

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 Jun-Jul 2020 issue has some useful and interesting articles, including:

- “Mental health for families”, a brief news item announcing the launch of Suffolk Libraries’ new mental health support schemes for pregnant women and young families¹ [p6]
- “Places of sanctuary”, a news story about the launch of the *Libraries of Sanctuary resource pack* [see below] [p11]
- “The Covid Pivot – what to expect as the devolved nations emerge from lockdown”, “[...] we look at Covid-19 responses from library and information services in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales” [pp14-16]
- Regina Everitt “A place to breathe: UEL students share solidarity and support via Teams”, in which “Regina Everitt, Director of Library, Archives and Learning Services, explains how and why she organised a forum to help students make sense of George Floyd and Covid-19” [pp17-19]
- Isobel Hunter “Preparing for the present and the future”, in which the Chief Executive of Libraries Connected introduces the Service Recovery Toolkit² [pp26-27]
- Alex Clegg “Critical thinking to navigate a storm of misinformation”, which looks at the work of Sense About Science³ to help young people develop their critical thinking [pp31-33]
- Alison Tarrant “Creativity and innovation for times of change and opportunity”, which looks at how school libraries have supported students and teachers during lockdown – and how things may change as schools reopen [pp34-35]
- Ian Anstice (interviewed by Rob Mackinlay) looks at public libraries and how *Public Libraries News*⁴ has covered recent news – and the need for more in-depth consideration of the role of libraries [pp44-46]

The Aug-Sep 2020 issue has the following interesting articles, including:

- “Working class under-represented in creative sector, study reveals”, a short news item about the report⁵ from the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre [p6]

¹ See: <https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/about/news/me-myself-and-baby-suffolk-libraries-launches-new-perinatal-support-service>.

² See: <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/news/new-guide-help-libraries-reopen>.

³ See: <https://senseaboutscience.org/>.

⁴ See: <https://www.publiclibrariesnews.com/>.

⁵ Heather Carey, Rebecca Florisson, Dave O'Brien and Neil Lee. *Getting in and*

- “Membership”, an introduction to the proposed new CILIP membership model [pp14-17], together with a re-stating of their commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion⁶ [p17]
- Tracie D Hall⁷ (interviewed by Rob Mackinlay) “Professional associations – working for members”, which trails Tracie Hall’s keynote speech at the CILIP Conference, and highlights the three actions needed to galvanise the ALA’s membership:
 - Universal broadband
 - Rapid racial diversification of the library workforce
 - The preservation and sustainability of library services. [pp18-19]⁸
- Shirley Yearwood-Jackman “Covid-19, anti-racism, and the CILIP BAME Network: committing to the new normal”, which assesses the impact of the CILIP BAME Network⁹ after its first year [pp24-25]
- Ash Green and Steven Dryden “CILIP and BL groups collaborate to create the LGBTQ+ Lives Online Web Archive”¹⁰ [p30]
- Yvonne Morris “Embedding diversity at the heart of CILIP and its work”, which is an update on the work to deliver the “Changing Lives” programme¹¹ [p31]
- John Vincent “Libraries of Sanctuary”, which introduces *The Libraries of Sanctuary resource pack*¹² [pp44-46]

getting on: class, participation and job quality in the UK Creative Industries. Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) (Policy Review Series: Class in the Creative industries – Paper No.01), 2020. Full report available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.pec.ac.uk/assets/publications/PEC-report-class-in-the-creativeindustries-FINAL.pdf>; Summary: <https://www.pec.ac.uk/assets/images/PEC-reportClass-in-the-creative-industries-summary.pdf>. There is also a supporting blogpost by Heather Carey, “Rebuilding a more inclusive creative economy”, at: <https://www.pec.ac.uk/blog/rebuilding-a-more-inclusive-creative-economy>.

This was assessed in *The Network Newsletter*, 233, Jul 2020, pp4-5, available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Newsletter-NS-233.pdf>.

⁶ This refers to “Libraries, Information and Knowledge Change Lives”, <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/changinglives>.

⁷ Tracie D Hall is Executive Director of the ALA – see, for example: <http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2020/06/ala-executive-director-tracie-d-hall-says-dismantling-racism-library-and>.

⁸ The interview is available at: <https://www.cilip.org.uk/news/news.asp?id=527177>.

⁹ See: <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/BAMENetwork>.

¹⁰ See: <https://blogs.bl.uk/webarchive/2020/07/index.html>.

¹¹ See: <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/changinglives>.

