The University Of Sheffield.

The right 'man' for the job?
The role of empathy in community librarianship

Kerry Wilson
Briony Birdi

A research project completed by the Centre for the Public Library and Information in Society (CPLIS), Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield

Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)

March 2006 – February 2008

Arts & Humanities Research Council

CONTENTS

Chapter	Page number
1 INTRODUCTION	**4**
2 RESEARCH AIMS & OBJECTIVES	**6**
3 KEY CONCEPTS & DEFINITIONS	**6**
4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	**8**
4.1 Review of the literature	**8**
4.2 National survey	**8**
4.3 Focus groups and interviews	**11**
4.4 Job vacancy profiling	**12**
4.5 Case studies	**12**
4.6 Research workshop	**13**
4.7 Methodological limitations	**14**
5 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	**15**
5.1 Exclusion, inclusion and social policy	**15**
5.2 Social inclusion in public services and the cultural sector	**21**
5.3 The role of public libraries	**27**
5.4 Professional empathy	**33**
6 RESEARCH FINDINGS	**40**
6.1 Social inclusion philosophy – policy awareness and understanding	**40**
6.1.1 Awareness of social inclusion policy	**40**
6.1.2 Defining social inclusion: conceptual issues	**42**
6.1.3 Cultural diversity and representation	**44**
6.1.4 Cultural awareness and training	**54**
6.2 Social inclusion practice – methods of service planning and delivery	**58**
6.2.1 The local government agenda: ticking boxes and jumping	**58**

through hoops?	
6.2.2 Identifying the socially excluded: target groups and political objectives	**64**
6.2.3 Working practices: logistical issues in providing socially inclusive services	**70**
6.2.4 Socially inclusive services, professional skills and identity	**76**
6.3 Staff attitudes and engagement – motivation and barriers	**86**
6.3.1 Exploring cognitive and intuitive empathy	**86**
6.3.2 Public libraries as inclusive organisations: practicing what we preach?	**92**
6.3.3 Attitudes towards the socially excluded: empathy in practice?	**95**
7 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	**103**
7.1 Skills, partnerships and professional identity	**103**
7.2 Empathy and cultural representation	**104**
7.3 Social inclusion and community librarianship	**105**
8 RECOMMENDATIONS	**107**
8.1 Redefining public library roles and services	**107**
8.2 External partners and service networks	**108**
8.3 Staff recruitment and selection	**109**
8.4 Internal communication and staff support systems	**109**
8.5 Staff training and development	**110**
REFERENCES	**112**
APPENDICES	**122**

1 INTRODUCTION

The project

The project has been designed to investigate public library staff attitudes towards social inclusion policy and disadvantaged groups in society, and to test the relationships between the ethnic, social, cultural and professional background of staff and their capacity to make an effective, empathic contribution to social inclusion objectives.

Investigating the impact of staff attitudes on the effectiveness of public libraries' contribution to social inclusion policy and objectives, issues explored have included whether or not an individual's ethnicity and social and cultural background can be a key driver in maintaining a positive attitude towards community librarianship. The appropriateness of organizational structures and recruitment policies are also considered, particularly with reference to the professional/non-professional hierarchical structure within librarianship. The project investigates the extent to which an inclusive organization facilitates an inclusive public service, and to which the ability to empathise through personal experience motivates the proactive and successful community librarian.

A selection of existing social inclusion initiatives, including their organization, management, delivery and effectiveness are also profiled, providing a contemporary picture of the public library contribution to social inclusion policy, and recommendations for the future of community librarianship. The research focused upon public libraries in England only.

Why this project?

The project was considered to be of value and significance, i.e. in making a valid contribution to the field, due to the following criteria:

Political pertinence – the contemporary cohesive public policy approach to addressing social exclusion in England has encouraged a greater involvement of, and expected contribution from, all public service sectors. The researchers were interested in exploring public library staff responses to such cultural shifts and the need to align service delivery more clearly with political objectives.

Public libraries and social impact research – most published research in this area relates to how public libraries *could* have a social impact and their perceived potential value as community services. There are also sporadic examples of actual impact in this area from individual service and project evaluation studies. Researchers recognised a gap in the existing literature concerning *how* such impact is achieved.

Staff as key stakeholders – when considering this apparent gap in the literature, it was observed that library staff are often overlooked as key

stakeholders in the process, in terms of communicating their perceptions and opinions on the social impact of the services in which they work.

Finally, the project was inspired and motivated by researchers' own prior experience of doing research with public library staff, and a perception that negative attitudes may exist towards the social inclusion agenda within the sector.

