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

Number 99, July 2009

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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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Network news – bookshop now on website!

There is now a bookshop on The Network website – as more titles are identified, they will be added, but also let John Vincent know if there are other

titles you'd like to see included. By buying books from the site, you can add to our income!

Please see: http://www.seapn.org.uk/shop.asp?page_id=79.

Did you see …?

Update

The May issue[1] includes some interesting articles:

- Sue McKenzie "Staying in with a book – the new going out" looks at the role that libraries play during a recession [p29]
- Interview with Jonathan Douglas "Think how you're changing lives", focusing on effective advocacy [pp32-34] – there's also an extended version, available to CILIP members via their website[2]
- Ayub Khan "Providing a service for migrant workers" [pp38-39]
- Ruth Harrison "groupthing.org – creating a teens reading site", background to The Reading Agency's new reader development site for young people [pp45-47].

The July/August issue[3] also includes:

- "Campaign calls for fun – and librarians", report by Laura Swaffield on the Campaign for the Book's first conference [p19]
- Tracey Paddon "'But lads don't read'", how Newport worked with Basic Skills Cymru to get boys reading [pp26-27]
- Cheney Gardner "Learning about outreach", a report on Opening the Book's new course on outreach reader development [pp48-49].

Museums Journal

The July issue[4] includes an interesting article about the role that museums and galleries play in preventing mental illness:

- Julie Nightingale "A state of mind" [pp27, 29, 31].

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[1] *Library & Information Update*, May 2009.
[2] Log in via: www.cilip.org.uk/updatedigital.
[3] *Library & Information Update*, July/August 2009. Further information from: www.cilip.org.uk.
[4] *Museums Journal*, July 2009. Further information from: http://www.museumsassociation.org/mj.

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

The multi-dimensional analysis of social exclusion

This piece of research[5] was published in 2007, but somehow slipped under the radar!

In it, the authors redefined social exclusion as:

> "Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole." [p9]

At the same time, they identified that there were degrees of severity of exclusion:

> "Deep exclusion refers to exclusion across more than one domain or dimension of disadvantage, resulting in severe negative consequences for quality of life, well-being and future life chances." [p9]

In order to reassess how people are affected by social exclusion, they also created the *Bristol Social Exclusion Matrix*, or B-SEM[6], which:

> "… contains 10 dimensions or domains of potential importance in social exclusion:

Resources:	Material/economic resources
	Access to public and private services
	Social resources
Participation:	Economic participation
	Social participation
	Culture, education and skills
	Political and civic participation
Quality of life:	Health and well-being
	Living environment

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[5] Ruth Levitas *et al. The multi-dimensional analysis of social exclusion.* Cabinet Office. Social Exclusion Task Force, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (1730 kb) from:
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/research/multidimensional.pdf.
[6] This is in Appendix 7 of the report, which is published separately at:
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/research/chapters/appendix7.xls.

<div align="center">Crime, harm and criminalisation." [p10]</div>

This analysis gives us additional ways of viewing exclusion and of assessing just how far people may be affected by it.

The importance of analysing the effects of social exclusion across the life course is developed in the following reports.

"Understanding the Risks of Social Exclusion Across the Life Course"

"The Understanding the Risks of Social Exclusion Across the Life Course research project comprises four studies that map the risk of social exclusion among people and families at key life stages ...

The reports were commissioned by the Social Exclusion Task Force in the Cabinet Office and examined risk markers of social exclusion using a new analytical framework – the Bristol Social Exclusion Matrix – developed by researchers at the University of Bristol."[7]

The Project has just produced four new reports.

Understanding the risks of social exclusion across the life course: families with children

The first report[8] used data from the Families and Children Study[9] to investigate social exclusion within families with children. They found that:

"Around 45% of families with children were exposed to multiple risk markers (i.e. two or more markers of risk) in 2006 …" [p1]

In addition:

"The findings support existing evidence that poor outcomes can be transmitted from one generation to the next. Children from the most at risk families also experienced low levels of well-being, and their risks often reflected those of their parents. For example, children with parents in ill health also had disproportionately high rates of illness and children who lacked the use of internet facilities at home were more likely to come from poorer families and have parents with lower levels of education." [p2]

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[7] Taken from: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/life-course.aspx.

[8] Paul Oroyemi *et al. Understanding the risks of social exclusion across the life course: families with children*. Social Exclusion Task Force, 2009. Available to download as a pdf (1410 kb) from:
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/226107/families-children.pdf.

[9] See: http://www.natcen.ac.uk/facs/.