¹² See: <https://libraries.cityofsanctuary.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/157/2020/05/COS-Library-resource-pack-low-res-website-version-13-5-20.pdf>.

- Elena Traina “Em Voz Alta: literature, identity and heritage in a Shared Reading programme”, which looks at a Shared Reading project in Norfolk, working with the Portuguese community¹³ [pp47-49]
- Elizabeth Hutchinson “Mental health and wellbeing” (“Insight: school libraries” column), which outlines the work of the Great School Libraries Campaign in supporting mental wellbeing in schools [p51]

ARC Magazine

The Oct 2020 issue¹⁴ focuses on “Digital Exploration”, and includes a very interesting short article:

- Hannah Salisbury “A first foray into online collecting: surveys as collection tools” [pp23-24], which looks at how Suffolk Archives used digital surveys:

“When lockdown began we were poised to run collecting events for our Pride in Suffolk’s Past project. This project is both investigating LGBTQ+ history in Suffolk and collecting contemporary stories [...]

Our planned physical display for Suffolk Pride quickly morphed into plans for an online display. This would use historical content already researched, but we also wanted to include contemporary stories. With in-person collecting not an option, we investigated how we could collect stories remotely.” [p23]

Black Lives Matter

An avoidable crisis: the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities – a review by Baroness Doreen Lawrence

The report¹⁵, commissioned by the Labour Party, has just been published, and has had considerable media coverage.

“Covid-19 is having a disproportionate and devastating impact on ethnic minority communities. Not only are Black, Asian and minority ethnic

¹³ See, for example: <https://www.facebook.com/events/440889623233022/>.

¹⁴ ARC Magazine, 374, Oct 2020.

¹⁵ *An avoidable crisis: the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities – a review by Baroness Doreen Lawrence*. The Labour Party, 2020. Available as a web version: https://www.lawrencereview.co.uk/?utm_source=bsd&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=LawrenceReview&source=20201027_LawrenceReview&subsource=bsd_email, and to download as a pdf: https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5f5bdc0f30fe4b120448a029/5f973b076be4cad5045fad3_An%20Avoidable%20Crisis.pdf.

people dying at a disproportionate rate, they are also overexposed to the virus and more likely to suffer the economic consequences. Despite repeated warnings, the Government has failed to take sufficient action.

Covid-19 has thrived on inequalities that have long scarred British society. Black, Asian and minority ethnic people are more likely to work in frontline or shutdown sectors which have been overexposed to Covid-19, more likely to have co-morbidities which increase the risk of serious illness and more likely to face barriers to accessing healthcare. Black, Asian and minority ethnic people have also been subject to disgraceful racism as some have sought to blame different communities for the spread of the virus.

This virus has exposed the devastating impact of structural racism. We need immediate action to protect people this winter, but we must also fix the broken system that has left ethnic minority people so exposed.” [p5]

It makes 20 recommendations:

1. The Government must go further and set out an urgent plan for tackling the disproportionate impact of Covid on ethnic minorities this winter

“Despite being aware of the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the UK’s Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, the Government has not done enough to protect people ahead of the second wave or account for the significant disparities we’ve seen. As the country now faces rising Covid cases, hospital admissions, and deaths, the need for this action could not be more urgent.” [p8]
2. A national strategy to tackle health inequalities
3. Suspend ‘no recourse to public funds’ rule during the pandemic and initiate a review
4. Suspend ‘no recourse to public funds’ rule during the pandemic and initiate a review
5. Strengthen Covid-19 risk assessments to ensure consistency and to give workers more confidence
6. Improve access to PPE in all high-risk workplaces
7. Give targeted support to people who are struggling to self-isolate at home
8. Ensure protection and an end to discrimination for renters
9. Raise the local housing allowance and address the root causes of homelessness

10. Urgently conduct equality impact assessments on the Government's support schemes to make sure Black, Asian and minority ethnic people are able to access the support they need
11. Develop and implement a clear plan to prevent the stigmatisation of communities during Covid-19
12. Urgently legislate to tackle online harms: "The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee has warned that Covid-19 has 'exacerbated online harms before the machinery to deal with them has been put in place'. The Government needs to take this issue seriously and must urgently bring forward its much-delayed Online Harms Bill [...]" [p20]
13. Ensure everyone can access Covid-19 communication
14. Collect and publish better ethnicity data
15. Implement a race equality strategy
16. Ensure all policies and programmes help tackle structural inequality: "When the Government and political parties develop policies and programmes, racial equality must be a positive aspiration, not an afterthought or a tick-box exercise. Equality impact assessments should be used much more effectively to shape and inform policy, and policymakers should seek to tackle structural racism with their decisions. The Government should also enact section 1 of the Equality Act, which requires public bodies to reduce inequalities that result from socio-economic disadvantage." [p26]
17. Introduce mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting
18. End the 'hostile environment'
19. Reform the curriculum to fight the root causes of racism
20. Take action to close the attainment gap

This is an important 'blueprint' for action – recommended.

