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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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Thanks!

Firstly, just a quick note to say how grateful I am to all those Network members who have renewed their subscriptions at this difficult time for our sector – your continuing support means that we can keep on producing the Newsletter and Ebulletin, and all the other work that The Network does – thank you!

Did you see ...?

Race Equality Teaching

The Spring 2011 issue¹ has been commissioned as a response to the education White Paper², and includes a range of interesting pieces, including:

- Robin Richardson “Due regard and disregard – the coalition government’s performance on equality, a review of progress and looking ahead” [pp3-8]
- David Gillborn “Fine words and foul deeds: why coalition education policy will make things worse for Black students and the White working class” [pp9-14]
- Jean Conteh “Initial Teacher Education, EAL and diversity: ‘it’s more complex than you think’” [pp30-33]
- Bill Bolloten “Among the unkindest cuts of all: EMA and ESOL – two case studies” [pp45-50].

Books for Keeps

The latest issue has a thoughtful article by Rosemary Stones³ on “The marketing and reviewing of multicultural children’s books”, which looks at whether it is still necessary to highlight that a book has, for example, a BME character, or whether, in the current climate, this is putting up barriers to the take-up of particular books.

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

‘I didn’t know I could’: museums and young people looked after

“As part of the Renaissance East of England business plan 2009-11, the four hub museums developed innovative programmes for children and young people aged from 7 to 18 being looked after in care homes or

¹ *Race Equality Teaching*, 29 (2), Spring 2011. For further information and subscription details, see: http://www.trentham-books.co.uk/acatalog/Race_Equality_Teaching.html.

² *The importance of teaching*. Cm 7980. DfE, 2010. Available to download as a pdf (1015 kb) from: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/CM-7980.pdf>.

³ Rosemary Stones “The marketing and reviewing of multicultural children’s books”, *Books for Keeps*, 188, May 2011, p3. The journal can be accessed at: <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/188>.

foster families. They took part in a range of activities from creative workshops in art, music and dance to developing campaigns and putting on exhibitions and performances.”⁴

MLA Renaissance East of England commissioned Local Level to evaluate this work, and this important report⁵ has just been published.

The report begins by setting the scene (about who looked-after children are and the policy setting that we are working in), and then goes on to evaluate work at Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service; Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service; the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; and Luton Culture.

It found strong evidence of the positive effects of this work on the young people and their carers, and on the museums themselves; it also considers the key practical issues that need to be resolved to make this work successful.

The research also suggests that there could be a good business case to be built from this work, and recommends that further research is undertaken:

“... museum-based activities with young people looked after appear to produce beneficial outcomes reliably and sustainably.” [p41 – emphasis theirs]

Overall, the study found that:

- “the young people gained consistent benefits in terms of confidence, self-knowledge and identity; social skills; cultural capital; and learning
- museum-based activities with young people looked after appear to produce beneficial outcomes *reliably and sustainably*
- the kinds of benefit identified can probably be accessed for considerably less than £30 per young person per hour
- the costs are such that these activities represent value for money compared with other opportunities available
- the activities are low risk and inexpensive; not addressing the young people’s needs is high risk and expensive
- there is potential to sharpen the focus on individual needs, and to improve outcomes through better communication and following up on the experiences. The benefits can be sustained within existing formal and informal care programmes
- there is also potential to involve young people themselves in the design and organisation of activities.

⁴ From:

http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions/east_of_england/news/publications.

⁵ Kevin Harris and Martin Dudley. *‘I didn’t know I could’: museums and young people looked after: report to the Renaissance East of England Museum Hub*. MLA Renaissance East of England, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (342 kb) from: http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions/east_of_england/news/~media/East_of_England/Files/2011/MACLA_report_Final.ashx.

The report provides support for an emerging movement of museum-based activities that contribute direct and consistent benefits to young people looked after.

Pioneers in this field have shown that what has been tried is realistic, with positive outcomes consistently and inexpensively achieved.

Museum practitioners should put energy into the systematic dissemination of experience; sharing ideas, lessons and resources; engaging child care professionals strategically; and explaining the benefits to policy makers.” [p12]

The report concludes by stating:

“The young people not only gained confidence, sometimes in very striking ways, but most seem to have made an investment in their own identity, which they could build on. The boost to self-esteem contributes in turn to other outcomes.