The research group[1]

The Department of Information Studies at the University of Sheffield is one of the outstanding research departments in the field. It has a high international reputation and has achieved the highest grade in all recent UK research evaluations. The Centre for the Public Library and Information in Society (CPLIS[2]) provides a focus for its work in the public library sector. The Department's present strengths in this area are reflected in a significant number of funded research projects, a wide range of doctoral studies and in numerous dissertations carried out for Taught Masters Programmes.

The research council

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC[3]) funds postgraduate training and research in the arts and humanities, from archaeology and English literature to design and dance. The quality and range of research supported not only provides social and cultural benefits but also contributes to the economic success of the UK.

[1] To contact the authors, please email Briony Birdi (Principal Investigator), at b.birdi@sheffield.ac.uk.
[2] For more information about CPLIS, please see www.shef.ac.uk/is/research/centres/cplis, and the project website at www.shef.ac.uk/is/research/centres/cplis/research/rightman.html
[3] For further information about the AHRC, please see www.ahrc.ac.uk

2 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the research, as stated in the original proposal submitted to the AHRC, are as follows:

The overall aim is to investigate public library staff attitudes towards the concept of social inclusion.

The objectives are:

- To investigate public library staff attitudes towards social inclusion policy
- To investigate public library staff attitudes towards disadvantaged groups in society
- To compare attitudes to the above variables by staff at different levels of the organizational structure
- To compare attitudes to the above variables by staff in different geographic regions
- To profile current actions and initiatives within the social inclusion agenda and to identify to what extent they differ according to socio-economic/geographic region.

Recommendations are made concerning:

- Appropriate staff recruitment and selection
- Staff training and professional development
- A best practice approach to social inclusion initiatives, from a local and national perspective.

3 KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

In the interests of conceptual clarity, the following key definitions (as used in the research) are presented:

Community librarianship: an operational element of public library services that specifies working with community groups and/or the delivery of targeted services e.g. outreach services, branch library positions, mobile library services.

Social exclusion: a political term applied to groups who are less able to engage in social, economic, cultural and political life due to a combination of factors, poverty often the common denominator. Also described as ‘marginalised’ or ‘disadvantaged’ social groups, social exclusion is in effect a multi-dimensional outcome of disadvantage.

The single definition used to represent the concept of social exclusion and inform research design and data collection is as follows:

> … *a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.* (Social Exclusion Unit, 1997)

Empathy: a psychological construct with various definitions, based on three accepted 'dimensions' of empathy. Firstly, empathy is considered as a *cognitive* or intellectual process, involving an imagined understanding of others and perspective taking. Secondly, empathy is considered to be an *intuitive* response based on emotional reaction and vicarious understanding of another's situation. Thirdly, there are multi-dimensional definitions of empathy which combine or consider both cognitive and emotional elements.

Both cognitive and intuitive dimensions of empathy are integral to this research in examining the relationship between staffs' own vicarious relationship with library users and their capacity to empathise with them. If intuitive empathy for example is not possible, or not considered to be important within a professional transaction, then cognitive empathy skills will (normally) be employed.

The single definition used to represent the concept of empathy and inform research design and data collection is as follows:

Levenson and Ruef (1992) identified three different qualities of empathy:
(a) *knowing* what another person is feeling
(b) *feeling* what another is feeling and
(c) *responding compassionately* to another person's [distress]

This definition was considered to be the most helpful in seeking to define and deconstruct the concept of empathy within a professional service context.

The authors acknowledge that other definitions of the key concepts used within the project exist, and these are explored in more detail within the review of the literature (chapter 5). The definitions used above however have been used to inform and develop the research (used as prompts within focus group discussions for example), so it is important to present them as such.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following research methods have been used throughout the project:

- Review of the literature
- National survey
- Focus groups and interviews
- Job vacancy profiling
- Case studies
- Research workshop

4.1 Review of the literature

A cross-disciplinary review of the literature was undertaken throughout the project, during which books, articles, reports and other publications were consulted from disciplines including library and information management, politics, social policy and social sciences, cultural studies, psychology, management and organizational theory. The review has facilitated a theoretical foundation for the research under the following key themes:

- Exclusion, inclusion and social policy
- Social inclusion in public services and the cultural sector
- The role of public libraries
- Professional empathy

A summary of the review is included in the report as chapter 5. Reading of relevant literature has informed the development of the research, and it is anticipated that the summary will have a similar function for readers in providing a theoretical context by which research findings and conclusions can be measured and evaluated.

4.2 National survey

A postal survey was conducted in Autumn 2006, during which 1100 questionnaires were distributed to a stratified sample of 90 public library authorities (PLAs) in total (within and across the nine English regions) in batches of 10, 15 and 20. The regional allocation of questionnaires was based on the number of PLAs in each region, and a range of PLA 'types' were selected. The questionnaires were addressed to Head of Service or Library Manager for local distribution to staff at all levels of the organisation. A total of 453 completed questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 41%.