Moving the dial on race: a practical guide on workplace inclusion

This important new guidance¹⁶ has just been published by the CMI Race Network¹⁷. It aims to help managers to:

¹⁶ *Moving the dial on race: a practical guide on workplace inclusion*. CMI, 2020. Available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.managers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/moving-the-dial-on-race-practical-guidance-cmi-race-2020.pdf>.

- Support people who face racism
- Learn how to talk about race
- End microaggressions at work
- Build support
- Raise awareness and skills.¹⁸

The guide is very practical and useful – its contents include:

- Supporting People who Face Racism
- Terminology
- Microaggressions
- Building Support
- Allyship
- Raise Awareness, Knowledge & Skills
- Glossary and Extra Reading.

There are lots of handy checklists, a good example of which is the listing “Six steps for better managers to move the dial”. This includes:

1. “SUPPORT PEOPLE WHO FACE RACISM

- Prioritise anti-racism
- Lead with empathy
- Educate themselves
- Create safe spaces
- Encourage true identities at work

Practical step: schedule a conversation with colleagues who face racism to better understand their experiences and agree how the conversation might best continue.

2. LEARN HOW TO TALK ABOUT RACE

- Don’t generalise
- Be specific and accurate
- Put people first
- Avoid acronyms
- Keep up with evolving terminology

Practical step: commit time each week to learn more about anti-racism

3. END MICROAGGRESSIONS AT WORK

¹⁷ “CMI Race was established in 2017 to put diversity and inclusion at the heart of great leadership.” [Taken from: https://www.managers.org.uk/community/community-networks/cmi-race/?utm_source=GI281020&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=cmirace2020&dm_i=SYT,73URF,4H1XSR,SQCKH,1]

¹⁸ Taken from: https://www.managers.org.uk/community/community-networks/cmi-race/?utm_source=GI281020&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=cmirace2020&dm_i=SYT,73URF,4H1XSR,SQCKH,1.

- Understand each type of microaggression
- Respond every time you notice them
- Discern the nuances
- Disarm aggressors
- Define the problem to aid reflection

Practical step: train your team to understand microaggressions and ensure all staff are clear on zero tolerance to racism and how incidents will be addressed.

4. BUILD SUPPORT

- Facilitate small group conversations
- Reassure people who share their experiences
- Praise people who actively listen
- Confirm that there will be no ridicule
- Communicate how vital diversity is

Practical step: create or join a network to enable people to share, learn, make mistakes and deliver clear outcomes.

5. RAISE AWARENESS

- Become a race champion
- Be intentional on inclusion
- Promote curiosity in your team

Practical step: re-examine recruitment and promotion processes to ensure they are free from unconscious bias and that short lists are balanced.

6. RAISE SKILLS

- Invest in training on Diversity & Inclusion
- Communicate the value of this training with your organisation & employees
- Ensure that training is flexible and skills gained are adaptable

Practical step: ask about training for you and your team and seek a long term solution.” [pp6-7]

The focus is very much on moving to be an anti-racist organisation, and there are plenty of ideas and suggestions about how to develop this:

“Anti-racism at work is an ongoing duty that requires constant reinforcement. For example public services such as transport and healthcare post caution signs reminding users that abuse or violence towards staff will not be tolerated. Managers and leaders should look at how their organisation reinforces health and safety at work and give equal importance to communicating zero-tolerance to racism and commitment to anti-racism.” [p15]

There is a useful discussion of terminology, and this section urges readers to

“BE BRAVE

Managers must be brave and start the conversation about race in the workplace, now. Acknowledging to yourself and your team that you will build your knowledge and confidence about what language and terminology to use – and may well make mistakes along the way – is the most important first step you can take against inaction.

ASK.

If in doubt, treat people how they would like to be treated and ask how they prefer to describe their racial, ethnic or national identities.

EVOLVE

Terminology around race and ethnicity evolves continuously, so managers should learn about preferred terminology in their organisation and remain actively conscious of changes. This commitment alone can be considered a powerful act of allyship.” [p23]

There is also a very helpful look at acronyms:

“The use of collective terms and associated acronyms is widespread and results from efforts to collect complex data. ‘Black and Minority Ethnic’ (BME) and ‘Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic’ (BAME) are commonly used in the UK.