The key points that we would want to draw to the attention of policy makers are these:

- museums can provide activities in a public space in which life skills can be developed and aspiration can be nurtured
- museums link the past to the present in a way that affirms and extends, and stimulates learning
- activities tailored for young people looked after can address their issues of exclusion, identity and a place in society
- young people can enjoy new experiences in the company of others while developing a range of social and practical skills
- the activities led *consistently* to beneficial outcomes for the young people
- the activities are low risk, and the costs of not addressing the young people’s needs are likely to be high
- there is potential to sharpen the focus on individual needs, and to improve outcomes through following up on the experiences. The benefits can be sustained within existing formal and informal care programmes
- the likely costs are such that these activities represent value for money compared with other opportunities available.” [pp47-48]

As well as this full report, there are also:

- A summary report⁶
- A set of brief case studies⁷.

⁶ Available to download as a pdf (585 kb) from:
[http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions/east_of_england/news/~media/East_of_England/Files/2011/LAC%20Summary%20vF.ashx](http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions/east_of_england/news/~/media/East_of_England/Files/2011/LAC%20Summary%20vF.ashx).

⁷ Available to download as a pdf (74 kb) from:
http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions/east_of_england/news/~media/East_of_England/Files/2011/MaCLA%20case%20studies.ashx.

This evaluation builds a strong case for the importance of working with this vulnerable group – and of the benefits that all accrue. Highly recommended.

Stepping stones evaluation: final report

MLA Renaissance East of England have also just published this report⁸ on the Stepping Stones project:

“Stepping Stones is a Renaissance East of England programme looking at how museums can meet the needs of young people who are out of work by building confidence and developing transferable skills. The programme created 32 extra jobs for unemployed young people in a diverse range of roles in 24 museums across the region. Young people were recruited to jobs in partnership with Jobcentre Plus. They came from a wide range of backgrounds with very differing levels of qualification and previous work experience. For some this was their first experience of paid employment. The impact of the programme was evaluated by Discovery Research Ltd who interviewed young people and museum staff involved in the programme.”⁹

The evaluation report begins with the young people – as the report says:

“... the project has had a profound effect on those taking part, and to a large extent worked extremely well for young people to transform their attitudes and mindset, feelings of confidence and self-worth, and crucially, propensity to continue into employment or training.” [p4]

It looks, for example, at the impact that the project had on the young people, the skills gained, and their impact on the museum.

The second part of the report looks at the museum staff evaluation:

“The message was a largely positive one, with museums considering they have benefitted from the experience in a number of ways:

- Encouraging staff to think outside of the forms and paperwork associated with recruitment, and to look instead at the individual, and rely more on gut instinct;
- The young people bring with them an infectious enthusiasm and fresh ideas about how to benefit museum visitors;
- The experience of helping and supporting young people in difficult circumstances, and in most cases see them transform and flourish, has provided real satisfaction for many staff within the

⁸ *Stepping Stones evaluation: final report*. MLA Renaissance East of England, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (209 kb) from:

[http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions/east_of_england/news/~media/East_of_England/Files/2011/Rennaisance%20East%20of%20England%20-%20Stepping%20Stones%20Final%20Report%20v1.ashx](http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions/east_of_england/news/~/media/East_of_England/Files/2011/Rennaisance%20East%20of%20England%20-%20Stepping%20Stones%20Final%20Report%20v1.ashx).

⁹ Taken from:

http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions/east_of_england/news/publications.

- museums, as well as helping develop management skills among staff mentoring the young people;
- Museum staff have witnessed just how productive the museum environment can be in offering a range of skills and positive environment in which to nurture young people, which can make them look differently at the role of the museum in the wider community;
 - The public have benefitted from the way many of the young people are able to interact with visitors in a positive way, especially in the way they are able to mix with, and relate to other young people visiting the museum.

