

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

**Number 92, December 2008**

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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.

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## Did you see ...?

### **CILIP Update**

The latest issue<sup>1</sup> has an important article by Robert Gent, "Driving improvement through a Local Area Agreement", in which he describes how Derbyshire County Council is working with local partners to improve services [pp36-38].

### **Museum Practice**

The Museums Association journal<sup>2</sup> has a regular column, "Working Knowledge", and the latest issue features community projects, and has some very interesting articles, including:

- Julie Nightingale "People power", looking at the challenges of involving the 'hardest-to-reach' groups [pp50-51]
- Katie Bruce has contributed a Case Study about the part that advice and training for staff play in supporting their community work at Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art [p52]
- Julie Nightingale "Group therapy" which looks at setting up an advisory group to help tap into specialist knowledge and different perspectives [pp53-54]
- This is followed by a Case Study by Liz Puddick and Sarah Gilbert, which looks at the Imperial War Museum's advisory group that was established to improve their exhibition about Black people's war experiences [p55]
- Julie Nightingale "On target" looks at ways of evaluating community-based projects [pp56-57]
- Julie Nightingale "Generation game" looks at involving young people [58-59]
- Clare Ferdinando contributes a Case Study on Dulwich Picture Gallery and its artist-led workshops for young people in an inner-city area [p60]
- Julie Nightingale "Home from home" looks at work with refugees [pp61-63]
- Julie Nightingale "Creative freedom" looks at working with prisoners [pp64-65].

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## National Year of Reading

### **"Reading for Life"**

Just in case you have missed this announcement, the National Literacy Trust, The Reading Agency and supporting organisations announced on 12 December a campaign to improve the life opportunities of people in most need through reading.

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<sup>1</sup> *Library & Information Update* December 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Further information at: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/subscribe>.

The campaign, which will launch in Spring 2009, will be called “Reading for Life”. It will build on the achievements, networks and approaches championed by the 2008 National Year of Reading. The campaign is based on a belief that reading sits at the heart of social justice, and will engage and inspire key target audiences such as black minority ethnic children, pre-school children, white working class boys and adult learners.

The campaign will consist of a public-facing website<sup>3</sup> featuring literacy initiatives and resources; Wikireadia, the shared professional resource developed during the NYR and now a key resource for those wishing to support reading in a wide variety of settings; and a strategic local authority development programme to support the creation of cross-authority reading strategies. [taken from NYR press release<sup>4</sup>]

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## **Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government**

### **“Aspirations and attainment in deprived communities”**

“Aspirations and attainment in deprived communities” is a joint project between SETF, DCSF and CLG. It explores the potential to raise the attainment of young people in deprived communities, by raising aspirations and changing attitudes within these communities.

The project has just produced an analysis and discussion paper<sup>5</sup>, and policy recommendations will be published next year.

Key findings are:

- “Young people in certain types of neighbourhood are less likely to develop high aspirations. These neighbourhoods tend to have high levels of deprivation.
- However, not all deprived communities are the same. Our analysis has shown that in some very deprived communities – often ethnically diverse, mobile, urban neighbourhoods – young people tend to have high aspirations for the future. In other areas – often traditional working class communities in ex-industrial areas – low aspirations may be preventing young people from achieving their potential.
- Certain community characteristics are associated with low aspirations – such as insular social networks, low population mobility and a sense of decline. These may be close knit, strong and cohesive communities. However, people may lack more diverse connections with people and places outside their immediate neighbourhood.

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<sup>3</sup> See: [www.readingforlife.org.uk](http://www.readingforlife.org.uk).

<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/index.php?id=428>.

<sup>5</sup> *Aspiration and attainment amongst young people in deprived communities: analysis and discussion paper*. Cabinet Office (Social Exclusion Task Force Short Studies), 2008. Available to download as a pdf (870 kb) from: [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/109339/aspirations\\_evidence\\_pack.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/109339/aspirations_evidence_pack.pdf).