Prior to national distribution, the survey was conducted on a pilot basis with MA Librarianship students at the Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield. The purpose of the pilot study was to assess respondents' experiences of completing the questionnaire rather than to test the data collected, and participants were asked to give feedback on

questionnaire content, design and structure. Please see Appendix 1 for the pilot survey feedback form.

The specific aims and objectives of the survey were to provide a statistical profile of staff demographics in terms of gender; age; ethnic group; highest educational qualification; secondary education experience (including cultural diversity; denomination; educational performance); region; length of time in public library service; type of authority; Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) membership and category; and current role. Please see Appendix 3 for a summary of demographic survey data. Other objectives include:

Quantitative measures of professional empathy exploring:

- Staff attitudes towards the community role for the public library
- Staff attitudes towards socially excluded groups
- Staff attitudes towards professional roles and responsibilities in addressing exclusion.

To achieve this aim, the *Professional Empathy* measure was developed, including the following individual scales:

- Genuine Empathy (GE)
- Sympathetic Tendency (ST)
- Simulated Empathy (SE)
- Social Identity (SI)
- Service Values (SV)
- Professional Ethics (PE)

Each scale contains five statements to which respondents had to identify the extent to which they agreed with each statement using the following five-point scale: *'strongly disagree' (1), 'disagree' (2), 'undecided' (3), 'agree' (4), 'strongly agree' (5).* The individual scales were intended to measure professional empathy from *individual*, *societal* and *professional* perspectives.

Individual perspective: The GE and ST scales were designed to measure respondents' capacity to both empathise and sympathise on an individual, interpersonal level. Genuine Empathy[4] is explored in terms of the respondents' ability to empathise via personal experience and vicarious knowledge and understanding of another person's circumstances. The Sympathetic Tendency scale uses the concept of sympathy as a literal expression of concern or compassion under given circumstances, irrespective of one's own experience.

Societal perspective: The impacts of societal influences upon expressions of empathy were explored using the SE and SI scales. Simulated Empathy[5] is explored as a conscious decision or action, i.e. to deliberately imagine oneself

[4] Described as 'intuitive' empathy within the 'Key concepts and definitions' section (3)
[5] Described as 'cognitive' empathy within the 'Key concepts and definitions' section (3)

in another person's position. Societal influences upon such action include a perceived social obligation to show empathic concern, image projection and the interpersonal perceptions and reactions of others. Issues such as social and political consciousness are further explored using the Social Identity scale, including perceptions of community, equality and diversity.

Professional perspective: The SV and PE scales were designed to explore the relationship between organisational values and objectives as perceived by respondents, and their own individual professional values, identity and ethics, i.e. providing a public service and being a Professional. This helps us to gauge a sense of professional priorities amongst participants, and helps to address the general research aims and objectives regarding the appropriateness and value of professional hierarchies in meeting social inclusion objectives.

Overall reliability of Professional Empathy instrument

The instrument did not produce the reliable scales that were expected. Of the 6 proposed scales, reliability tests showed us that we could only create 3 sufficiently reliable scales (*), using reduced numbers of items. The Social Identity scale is shown to be the most robust of the proposed scales, with 4 of the original items reflecting the same attribute.

Proposed scale	Reliability
Genuine Empathy (all 5 items)	.51
Sympathetic tendency (all 5 items)	.50
***Simulated empathy (2 items)**	**.60**
***Social identity (4 items)**	**.66**
***Service values (2 items)**	**.61**
Professional ethics (all 5 items)	.45

Figure i

Table to show Cronbach's alpha of reliability for each of the 6 scales produced for the research instrument.
N.B. Cronbach's alpha of reliability ranges from 0 to 1. A good level of reliability is 0.7 or more, although an outcome of 0.6-0.7 is acceptable.

A summary of Professional Empathy data is included as Appendix 4.

Additional background information was also collected on the (quantifiable) extent to which socially excluded groups are being targeted within responding authorities; brief coverage (quantifiable) of the ways in which exclusion is being addressed; and respondents' awareness of national social inclusion policy.

Please see Appendix 2 for the survey questionnaire used in the research, including the cover letter and information sheet provided for respondents' reference.

The survey was the first primary data collection exercise and was subsequently used to provide a statistical 'snapshot' of current thought and activity in this area, and as a scoping study to provide a theoretical framework for the project, which has a predominantly qualitative methodological structure.