Overall, in many cases the experience has energised and enthused staff across the museums in a way that was entirely unexpected, and worked to bond people together in a common cause.” [p31]

The third section of the report consists of reflector interviews, “short telephone interviews that take place 6 to 12 weeks after the jobs have finished, in order to complete the circle and understand what the young people have been doing since finishing, and what they think of the Stepping Stones project in retrospect, and in the light of returning to the job market.” [p41]

These have been summarised as:

“Reactions were mixed as some of the participants had not managed to go straight into further employment, and found themselves once again applying for positions, while some felt they had compromised significantly by taking up employment that was not inline with their qualifications, abilities, aims or ambitions. However, across the sample, all felt that on reflection, the experience of working in a museum had been invaluable and given them a real confidence boost, resilience and far better chance of securing future employment.” [p41]

The final summary is very positive:

“The evaluation demonstrates that the key objectives of the project are exceeded, and young people experience:

- A boost in confidence;
- A more positive attitude to achieving future employment;
- Transferable skills and experience;
- A broader scope of the types of future employment they might consider;
- Improved mental health;
- A wider social network;
- Ongoing support from their mentors and peers within the museum.

The outcome is young people who feel they genuinely have something of practical value to offer potential employers, beyond education, which will help them compete effectively in the current job market.” [p44]

In addition to the full report, there is also a summary report¹⁰ available.

Highly recommended.¹¹

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

C4EO: three new Youth Knowledge Reviews

In addition to the three Reviews¹² on Families, Parents and Carers, C4EO have now published these three new Reviews.

Increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities

This Knowledge Review¹³ “... tells us what works in increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities. It is based on a rapid review of the research literature involving systematic searching, analysis of key data, validated local practice examples and views from service users and providers.” [p2]

The key findings include:

- “Around three-quarters of all young people participate in some form of positive activities. The most common form of activity is sport and physical activity. There is little difference in terms of participation rates by gender, but far fewer young people from lower-income families or from rural areas participate in activities.
- Barriers to participation include: poor access to information about what is available and how to access it; parental attitudes; the influence of friends and peers; internal factors (the perceptions young people hold about themselves, for example, confidence); and practical factors such as time, transport and cost.
- There is limited quantitative evidence of many of the principal perceived benefits of young people’s participation in positive activities, much of the research available is qualitative and often based on self-reports.” [p2]

In addition:

- “Participation in multiple positive activities brings additional benefits.

¹⁰ Available to download as a pdf (226 kb) from:

[http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions/east_of_england/news/~media/East_of_England/Files/2011/Stepping%20Stones%20Executive%20Summary%201%20vF%2012%20L.ashx](http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions/east_of_england/news/~/media/East_of_England/Files/2011/Stepping%20Stones%20Executive%20Summary%201%20vF%2012%20L.ashx).

¹¹ Thanks to Hazel Courtley (MLA Renaissance East of England) for alerting me to these two reports.

¹² Assessed in *The Network Newsletter*, 119, March 2011, pp3-6.

¹³ Jon Adamson *et al.* *Increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities*. Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People’s Services (Youth Knowledge Review 1), 2011. Available to download as a pdf (1200 kb) from: http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/youth/positiveactivities/files/positive_activities_knowledge_review.pdf?dm_i=7SL,F58P,12Q3JN,17VKS,1.

- Effective strategies for promoting opportunities for young people to participate in positive activities include:
 - appropriate levels of engagement (i.e. for initial take-up of opportunities and sustained engagement)
 - targeting all young people, not just specific groups such as young offenders or elite athletes (although again universal provision may incur increased costs)
 - using a variety of media/marketing as part of a comprehensive communications strategy
 - involving young people
 - communicating specific messages about the benefits rather than the generic benefit of participation being a ‘good thing’.
- Young people should be involved in all aspects of the provision and promotion of positive activities and the influence of word of mouth through friends and social networks is a very powerful one.
- There is a need for cost-benefit analysis of young people’s participation in positive activities and the social return on investment that participation may bring. This could prove beneficial for improving value for money and more effective targeting of resources.” [p3]

This Review builds a strong case for the importance of involving young people, and we can draw on it in our own work.