The researchers were also able to identify that:

> "Families that experienced persistent multiple risk were more likely to be lone parents, those with four or more children, young mothers, mothers from Black ethnic groups, social tenants and those living in urban areas. Families that were successful in making a transition out of multiple risk had experienced events such as partnering and entering employment. On the other hand, moves into multiple risk, or between risk clusters, were generally associated with becoming unemployed, experiencing family separation, lone parent status, mothers with low levels of education, younger mothers, and social and private tenants." [p2]

This important research not only identified that social exclusion is transmitted down the generations, but also looked at which factors were likely to lead to persistent multiple risk. They concluded that:

> "Policy makers and service providers may therefore wish to consider how services can best be coordinated to address the full range of need among such families." [p3]

Understanding the risks of social exclusion across the life course: youth and young adulthood

The second report[10] covers 16-24 year-olds.

The key findings included:

> "In general, females experienced greater number of risks than males, and young people living with a lone parent, or independently with their own children faced higher risk than other young people. Lack of educational qualifications and experience of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) were particularly high amongst young people who had their own children ...
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> … Based on an additive scale of individual indicators of risk, young peoples' experience of multiple disadvantages was investigated. Female young people were more likely to experience multiple risks, as were older young people. As before, those young people who were living independently with their own children, and those living with a lone parent were also more likely to experience multiple risk, as were social and private tenants. Not surprisingly, those living in areas with higher levels of exposure to disadvantage (as measured by the Index of Deprivation) were more likely to experience multiple disadvantages,

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[10] Linda Cusworth *et al. Understanding the risks of social exclusion across the life course: youth and young adulthood.* Social Exclusion Task Force, 2009. Available to download as a pdf (925.88 kb) from: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/226116/youth.pdf.

whilst risk of social exclusion was less severe for young people living in villages than in urban areas …

… The persistence of risk experienced varied for the different indicators with the most persistent risks of social exclusion being: lack of home ownership; lack of internet connection; smoking more than five cigarettes a day; not having undertaken any qualification or training; and living in a workless household. The least persistently experienced risks were lack of adequate heating, debt, subjective poverty, poor health, and having no contact with neighbours … " [p3]

"… These findings have several general implications for policy. The evidence that young people who were living independently with their own children tended to experience higher risk of social exclusion, both in individual measures and in influencing multiple disadvantages, suggests that more needs to be done to prevent teenage pregnancy and support young parents. Levels of NEET were particularly high for young people with their own children, who need to be offered more opportunities for education and training, supported by improved childcare facilities. Young people living with a lone parent also experienced higher rates of disadvantage or risk than those living with two parents, perhaps as a result of lower average household income. Increased promotion of policies, such as the educational maintenance allowance (EMA) may improve rates of education and training, improving later prospects and experiences. The analysis of transitions between levels of disadvantage also suggested that young people living independently of their parents were less likely to improve their situation year-on-year.

There is evidence from this research that one of the most significant triggers of risk of social exclusion in young adulthood is having lived in a family who was in receipt of income support during adolescence. This stresses the need to break the intergenerational cycle of deprivation by increasing support for poor families with children in order to improve the life chances of the next generation." [p4]

Understanding the risks of social exclusion across the life course: working age adults without dependent children

This research[11] found that:

"… the hazard of becoming 'severely disadvantaged' is significantly greater for women, older respondents, rental tenants, manual occupational groups, the unemployed, home makers, early retirees, the

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[11] Eldin Fahmy *et al. Understanding the risks of social exclusion across the life course: working age adults without dependent children*. Social Exclusion Task Force, 2009. Available to download as a pdf (1740 kb) from: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/226113/working-age-children.pdf.

sick and disabled, those with no qualifications, unmarried (never married) respondents, and single person households. The hazard of entering the 'low skilled' group is significantly greater for older respondents, manual occupational groups, respondents in employment, respondents with few or no qualifications, couples with no dependent children, and single person households." [p6]

It concluded that:

"This research suggests that approximately 16% of this population – 2.6 million adults – are experiencing multidimensional disadvantage at any one point in time. Tackling multidimensional disadvantage amongst working age adults without children therefore ought to be a key priority within the UK's overall strategy for social inclusion. However, the circumstances facing this group are not wholly explicable in terms of labour market non-participation, for example with regard to the circumstances of the 'working poor' and 'low skilled' groups identified here. The absolute magnitude of these groups means that tackling disadvantage amongst those in work should also be a priority in reducing the overall incidence of disadvantage in the UK.

Equally, inclusion through paid work is likely to be a highly inappropriate policy solution for those working age adults whose disadvantaged circumstances are associated with ill health, disability, and caring responsibilities. Labour market activation policies therefore need to be supplemented by policies directed at improving the quality of working life for those in work, as well as income maximisation policies for those working age adults unable to participate in the paid economy. Finally, trends in the incidence of specific instances of disadvantage suggest that overall progress in tackling disadvantage amongst this population has, at best, been mixed. Whilst there appears to have been progress in some areas (material deprivation, housing and neighbourhood quality) there remains much to be done. These findings draw attention to the enduring and cumulative nature of disadvantage - and therefore to the need for a continuing long-term policy commitment to tackling disadvantage and holistic approaches for combating it." [pp6-7]

Understanding the risks of social exclusion across the life course: older age

The fourth report[12]:

"… focused older people aged 60 and over, who experienced *multiple* risk markers …" [p1 – emphasis theirs]

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[12] Elizabeth Becker and Richard Boreham. *Understanding the risks of social exclusion across the life course: older age.* Social Exclusion Task Force, 2009. Available to download as a pdf (1410 kb) from: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/226110/older-age.pdf.