- Young people’s aspirations have a significant influence on their educational attainment and future outcomes. 11-14 is a key age range, when young people move from idealistic to more realistic ambitions.
- Aspirations vary by gender, ethnicity, social class and area deprivation. White boys have the lowest aspirations. The educational attainment of white boys is also failing to improve at the rates of most other ethnic groups.
- Parents are the most important influence on children. But young people and their parents are also influenced by the people and places where they live.” [Taken from SETF website<sup>6</sup>]

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## Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

### Quick Reads 2009

Claire Woodward from NIACE has written an article about next year’s Quick reads – see Appendix.

### ***Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2008***

JRF have just published their tenth anniversary review<sup>7</sup> of the position in the UK.

It can be summarised as follows:

- “For 15 statistics, earlier improvement has stalled. These include: children in low-income or workless households; working-age adults lacking but wanting paid work; the value of out-of-work benefits for pensioners and families relative to earnings; 16-year-olds failing to get five or more GCSEs; and adults worried about being a victim of burglary or violent crime ...
- For 5 statistics, earlier improvement has since reversed, usually meaning no net progress. These include court orders for repossession and young adult unemployment ...
- For 5 statistics, deterioration has followed earlier stagnation. These include adults in low-income working families and working families needing tax credits to avoid low income ...
- 5 statistics only improved in the latter period, sometimes sharply. They include those aged 60 and over who feel very unsafe going out alone at night and households newly recognised as homeless ...

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<sup>6</sup> See:

[http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social\\_exclusion\\_task\\_force/short\\_studies/aspiration\\_s.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/short_studies/aspiration_s.aspx).

<sup>7</sup> Guy Palmer, Tom MacInnes and Peter Kenway. *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2008*. JRF, 2008 (ISBN-13: 9781859356890). Available to download as a pdf (3300 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/ebooks/2315-society-poverty-exclusion.pdf>.

- 10 have shown a sustained improvement over the decade, including: 11-year-olds failing to reach level 4 at Key Stage 2; premature deaths; homes deemed 'non-decent'; and low-income households without a bank account ...
- 5 have steadily worsened, including: pensioners not taking up benefit entitlement and the value of out-of-work benefits for adults without dependent children, relative to earnings ...
- 11 have remained unchanged throughout (often despite being policy priorities) including: the geographic concentration of those claiming out-of-work benefits; pregnancies under 16; low-income households without contents insurance; and pensioners reporting a long-standing illness or disability ...
- The authors conclude that what stands out is how different the record has been in the two five-year periods, from 1997 up to 2002 or 2003 and since then. From 1997 to 2002/2003, 30 out of 56 statistics monitored improved, with 7 worsening. By contrast, from 2003 to the latest available data, 14 improved while 15 worsened.”<sup>8</sup>

The report suggests seven conclusions about what needs to be done from now on (and these give some interesting directions):

1. “There was once a great deal more to the government’s vision of poverty and social exclusion than ‘ending child poverty’ ... Ten years on, the challenge is to prevent it dominating the social policy agenda to the exclusion of virtually all else.”
2. “...attempts to find a way forward again on child poverty, after several years of stagnation, must be based on a much deeper understanding of the forces at work.”
3. “...the answer is nowhere near as simple as ‘work is the route out of poverty’. Instead of being idealised, ‘work’ needs to be scrutinised and the problems it can cause understood in addition to the solutions it can provide.”
4. “Fourth, many of the things that were on the government’s poverty and social exclusion agenda ten years ago do not fall under headings where the question is ‘how to start making progress again’. In particular, some things have been getting worse all the time. In this regard, it really is noticeable how badly the social security system comes out of this assessment, with three of the five statistics that worsened in both periods being directly to do with it (while a fourth is to do with a related matter of social care). These statistics cover all aspects of the system, from frozen levels of benefits for some, rising non-take-up among those who are entitled and rising non-entitlement among those who ought to be entitled, namely those on low incomes.”
5. “... the successes of the last ten years need to be stressed in order to confront the damaging idea that everything always gets worse and that nothing can be done about it.”
6. “... the failures of the last ten years also need to be exposed and re-examined, whether to conclude that some things cannot be done or

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<sup>8</sup> Taken from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/2338.asp>.

that others must be done better. For example, the failure to reduce the number of underage pregnancies – once, at least, a high priority – deserves attention for what it may have to say about the limits of policy in relation to intimate personal behaviour (the idea that couples should be encouraged to stay together might be another). Just because government wants to do something does not always mean it really can.”