Improving outcomes for young people by spreading and deepening the impact of targeted youth support and development

The second Review¹⁴ “aims to improve understanding of targeted youth support (TYS) services by evaluating the evidence on the:

- eligibility and uptake of TYS services
- impact of TYS on desirable outcomes
- facilitators of and barriers to effective TYS services.” [p1]

The key findings include:

- “The literature review and knowledge workshops both found evidence that many TYS services are effective in the areas of reducing teenage pregnancies; promoting positive behaviours; reducing emotional and behavioural problems, including delinquency/offending, school exclusion and truancy; increasing confidence and motivation in at-risk young people; and can improve family relationships and parental engagement.
- Barriers and issues around TYS can be grouped into three categories: relationships, resources and research.” [p1]

¹⁴ Alison O’Mara *et al.* *Improving outcomes for young people by spreading and deepening the impact of targeted youth support and development*. Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People’s Services (Youth Knowledge Review 2), 2011. Available to download as a pdf (1540 kb) from: http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/youth/supportanddevelopment/files/support_and_development_knowledge_review.pdf?dm_i=7SL,F58P,12Q3JN,17VKS,1.

Reducing alcohol consumption by young people and so improving their health, safety and wellbeing

The third Review¹⁵ “tells us what has worked to date regarding reducing alcohol consumption among young people with the potential to improve their health, safety and wellbeing.” [p1]

- “Programmes that have shown promise in reducing alcohol consumption among young people include those that:
 - Engage and work with families to improve the quality of familial relationships
 - Assist pupils to learn about alcohol and apply what they have learned to resisting drug and alcohol use
 - Adopt a personality-focused approach to working with pupils at greatest risk of using alcohol problematically
 - Seek generally to improve the quality of pupils’ experience at school
 - Provide young people with enjoyable out-of-school activities that contribute to their sense of achievement.” [pp1-2]

Poverty and ethnicity: a review of evidence

JRF have just published a “Round-up”¹⁶ which summarises major research from one of their key programmes:

“Since 2005, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has funded a number of research projects exploring the links between poverty and ethnicity. More recently, a series of reviews and studies were commissioned in order to feed into the scoping of a major new programme focusing specifically on understanding how poverty and ethnicity interact. These were intended to distil from current evidence what is currently known about a number of key issues and which gaps in knowledge and understanding are most significant in relation to tackling poverty. This *Round-up* draws together the findings of the scoping work, carried out in 2010.

The research focused mainly on three areas of life that have enormous impact on whether and how people experience poverty: education, work and unpaid caring. It also examined two of the underlying issues that help us to understand how and why outcomes in all of these areas vary so markedly – social networks and the role of places. Alongside this, the research looked at the question of inequality within a range of ethnic

¹⁵ Ian Warwick *et al.* *Reducing alcohol consumption by young people and so improving their health, safety and wellbeing*. Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People’s Services (Youth Knowledge Review 3), 2011. Available to download as a pdf (1600 kb) from:

http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/youth/alcoholconsumption/files/alcohol_consumption_full_knowledge_review.pdf?dm_i=7SL,F58P,12Q3JN,17VKS,1.

¹⁶ Helen Barnard and Claire Turner. *Poverty and ethnicity: a review of evidence – Round-up: Reviewing the evidence*. JRF, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (200 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-ethnicity-evidence-summary.pdf>.

groups. It also included qualitative research with a number of communities to understand their day-to-day experiences.” [p3]

As the JRF researchers acknowledge:

“There is a tension running through all of this research between the reality of common experiences *among* people from some ethnic backgrounds and the wide variations and nuances that also exist *within* and *across* such groups.

There are definite patterns of disadvantage for people from minority ethnic backgrounds which need to be acknowledged and tackled. For instance, poverty is higher among all black and minority ethnic groups than among the majority white population ... There are also commonalities of experience, particularly in terms of discrimination and racism.

But as soon as nearly every issue is examined in more detail, such broad patterns start to break down. Discussing issues in relation to ‘minority ethnic groups’ as a whole almost immediately becomes untenable due to the enormous variation between them. Even considering a smaller set of ethnic groups is very often also problematic.” [p2, emphasis theirs]

The key points to come out in this research summary are:

- “‘Intersectionality’¹⁷ is vital: in order to understand how ethnicity affects people’s experiences and outcomes. It is also necessary to consider other aspects of identity such as gender, age, religion, disability, health and location.
- Outcomes for individuals come from the interaction of two broad sets of factors:
 - informal processes – the texture of everyday life, the decisions and assumptions of individuals, communities and organisations;
 - wider structures – labour markets, housing options, services, geography, social norms.
- There are many issues which are understood only partially. Four areas emerged for further investigation:
 - caring and earning: the changing ways families across ethnicities and locations are managing their caring and economic needs; the implications of this for informal and formal care services, labour market policies and the future of family and community life;
 - how ethnicity affects in-work poverty: in particular the part played by informal workplace culture and the effects on access to, and use of, training and qualifications, development and progression in work;
 - how social networks are linked to escaping from poverty: how this is changing for new generations and new groups; the evolving role of digital networks; the potential role of links between low and higher income people within ethnically based networks;

¹⁷ “People’s experience is not shaped by one aspect of their identity alone but by a combination of elements.” [p4]

– the influence of the places people live and work in: why this varies so much around ethnicity and how understanding it can lead to more effective local and national action on poverty.” [p1]

Finally, in addition, the paper concludes:

“Reviews of the existing literature have also highlighted weaknesses in the evidence relating to Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales and insufficient exploration of much of England outside London and other major cities. It has demonstrated the importance of considering all the issues raised across a broad range of ethnicities – settled, minority ethnic groups; newer groups; and white ethnicities. A consistent theme has been the greater insights and more effective policy development that are possible when other dimensions are considered in addition to ethnicity. In particular, research examining ethnicity, religion and gender together have pointed towards much more nuanced policy in relation to enabling minority ethnic women to enter and succeed in the workplace. This suggests that extending this kind of knowledge to other groups and dimensions of identity may enable more effective policies and practices to be developed. Finally, the very varied impact of places on people from different ethnicities suggests that thinking locally may present greater opportunities in some cases than developing very broad national approaches.” [p16]

As noted above, this summary paper draws on a number of other published pieces of research – these include:

- *Exploring experiences of poverty in Bradford*¹⁸
- *Experience of poverty and ethnicity in London*¹⁹
- *Community consultation on poverty and ethnicity in Scotland*²⁰
- *Poverty, ethnicity and place*²¹
- *Social networks, poverty and ethnicity*²²
- *Poverty, ethnicity and caring*²³
- *The role of employer attitudes and behaviour*²⁴

¹⁸ Bal Athwal *et al.* *Exploring experiences of poverty in Bradford*. JRF, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (200 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/Bradford-experiencing-poverty-full.pdf>.

¹⁹ Karen Chouhan *et al.* *Experience of poverty and ethnicity in London*. JRF, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (200 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/London-poverty-ethnicity-full.pdf>.

²⁰ Philomena de Lima *et al.* *Community consultation on poverty and ethnicity in Scotland*. JRF, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (300 kb) from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/income-ethnicity-Scotland-full_0.pdf.

²¹ Steve Garner *and* Gargi Bhattacharyya. *Poverty, ethnicity and place*. JRF, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (200 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-ethnicity-place-full.pdf>.

²² Alison Gilchrist *and* Paul Kyprianou. *Social networks, poverty and ethnicity*. JRF, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (100 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-ethnicity-social-networks-full.pdf>.

²³ Donald Hirsch *et al.* *Poverty, ethnicity and caring*. JRF, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (100 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-ethnicity-caring-full.pdf>.

- *A review of poverty and ethnicity in Scotland*²⁵
- *Inequality within ethnic groups*²⁶
- *Poverty, ethnicity and education*²⁷

These are important findings for us to look at in relation to our own work with both BME groups and people struggling with poverty.

Health & Wellbeing issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

The role of local government in promoting wellbeing: Healthy Communities Programme

This report²⁸ presents the findings of a project commissioned by Local Government Improvement and Development and the National Mental Health Development Unit.

The report is in three parts:

1. This sets out the focus of the report. It includes “the latest thinking on wellbeing, and how this applies to the role of local government. It sets out the benefits that councils and their communities can gain by promoting wellbeing.” [p5]
2. Part 2 “sets out how action can be taken to promote wellbeing at different levels of government. The priority action areas include: a strategic leadership role for chief executives and leaders; a rethink of service design and the commissioning process by service managers and commissioners; a reconfiguration of community engagement practices by officers employed throughout local government; operational and cultural change undertaken by HR and procurement officers; and the measurement of wellbeing outcomes by performance teams.” [p5]
3. The third part “considers how local government can start or build on work to promote wellbeing. It suggests the first steps for councils to take, ways to build capacity and confidence, and wellbeing resources that can help local government to develop its role.” [p5]

²⁴ Maria Hudson and Dragos Radu. *The role of employer attitudes and behaviour*. JRF, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (100 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/employer-attitudes-behaviour-full.pdf>.