These collective terms and associated acronyms are considered problematic because they:

- Put incredibly diverse racial, ethnic and cultural groups in one homogenous ‘box’
- Reinforce racial inequality by maintaining the White identity as privileged
- Minoritise and subordinate groups, many of which are global majorities
- Are widely misunderstood” [p24]

which is followed by “5 steps to getting it right”:

1. “KEEP UP
Keeping up with evolving terminology
2. BE SPECIFIC
Be as specific as possible and fully understand the terms you use
3. AVOID ACRONYMS
Avoid acronyms, especially referring to someone’s identity as an acronym
4. DON’T GENERALISE
Avoid referring to groups as generalisations or as colours (“blacks” or “whites”)

5. PEOPLE FIRST

Put the person or people first, recognising their individuality and preferences” [p25]

After a brief introduction to microaggressions and how to deal with these, the guidance suggests:

“Better managers and leaders should create a safe space for people to talk about the issues they’re facing and the support that might be needed. Demonstrate empathy by recognising that the subject of race may invoke trauma for people, including managers, who experience racism.” [p35]

There are tips on developing networks and working collaboratively. These are followed by top tips about becoming a powerful ally, which includes raising awareness, and developing knowledge & skills.

Finally, the glossary and extra reading are valuable additions to the guide.

This guidance is well worth reading – and following – and introducing to other people you work with.

Highly recommended.¹⁹

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

Libraries in lockdown: connecting communities in crisis

Libraries Connected have published their report²⁰, showing the range of activities that public libraries carried out during lockdown, and the impact that these had.

The report ends with a series of important conclusions:

1. “Valuing quality and value for money in staff and physical services

- Councils should recognise the evidence that digital and remote services provide mitigation for isolation and lack of social contact, but that communities also need and want social spaces with the values and reach of public libraries
- Library services should continue to embrace models of collaboration with other council services and partners which offer a personalised and holistic service, to prevent future cost burdens to welfare, education, health and social care

¹⁹ Source: email from CMI, 30 Oct 2020.

²⁰ Andrew Holden, *et al. Libraries in lockdown: connecting communities in crisis*. Libraries Connected, 2020. Available to download as a Word document from: <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/news/library-services-online-events-lockdown>.

- Library services should absorb the potential implications of changes in footfall, working patterns and space requirements when thinking how library spaces could be best used and located in the future
- Councils and library services should build on the way staff have demonstrated and developed skills during lockdown to deliver a workforce ready to respond to future customer needs and to advocate for their services.

2. Digital must work for everyone, everywhere

- Councils should use the skills and expertise of library staff to ensure all residents have access to digital services, particularly young people and those facing isolation as social distancing continues
- Councils need to remove barriers which prevent libraries from delivering a high-quality digital offer including corporate limitations on web platforms and use of social media
- Library services should prioritise investment in digital capacity to offer an improved user experience online that meets consumer expectations of a modern digital service
- Library sector bodies and government should accelerate negotiations with publishers to improve the terms of digital lending and online broadcast licensing to increase availability and affordability for public libraries.

3. Recognising and facing the funding threat

- The sector governing bodies need to meet head-on any suggestion that digital and remote services could replace physical spaces as a comprehensive and efficient service, given the relatively limited reach of the current digital offer, and the risk of excluding those most in need.
- Councils should value and leverage their libraries' reach, assets and trusted brand to enhance their preventative strategies. They should consider libraries first when commissioning, rather than viewing libraries as a source of short-term savings.
- Libraries should take the opportunity to develop their funding and income generation strategies to align them with the emerging needs of community resilience and regeneration and support their communities to respond to changing employment and working patterns.
- The library sector needs to improve their evidence gathering to create a standardised and comparable dataset so they can more clearly monitor and track their impact and present evidence which is compelling for councils and other funders." [pp46-47]

Health & Wellbeing issues – Other Agencies

“Every Object Tells A Story”

Kath Reynolds writes:

During the last few months, we have all had our usual interests and activities curtailed due to COVID.

Opportunities for entertainers to visit care settings have certainly been reduced and in most cases stopped all together.

As a reminiscence facilitator and in response to this, I have put together a series of reminiscence videos called "Every Object Tells A Story".

The videos have been really well received in the pilot project, so I am now starting to offer them more widely.

"Every Object Tells A Story" is a series of 12 short videos designed to stimulate conversation, interaction and to bring back memories.

