

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

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

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

Did you see ...?

Social exclusion column

Just in case you've missed this, The Network has been invited to contribute a new column to *Public Library Journal*, "Social exclusion"¹.

Gypsies and Travellers

John Pateman has written a key article² for CILIP *Update* on library provision for Travellers, outlining the need for a 'complete rethink' of how services are delivered and managed.

Library services and EAL

There is a very useful overview article³ in the latest *Impact*, looking at public library provision for people who wish to learn English as a second language.

Young runaways/"thrown out" children

There has been considerable media coverage⁴ of the horrifying new report⁵ from the Children's Society, which shows that there are some 129,000 "running away"

¹ The first article, "Tackling the problem: where to start?" by John Vincent was published in the Spring 2004 issue, pp18-19.

² John Pateman "Tackling exclusion: Gypsies and travellers", *Update* 3 (3) 2004, pp42-43.

³ Andrew Hudson. "Library services for people for whom English is an additional language", *Impact*, Spring 2004, pp7-10.

⁴ For example, Maxine Frith "Warning of risk to teenagers who 'slip off face of society'" *The Independent* 24 March 2004, p9.

incidents involving children and young people a year. Whilst most of these young people return home with a day or so, some 15,000 youngsters a year are forced out their homes through abuse or neglect – a new partner arriving, arguments about lifestyles or sexuality being common reasons.

Councils with small Black and ethnic minority populations

Whilst researching some background information for a course, I came across some very useful pointers on the Employers Organisation Website, which I hadn't seen before; they are at: www.lg-employers.gov.uk/diversity/race/bme.

Families and children in Britain

The DWP has recently published a summary of the findings of the 2002 Families and Children Study⁶.

Amongst the important findings of this Study is just how consistently worse off single parent families are, eg 7% of couple families were in the bottom quintile compared with 49% of single parent families; 24% of single parent families, where the parent was not working or was working less than 16 hours per week, went without 4 or more consumer durables.

Vulnerability and involvement in drug use and sex work

The Home Office published in November 2003 a research study⁷ looking at the vulnerability of young prostitutes; relationships between sex work and drug use; and opportunities for exiting sex work and/or drug use.

Based on their study of 125 participants, the Study found that:

- “They were young. The mean age of first prostitution for this group was 13.8 years.
- They were problematic drug users ...
- They were girls.
- They were likely to have been ‘looked after’. Seventy-eight per cent of this group had been ‘looked after’ by their local authorities. Of these, 71 per cent were living in, or running from local authority care when they first prostituted.

⁵ *Thrown away: the experiences of children forced to leave home – a research summary*. Children's Society, 2004. Available at: www.childsoc.org/media/pdf/media/Throwaways_Media_Summary.pdf. The full report is G Rees and J Siakeu. *Thrown away: experiences of children forced to leave home*. Children's Society, 2004.

⁶ Matt Barnes *et al.* *Families and children in Britain: findings from the 2002 Families and Children Study (FACS) – research summary*. DWP, 2004. Available on the DWP Website, www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/.

⁷ Linda Cusick, Anthea Martin and Tiggey May. *Vulnerability and involvement in drug use and sex work*. Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate (Research Study 268), 2003.

- They had supported at least one ‘boyfriend’s’ problematic drug use.” (p vi)

Hard-to-reach families

The Home Office has also recently published a very useful report⁸, looking at the issue of hard-to-reach families and how to deliver services to them.

Although this paper is based on the “On Track” programme (which aims to reduce and prevent crime by targeting early interventions – and which, therefore, may seem a bit removed from our day-to-day practice), in fact this is an immensely useful piece of work (and I have already used it to support a training session!).

The report starts by examining what we mean by hard-to-reach, and identifies the following factors (drawn from a survey of professionals responsible for service delivery):

- “Physical or social isolation of the client or client group.
- Aspects of the client’s behaviour.
- Population characteristics associated with the individual or group.
- Client or group needs (perceived or actual).
- Whether the individual or group has had a negative experience of services in the past.
- Whether service information is accessible to the group eg in an appropriate language.
- Whether the targeting strategies used are effective in identifying and engaging the client group.” (p3)

Further analysis found that hard-to-reach people/groups could broadly be defined as:

- Minority groups
- Slipping through the net
- Service resistant.

The report then goes on to look at key areas for action to try to reach each of these types of group; questions which practitioners need to ask themselves in relation to each group (eg for minority groups, “Is the population information that is available, and on which the service is based, complete and accurate?” (p5).

In section 2 of the report, the authors look at “Hard-to-reach groups and consultation”, again looking at the key issues affecting consultation; the main strategies (networking; targeting; outreach); consultation methods; barriers to effective consultation; and questions for practitioners.

⁸ *Delivering services to hard to reach families in On Track areas: definition, consultation and needs assessment.* Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate (Home Office Development and Practice Report 15), 2004.

In Section 3, the report looks briefly at needs assessment, and, again, asks practitioners some key questions (eg “How do providers deal with changing client needs?” p12)

This report is immensely helpful in focusing on the key issues in trying to reach the hard-to-reach – highly recommended.

