support a very broad spectrum of community needs and activities.” [p10]

Section 5 looks at “Education, informal learning and skills” and draws on a number of research studies to emphasise this. However, it also makes a key point:

“Without long-term sustainable funding, public library staff cannot support the range of learning activities which their users demand. They cannot build relationships with local schools and if their staffing is hollowed-out, will not be able to deliver specialist educational activities which enhance and extend learning.” [p13]

Section 6 is brief; it looks at “Health, wellbeing and social care”, and argues that:

“Evidence suggests a strong positive correlation between reading activities in libraries and overall health and wellbeing. We know that reading for pleasure reduces stress and depression, and that reading fiction leads to higher empathy and better relationships with others.

Public libraries are part of the local ecosystem of health and social care provision. They alleviate pressure on local health and social care budgets and provide a much-needed frontline for community-based support for

---

<sup>13</sup> Katie Cudworth and Jacqui Fortnum. *Evidencing Libraries Audience Reach: research findings and analysis*. ACE, 2017. Available to download as a pdf from: [https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/ACE%20Evidencing%20Libraries%20Audience%20Reach%20-%20research%20results%20and%20analysis%20%28final%29\\_0.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/ACE%20Evidencing%20Libraries%20Audience%20Reach%20-%20research%20results%20and%20analysis%20%28final%29_0.pdf).

people's health and wellbeing. This is why it is essential to secure these benefits through long-term sustainable funding." [p15]

Section 7 looks at "Digital skills and getting online":

"7.6. Public libraries have transformed their digital offer and now act as a vital trusted and networked infrastructure in every community across the UK to help people get online and develop their digital skills and confidence.

7.7. In light of the UK's digital skills gap and its potential cost to the UK economy, sustainable long-term funding for public libraries provides an opportunity to ensure that the benefits of digital transformation reach every community." [p17]

Section 8 looks at "Enterprise and business support", focusing particularly on the BL-supported network of Business and IP Centres.

Section 9 covers "Poverty, prevention, social mobility and social isolation". It starts with:

"HM Government's own social mobility policy highlights the importance of literacy support and early-years intervention to improving peoples [sic] educational attainment and life chances. Libraries already provide these services in a way that ensures they reach the hardest-to-reach communities across the UK." [p20]

It draws three examples from the CILIP LCLA-finalists (Suffolk's "Chat and Chill"; "Kirklees Family Storywalks"; and Glasgow Women's Library's "Story Café"), and the section concludes with:

"9.8. Public libraries contribute to measurable impact against all 4 ambitions in the Government's social mobility policy, including early years support, closing the attainment gap, improving post-16 education choices and developing rewarding careers.

9.9. Combating loneliness and social isolation and helping people develop the skills and employability they need to improve their life chances is very much the core business of a modern public library service. However, delivering on this potential depends on ongoing sustainable funding to ensure that they can provide the skilled staff and trusted spaces their communities need." [p21]

Finally, Appendix A is a list of information sources; and Appendix B includes the DCMS Impact Model for Public Libraries<sup>14</sup>.

Three minor quibbles: firstly, some of the research and data used are quite old (eg from 2010 – a very different library 'climate') which lessens slightly the

---

<sup>14</sup> Taken from: *The modernisation review of public libraries: a policy statement*. DCMS, 2010. Available to download as a pdf from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/228855/7821.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228855/7821.pdf), pp52-53.

power of the paper; secondly, it is quite a 'safe' paper, and does not have the 'punch' that CILIP's subsequent report does<sup>15</sup>; and, thirdly, it's sad to see that the paper does not include information from or a reference to the ACE report on diversity and inclusion in public libraries<sup>16</sup>.

This is a very important advocacy tool and is highly recommended.

The paper was launched in the House of Lords on 14 Oct, together with a new 10-point *Manifesto for Libraries*, produced by Library Champion Bobby Seagull and CILIP, setting out the call for Government to recognise the wider value of libraries and librarians in areas such as health, education, business and policymaking.<sup>17</sup> Just in case you have not yet seen the Manifesto, it includes:

1. "Ensure a fair funding settlement for Local Government to enable Councils to invest in public libraries at the heart of their communities;
2. Invest in the future of our communities by voting to support the establishment of a National Library Improvement Fund with a capital budget of £50m per year over the 5 years of the next Parliament;
3. Ensure adequate long-term sustainable support for Further and Higher Education and research in our colleges and Universities;
4. Provide long-term sustainable funding for schools and encourage Heads, Teachers and Governors to invest in libraries as the 'beating heart of the school';
5. Implement the recommendations of the independent Topol Review to enable librarians and knowledge specialists to transform evidence-based healthcare;
6. Invest in the Prison Service and encourage Governors to develop their prison libraries and librarians as a core part of prisoner education and rehabilitation;
7. Recognise the value of libraries in building literacy (including media literacy) and skills by supporting the CILIP Building a Nation of Readers campaign;
8. Continue to promote the importance of good information governance and information security to business, supported by information professionals;
9. Endorse the vital work of professional librarians in delivering a strong library sector that responds to current and future needs;
10. Work with the library and information profession to develop fair and balanced approaches to copyright to enable us to fulfil our public task in a digital economy."<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> *Libraries, information and knowledge change lives*. CILIP, 2019. Available to download as a pdf from:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TOq6oBuGRE7dpSxjPVEiMi528E7LuI/Me/view>.

<sup>16</sup> John Vincent. *Libraries welcome everyone: six stories of diversity and inclusion from libraries in England*. ACE, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from:

[https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/ACE\\_Libraries\\_welcome\\_everyone\\_report\\_July18.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/ACE_Libraries_welcome_everyone_report_July18.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> See: <https://www.cilip.org.uk/news/473781/The-Big-Issue-and-Library-Champion-Bobby-Seagull-bring-the-case-for-library-funding-to-Parliament-.htm>.

<sup>18</sup> Taken from: <https://www.librariesdeliver.uk/seagull>.

## ***Libraries Taskforce: 6 month progress report (April to September 2019)***

Again, just in case you have not yet seen this, ACE and DCMS have just published the latest Taskforce report<sup>19</sup> which includes a useful summary of recent developments.<sup>20</sup>

---

### **Abbreviations and acronyms**

ACE = Arts Council England

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

DCMS = Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

HMD = Holocaust Memorial Day

IP = intellectual property

LCLA = Libraries Change Lives Award

NCB = National Children's Bureau

---

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:

John Vincent  
Wisteria Cottage  
Nadderwater  
Exeter EX4 2JQ

Tel/fax: 01392 256045  
E-mail: [john@nadder.org.uk](mailto:john@nadder.org.uk)

October 2019

---

<sup>19</sup> *Libraries Taskforce: 6 month progress report (April to September 2019)*. DCMS, 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-taskforce-six-monthly-progress-report-april-to-september-2019/libraries-taskforce-6-month-progress-report-april-to-september-2019>.

<sup>20</sup> Source: *Public Libraries News*, 10 Nov 2019.