7. “... the broad agenda on poverty and social exclusion of 1998 was so much more flexible – and potentially offered more to more people – than the narrow preoccupations that have gained currency in recent years.

‘Social exclusion’ is a French concept, which entered into British politics after 1997 via the European Union. Although meaning slightly different things to different people, its very vagueness is arguably somewhat helpful. Ten years ago, we contented ourselves with a definition that aligned it with the broad notion of poverty advanced by Peter Townsend, adding that its ‘great practical value is that it widens the focus to include factors that may be thought to cause severe and chronic disadvantage’. We strongly believe that this is still a useful formulation.” [quotes taken from pp18-19]

This report – and the highlights in the “Findings” document – are key reading for an analysis of where exactly the ambitious social inclusion agenda has reached.

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## Broader issues – Libraries, Museums and Archives

### ***Seeing places, shaping places: the small area mapping revolution***

The Centre for Local Economic Strategies [CLES]<sup>9</sup> has just published this document<sup>10</sup> as one of its “Local Work” reports<sup>11</sup>.

“This Local Work provides a case study of how small area mapping has empowered managers in the public sector and their partners to inform policy priorities and guide their implementation in a way that is responsive to very local conditions. It draws on a process developed with Wolverhampton City Council’s Library and Information Services, which is highly replicable because it is a way of communicating the dynamics of a range of indicators within individual neighbourhoods.

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<sup>9</sup> See: [www.cles.org.uk](http://www.cles.org.uk).

<sup>10</sup> Steve Griffiths. *Seeing places, shaping places: the small area mapping revolution*. CLES (“Local Work” no.89), 2008. Available to non-CLES members for £5.00 – contact Jessica Smith for more details or to buy a copy, [jessicasmith@cles.org.uk](mailto:jessicasmith@cles.org.uk).

<sup>11</sup> “... a monthly publication, with each issue focusing on a single theme, dealing with best practice/issues with contributions from practitioners, academics and others in the field of regeneration.” [taken from: <http://www.cles.org.uk/information/100673/publications/>].

Rightly, Wolverhampton wanted their library services to develop in response to the differing conditions surrounding each community library: economic, educational, demographic, health, financial, to name a few. They felt that this way, their strategic objectives would be implemented with local intelligence in more senses than one. Whilst this Local Work focuses on the example of Wolverhampton's libraries, the model of small area mapping presented here can certainly be applied to a broad range of service delivery relating to economic development and regeneration." [p1]

The report briefly takes us through the process that CLES and Wolverhampton developed, including developing community profiles based on small area mapping<sup>12</sup> and relating these small area studies to library catchment areas. For each of these, an action plan was drawn up. The plans entailed:

- "targeting existing services to under-represented groups;
- redirecting services to more appropriate locations;
- accessing external funding to deliver service improvements;
- working with partner organisations (such as the PCT, Sure Start etc.) to develop service to respond to unmet need." [p4]

The work also involved mapping the policy context and priorities for Wolverhampton Council generally, the LSP, and the Library Service against available data.

The Library Service then used the resulting information to:

- "... produce fuller individual profiles for each service area. These included not only the profile data, but also showed the number of library users within each street of each designated catchment area. Library staff have since used this to prioritise streets with the greatest potential for marketing activities.
- ... focus events and activities at particular libraries - e.g. where there are particular education or health related problems, there has been an offer of specific activities and emphasis on particular areas of stock.
- The service has also used the findings to specifically promote areas of the service (such as the housebound delivery service) in areas that show the highest need." [p7]

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<sup>12</sup> "The term 'small area mapping' here is taken to refer to the geographical unit of Lower Level Super Output Area (LLSOA), which was introduced after much consultation in the 2001 Census, and typically contains a population of around 1,500. Though electoral ward populations vary substantially, this unit will commonly break ward analysis into seven or eight small areas. LLSOAs came into their own as the geographical unit of the 2004 Indices of Deprivation, which ranked the 32,482 that make up the totality of England by their level of deprivation according to seven Domains or themes (Income Deprivation etc.) plus two subsets for Income Deprivation affecting children and older people." [p2]

The report contains excerpts from examples of the data that were gathered for two libraries, and the marketing plan that was subsequently drawn up for one of them.