Open hearts, open minds

Open hearts, open minds is a social inclusion self-assessment Handbook⁹ that has been developed by a local community¹⁰. (The LINKS Project was set up in Exeter in 2000 as a joint initiative of a number of local community organisations, and its aims included the co-ordination and integration of local services and support for work to tackle social exclusion.)

The Project decided that they needed resources to assist them in working more inclusively, and, following considerable consultation with local community organisations, created this Handbook.

It comprises factual information on exclusion issues together with self-assessment exercises, and is divided into 4 main parts:

- Part A – background and introduction to issues involved
- Part B – for the reader’s own personal development
- Part C – about your organisation, and includes exercises aimed to prompt discussions with your line manager
- Part D – next steps, and additional background information.

Part A starts with definitions (and an exercise to test what the reader knows about socially excluded groups) and then goes into more detail about the factors that lead to exclusion and what we can all do about them.

Part B begins with an exercise, “Am I prejudiced?”; looks at links between social exclusion and our roles in work; looks at building inclusive relationships with clients; and gives some ideas of tools for improving support of clients (including creating a sociogram – outlining someone’s key contacts; a Quick Evaluator for checking clients’ primary needs; a framework for mapping a client’s referrals network).

Part C focuses on the organisation, including defining where support exists in the organisation; using policy documents to develop practice; adding social exclusion issues to induction and other training; a look at the relevance of staff development processes; how to develop support for staff and volunteers.

⁹ Sam Magne and Angela McTiernan. *Open hearts, open minds: a social inclusion self-assessment handbook for staff working with the public and those who support them*. Exeter Community Initiatives, 2004.

¹⁰ My thanks to Mike Maguire of Devon Library Service for drawing this to my attention.

Part D includes a reassessment of the reader's own needs; key notes on some frequently excluded groups; and a list of useful resources.

Obviously, some of the examples given throughout the Handbook (eg suggestions of community organisations to contact) and the list of resources are Exeter-based (this is intended primarily for local consumption), but we can find ways of applying these to our own areas.

The Handbook is intended to be used either by individuals to assess and develop their own roles, and/or by organisations to evaluate how successful they are being in tackling social exclusion. It is extremely clearly laid out, and the exercises are well worth trying.

The Handbook is available from Exeter Community Initiatives, 14 York Road, Exeter EX4 6BA. It is available in two versions with a licence to photocopy:

- Any number of copies for an organisation for use by staff/volunteers – available in an A4 ring-binder
- Particular pages of the document for an individual to copy for their own use only – available in a spiral-bound version.

The organisational version is priced as follows (add £5 per copy p&p):

- £18 per copy for voluntary/community groups with turnover under £50k pa
- £25 per copy for voluntary/community groups with turnover over £50k pa
- £50 per copy for local statutory organisations/private sector/partnership bodies
- £75 per copy for non-voluntary sector national organisations/partnership bodies.

The individual version is priced at £12.50 per copy (+ £2.50 p&p).

ECI would prefer cheques with orders, but will take paper orders – an admin cost of £1 per order will be added.

Sexuality – the new agenda

*Sexuality: the new agenda*¹¹ has been produced by the Employers' Organisation and the Local Government Association, in conjunction with the Association of London Government, Stonewall and UNISON, and aims to provide local authorities with information and advice on engaging with LGBT communities.

¹¹ *Sexuality – the new agenda: a guide for local authorities on engaging with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities*. Employers' Organisation (2003). £20.00 per copy (inclusive of postage & packing) for local authorities, related bodies and charity organisations and £40.00 for other organisations. Further details from Colin Divens, DIALOG, Employers' Organisation for Local Government, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London EC1M 5LG. Tel: 020 7296 6872; fax: 020 7296 6739.

It is based on good practice in local authorities in England and Wales, and also explores new ideas and suggests useful resources. Each section has a valuable, practical checklist for action, which both summarises the section and points ways forward.

The guide is divided into six sections:

1. Getting started, which looks at the context and challenges
2. Corporate planning, which looks at, amongst other topics, making a corporate commitment, working with partners, legislative requirements, cultural and organisational change, the business case
3. Service delivery and customer care, which places this work in the context of public service reform/CPA/Best Value, and looks at LGBTs as service-users
4. Community development and involvement, including tools for engagement, practical tips on engaging with LGBT communities, funding, and taking responsibility
5. Local authority employees, which looks at discrimination at work, the new statutory framework, dignity and respect at work, and taking responsibility
6. Monitoring and evaluation.

There are also two appendices:

Appendix 1: Government initiatives and legislation

Appendix 2: Organisations and publications.

This is a very timely guide, in that, since “Clause 28” was abolished in September 2003, local authorities should now have no reasons for not developing and delivering services; the “experience” sections – good practice culled from a wide range of local authorities – are particularly useful for gathering ideas of what’s possible.

Perhaps inevitably, given the issues around collecting data, the section on monitoring and evaluation is by far the weakest, but, that minor quibble apart, this is an extremely useful guide. Highly recommended.

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: 0845 128 4897
E-mail: john@nadder.org.uk

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