²⁵ Gina Netto *et al.* *A review of poverty and ethnicity in Scotland*. JRF, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (500 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-ethnicity-Scotland-full.pdf>.

²⁶ Lucinda Platt. *Inequality within ethnic groups*. JRF, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (100 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/inequality-ethnicity-poverty-full.pdf>.

²⁷ Nii Djan Tackey *et al.* *Poverty, ethnicity and education*. JRF, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (100 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-ethnicity-education-full.pdf>.

²⁸ Jody Aked *et al.* *The role of local government in promoting wellbeing: Healthy Communities Programme*. Local Government Improvement and Development, 2010. Available to download as a pdf (1780 kb) from: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/23693073>.

Finally, the report is also supported by a range of online resources²⁹.

The report includes a number of useful, brief case studies, and also examples of how policies can be applied practically (eg how to design into service programmes the use of “Five Ways to Well-being”).

With wellbeing (and happiness) increasing in significance for our work, this is an important and valuable resource. Recommended.³⁰

Broader issues – Other Agencies

The Conservative Party and social policy

This new title³¹ from Policy Press is one that I offered to review for their website, and the following should be published shortly:

“At the time of writing this review, we seem in the UK to be experiencing particularly intense ‘knee-jerk’ reactions to political issues, which are also often deeply personalised and simplistic. Rarely is there an opportunity to stand back a little and assess what is really happening – but this very timely book allows just that.

The writers assess the Conservative Party’s contribution (and attitude) to a range of social policy issues, including welfare; health; education; housing; the family; crime and criminal justice. They also look briefly at the changing role of the Conservative Party in the devolved administrations; and the developing approaches to ‘governance’ (as opposed to government) which is defined as the changing/new approach to the way in which government operates. The book is ‘topped and tailed’ by chapters which set the current Conservative Party into something of an historic context, and a brief look at the effects of the Coalition Government on the Conservatives – and the Liberal Democrats.

In doing so, the seventeen writers (all expert commentators on their particular areas) bring a critical analysis to bear, putting current social policy into context and comparing it with that of previous Conservative administrations and the Labour administration from 1997-2010.

This is particularly useful when party politics is still seen fairly simplistically (especially by parts of the media). The writers show how there has been continuity in social policy between the Conservative and Labour administrations (especially in some areas of education, for example), but also enormous changes and developments. What is also fascinating is the description of the changing ‘face’ of Conservatism (and the impact it has had on the other main Parties) – the book has appeared just before some bits of the Coalition began to

²⁹ See: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=23691278>.

³⁰ Thanks to Colin Bray for bringing this to my attention.

³¹ Hugh Bochel (ed). *The Conservative Party and social policy*. Policy Press, 2011.

Charged-for publication – further information at:

<http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781847424327>.

look quite 'creaky', and it will be interesting to ponder some of the issues raised in the book as the months pass ...

A key issue which many of the writers raise is how far the current notion of a 'compassionate', 'modern' or 'progressive' Conservatism can actually survive in the face of a great desire by many to continue with the 'rolling back' of the state – as Hugh Bochel summarises in his final paragraph, their biggest test may be: “both in the extent to which they allow this to happen, and in their ability to maintain key areas of state provision and/or develop alternative structures and mechanisms to deliver many of the services that the public have come to expect of their governments, and upon which large numbers of people depend.” [p278]

This is an important book which ought to be read widely – particularly by media commentators! Its analysis of key social policy issues and the way they have developed under the different political parties is very clear and gives a good starting point for anyone wanting to find out exactly how social policy evolves.

One other tiny comment – I would have found a glossary immensely helpful as there were terms used which I had to go away and look up (for example, the term 'One Nation Conservatism' is used regularly without defining exactly what is meant in this context).”

Abbreviations and acronyms

BME = Black and minority ethnic

C4EO = Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services

EAL = English as an additional language

EMA = Education Maintenance Allowance

ESOL = English for speakers of other languages

JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation

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