The videos also help to create a sense of community, identity and belonging whilst facilitating understanding between carers and the cared for.

Themed by areas of shared experience, the videos highlight everyday objects which would have been familiar to generations born from the 1920s through to the 1950s.

Intended for one-to-one or small group use, the videos are ideal for use in care settings especially with those suffering with dementia. However, they have also been successfully used with larger groups to simply entertain!

In care settings, the videos are designed to be shared with older people and paused at various points so that discussions can take place on individual object segments.

Each video lasts around 30 minutes but might take 60 minutes to discuss one day and on other occasions could be used to stimulate discussion over several days ... every object might easily tell a dozen stories not just one!

For prices and more information, please contact Kath – 01538 722812, kreyno9128@aol.com.

Kath Reynolds has been involved with reminiscence work (as a practitioner and trainer) for almost 30 years. She delivers talks to groups such as WIs, U3As as well as sessions within care settings. More information can be found on her website at www.kathreynolds.co.uk or follow her on Facebook - www.facebook.com/kathreynoldsReminiscence.

Broader issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

“Anti-capitalism” resources

Further to the piece in last month’s *Newsletter*²¹, the CILIP Information Literacy Group have produced a strong statement²² in response, including:

“The guidance makes sense in its view that schools should not engage with organisations that promote non-democratic political systems; and it is right too to require schools not to use resources produced by entities committed, for instance, to overthrowing democracy, opposing free speech or deploying racist discourse. But we are perturbed that organisations (and, by implication, individuals) which have views that are critical of or opposed to capitalism should be placed in the same category as extremist and potentially dangerous bodies. It is not our place to make a judgement about the merits or otherwise of capitalism. Rather, we are saying that, in the interest of fostering critical thinking abilities, it is proper for young people to be exposed impartially to a range of robust information and resources, including those produced by organisations and individuals whose views, whilst controversial, are nevertheless a legitimate part of democratic discourse. Indeed, making a point of removing exposure to anti-capitalist viewpoints politicizes the curriculum inappropriately.”²³

Following on from the piece in the last Newsletter²⁴, *The Guardian* covered a speech by Kemi Badenoch (the Women and Equalities Minister) in which she said:

“Schools which teach pupils that ‘white privilege’ is an uncontested fact are breaking the law, the women and equalities minister has said.

Addressing MPs during a Commons debate on Black History Month, Kemi Badenoch said the government does not want children being taught about ‘white privilege and their inherited racial guilt’.

‘Any school which teaches these elements of political race theory as fact, or which promotes partisan political views such as defunding the police without offering a balanced treatment of opposing views, is breaking the law,’ she said.

²¹ *Network Newsletter*, 234, Aug 2020, pp7-10.

²² “Information Literacy and political censorship in the school curriculum”, 14 Oct 2020, <https://infolit.org.uk/information-literacy-and-political-censorship-in-the-school-curriculum/>.

²³ Source: email from Deborah Varena, 14 Oct 2020.

²⁴ *The Network Newsletter*, 234, Aug 2020, pp7-10, available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Newsletter-NS-234.pdf>.

She added that schools have a statutory duty to remain politically impartial and should not openly support ‘the anti-capitalist Black Lives Matter group’.²⁵

The IRR Communications Officer, Liam Shrivastava, has written an important piece in which he argues that to suggest that critical race theory (from where the idea of ‘white privilege’ originated) “[...] is an ideology which is being taught within UK classrooms is complete nonsense.” He goes on to say that:

“Whether it be critical race theory, unconscious bias or the catch-all term ‘identity politics’, these phrases are mobilised to quieten the campaign against structural inequality.”^{26, 27}

Abbreviations and acronyms

ALA = American Library Association

BL = British Library

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

CMI = Chartered Management Institute

IRR = Institute of Race Relations

PPE = personal protective equipment

UEL = University of East London

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²⁵ Jessica Murray “Teaching white privilege as uncontested fact is illegal, minister says”, *The Guardian*, 20 Oct 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/20/teaching-white-privilege-is-a-fact-breaks-the-law-minister-says>.

²⁶ Liam Shrivastava “Kemi Badenoch’s speech is the latest in a multi-pronged attack on anti-racism”, *Byline Times*, 22 Oct 2020, https://bylinetimes.com/2020/10/22/kemi-badenoch-speech-attack-anti-racism/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=how_black_history_month_is_a_tool_to_understand_the_present&utm_term=2020-10-25.

²⁷ Source: *IRR News*, 22 Oct 2020.