This is a really important development in terms of community profiling, drawing on a range of existing data and relating all this to strategic priorities and the LSP. As the report concludes:

“To achieve a comprehensive understanding of a neighbourhood in this way is to take a decisive step towards really engaging with local communities, and using local knowledge to empower both providers, and crucially, local populations. This is consistent not only with the holistic thrust of regeneration and economic development (for example, developing a skilled, healthy, employable workforce), but the whole direction of the area focus embodied in the Audit Commission’s Comprehensive Area Assessment. The culture of delivery is going to change, and small area mapping is a key motor in ensuring that that change is effective.” [p8]

Highly recommended.

The author of the report, Steve Griffiths, would be very happy for people to make contact with him to discuss this further – [stevegriffiths@clara.co.uk](mailto:stevegriffiths@clara.co.uk); and Andrew Scragg, Assistant City Librarian, Wolverhampton, would also be glad to hear from anyone interested in finding out more about this piece of work - [Andrew.Scragg@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Scragg@wolverhampton.gov.uk).

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals  
CLG = Communities and Local Government (Department)  
DCSF = Department for Children, Schools and Families  
JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation  
NIACE = National Institute of Adult Continuing Education  
SETF = Social Exclusion Task Force

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## Quick Reads 2009

On World Book Day, 5 March 2009, ten new Quick Reads will be published by Ian Rankin, the Dragon's Den team, *Coronation Street* star, Sherrie Hewson, and [more](#).

Quick Reads has encouraged thousands of adults to begin to read. The books are ideal for adults who are new to reading or who find reading difficult. Written by bestselling authors and celebrities, Quick Reads are short and exciting books. They will be available from many supermarkets, bookshops and online from March 2009.

Each year we invite organisations to get involved in the Quick Reads campaign and help us to promote the benefits of reading to adults they work with. We've previously received support from readers, tutors, librarians, learning reps, practitioners, and educationalists. Sylvia French from Andover explains how 'The variety of subjects and authors have provided a good source of reading materials for our Adult Basic Skills students. Many of the students had not previously read a whole book and they are very proud to have read something contemporary and by such well known authors.'

You can get involved by:

- Registering your interest and ordering your FREE promotional pack on [www.quickreads.org.uk](http://www.quickreads.org.uk)
- Displaying the posters and giving out the promotional materials from your packs
- Set up fun reading activities such as quizzes and competitions
- Organise an event or set up a reading group
- Tell your students/colleagues/group about the 2009 Quick Reads campaign
- Sending book reviews and feedback to [quickreads@niace.org.uk](mailto:quickreads@niace.org.uk)
- Download the podcasts to hear about the authors experiences of writing the books and find out how other learning providers used Quick Reads at [www.quickreads.org.uk](http://www.quickreads.org.uk)

New Quick Reads titles to available from World Book Day, 5March 2009:

*A Cool Head* by Ian Rankin (Orion)  
*The Cave* by Kate Mosse (Orion)  
*Black-Eyed Devils* by Catrin Collier (Accent Press)  
*The Dare* by John Boyne (Transworld)  
*Doctor Who: The Sontaran Games* by Jacqueline Rayner (BBC Books)  
*The Tannery* by Sherrie Hewson (Macmillan)  
*All These Lonely People* by Gervase Phinn (Penguin)  
*101 Ways to get your Child to Read* by Patience Thomson, with an introduction by Jacqueline Wilson and celebrity tips (Barrington Stoke)  
*Reaching for the Stars: How you can make your dreams come true* by Lola Jaye (HarperCollins)

*Dragons' Den: Your Road to Success* by The Dragons (HarperCollins)

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