The key findings are shocking:

> "Findings from this study showed that 50 per cent of all those aged 60 and older experienced multiple risk markers of social exclusion.[13] The older old (aged 80 years and over) were more likely to experience multiple risk markers than their younger counterparts (72% of those aged 80 and over, compared with 52% of those aged 70-79, and 41% of those aged 60-69 experienced multiple risk markers)." [p1]

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Living with poverty …

This review[14] was commissioned by the Child Poverty Unit, and is:

> "… a summary of evidence from the last ten years regarding the 'lived experience' of poverty.
>
> The main aims of the review were:
> * to provide a critical summary of recent research on child and family poverty and identify gaps in knowledge about the lives and experiences of children and families;
> * to review evidence about childhood poverty: drawing together research that explores childhood poverty from children's perspectives and highlights their accounts of their lives and their experiences of living in poverty;
> * to review evidence about family poverty: drawing together research with parents in disadvantage, and exploring the challenges faced by families experiencing poverty in their everyday lives." [p1]

The main areas of concern identified by the children were:

* Economic deprivation
* Material deprivation
* "social deprivation: poverty restricted children's chances to make and sustain friendships, and reduced their opportunities for shared social activities due to the costs of attending social events, inadequate and expensive transport provision and the expense of hosting social occasions within their own homes"
* "school deprivation: children experienced restricted opportunities at school, largely through an inability to pay for resources such as study

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[13] "Experiencing multiple risk markers of social exclusion was defined as having two or more of 16 measures created in the ELSA data." [p1]

[14] Tess Ridge. *Living with poverty: a review of the literature on children's and families' experiences of poverty*. DWP (Research Report 594), 2009 (ISBN-13: 978 1 84712 607 8). Available to download as a pdf (342 kb) from: http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep594.pdf.

guides and exam materials, and restricted social opportunities through an inability to pay for school trips and other social activities. Inability to pay for compulsory items, such as uniforms, could also lead to conflict with teachers and disciplinary action"

- Visible signs of poverty and difference
- Family pressures
- "tensions with parents: conflicts sometimes arose with parents who were under severe financial pressure, or who sometimes had to work long hours or rely on childcare that children did not enjoy;"
- Additional responsibilities
- Poor quality housing
- Homelessness
- "poor neighbourhoods: deprived neighbourhoods created particular problems for children who described then as insecure and sometimes dangerous. They experienced a lack of safe space for play and a dearth of local and low-cost leisure facilities;
- living in rural areas meant that disadvantaged children lacked social opportunities for shared play, were reliant on inadequate and costly public transport, and were unable to meet the high costs of participation. This meant that children often felt confined within their local environments." [taken from pp2-3]

For families, the main issues were:

- The challenge of meeting their own needs and meeting children's needs
- "The challenge of balancing the costs of meeting everyday needs against the costs of meeting social imperatives, such as participation in cultural norms and expectations at times of special celebration, like Christmas, Eid and Ramadan."
- There were difficult decisions to be made about buying essential goods or saving for future expenditure
- Families had little access to affordable credit, and accessing expensive credit had to be balanced against going without essentials.
- Money for supervised play and leisure activities for children was difficult to find
- "Work can be an essential strategy for reducing family poverty, but parents had a range of concerns about employment, including the costs and availability of childcare, time poverty and travel costs."
- Employment could also be unpredictable, demanding and inflexible
- Working parents were often torn between doing the right thing for their children and satisfying the needs of their employers
- For families in hardship, adequate, reliable and secure welfare support was a critical issue. [taken from p4]

The report goes on to identify areas for further research, including ensuring that research keeps up with rapidly-changing childhood experience; and into:

> "… specific groups to help us understand their experiences of poverty and how poverty interacts with other characteristics. These groups include:
>   - low-income working families …
>   - low-income fathers …
>   - families experiencing disability and poverty …
>   - ethnic minority families on low-incomes …
>   - marginalised groups: especially the impact of poverty on the lives and experiences of gypsies, travellers and asylum seekers." [p5]

In addition, further research is needed into the availability of and access to public services.

The report also includes a full bibliography of all sources used in the review.

This is an extremely useful piece of background research.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

DWP = Department for Work and Pensions
ELSA = English Longitudinal Study of Ageing [see: http://www.ifs.org.uk/elsa/]

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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:

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