4.3 Focus groups and interviews

In follow-up to the survey, qualitative fieldwork was undertaken during Spring-Summer 2007 in order to build upon the inferences drawn from statistical data already collected. The qualitative approach employed has been used to investigate in greater detail:

- The extent of staff participation (including willingness to become involved) in social inclusion policy implementation
- The effects of internal politics, including communication, training and 'professional inclusion' upon attitudes towards social inclusion policy, testing the theory that an inclusive organisation facilitates an inclusive service
- The impact of national Government social inclusion policy and agenda on current practice
- Which excluded groups staff feel that the library service particularly targets and how
- Which groups staff feel that the service particularly 'lets down' and how
- Future plans for social inclusion at a local level

This was achieved via a series of focus groups with frontline staff and interviews with senior managers. One focus group was planned in each English region (nine in total), and front-line staff were invited to attend via postings on relevant email discussion lists, regional organisations and service heads/managers. Six focus groups took place: three sessions in the North West, South East and South West were cancelled due to low participant numbers. Volunteers were telephone interviewed as an alternative to the planned focus group sessions. A total number of 33 members of frontline staff took part, and the average focus group duration was 1 hour and 20 minutes. The same semi-structured questions were asked in each session, all of which were recorded and fully transcribed.

Telephone interviews were undertaken with senior managers, using the same semi-structured research instrument used in the focus group sessions to provide comparable data. A total of ten interviews were conducted, again across the nine English regions. All were recorded and fully transcribed.

Please see Appendix 5 for focus group and interview research instruments.

All participants were ensured complete confidentiality and anonymity, and are not named in person or by public library authority. Verbatim quotations from focus group and interview transcripts are presented in data analysis, and are identified by region and job title in case of interviewees.

4.4 Job vacancy profiling

Between January 2006 and December 2007, a job vacancy profiling exercise was undertaken. The main purpose of this exercise was to investigate the range of skills, competencies and experiences expected of candidates for posts with specific social inclusion and community-based responsibilities.

Due to the limited time available for this task, only vacancies advertised in the CILIP Library + Information Gazette within the given time period were profiled. Requested skills and competencies, as specified within relevant individual advertisements were colour coded according to the following criteria:

Skills/knowledge/experience	Definitions
Library specific	Knowledge or experience explicitly/specifically linked to library work and the requisite skills
Social inclusion/community based	Such as prior experience of working in a community setting, or of working with socially excluded groups
Interpersonal	Such as communication skills, or behavioural skills linked to personality traits
Generic	Generic skills and attributes that could be associated with a wide range of posts, e.g. time management or organisational skills, creativity etc

Figure ii

Please see Appendix 6 for a summary of the exercise, as compiled throughout the project.

4.5 Case studies

The case study method was chosen to profile examples of existing (or recent) social inclusion initiatives within the public library sector in England. Case studies have been collected throughout the project, and selected to provide examples of work in the following categories:

- Mainstreamed services
- Services targeted towards specific groups
- Outreach services
- Partnership delivery with external partners
- Reader development with excluded groups
- Children and young people

A total of 8 case studies are included within chapter 6 ‘Research findings’, which are presented using the following key elements/headings:

- Service or project name and owning public library service/authority
- Brief description
- Duration
- Funding

- Target group
- Social impact
- Personnel involved
- Impact on library staff
- Further information: including key contacts and references for published articles and reports

Most of the information gathered was acquired during the literature review process, and from researchers' existing knowledge of service initiatives and projects. Where possible, telephone interviews were undertaken with relevant project managers and personnel, although the opportunity for such further data collection was limited for all case studies due to staff having left the organisation. A total of five interviews were conducted and fully transcribed. Please see Appendix 10 for interview questions asked during case study fieldwork.

4.6 Research workshop

Key stakeholders from public library authorities and professional bodies were invited to take part in a research workshop, held at the University of Sheffield in October 2007. The aim of the workshop was to disseminate preliminary findings to participants, and to gather feedback and responses to the research via in-depth structured discussion groups. Selected findings were circulated in a preliminary report to participants prior to the event, which was then used to inform and guide discussion on the day according to the following three main headings:

- Skills, partnerships and professional identity
- Empathy and cultural representation
- Social inclusion and community librarianship

Please see Appendix 7 for questions asked during the three break-out discussion groups, and Appendix 8 for stimuli for each of the three themed discussions.

Data generated on the day were recorded by the research team, used in research analysis and are included in this final report.

During the first session of the workshop, participants were asked to give their general responses to the preliminary report. For a summary of feedback given, and of discussion generated during the event, please see Appendix 9. This summary was disseminated to all participants.

4.7 Methodological limitations

The following methodological limitations apply to chosen research methods, and should be acknowledged by readers:

Survey – the survey was purely quantitative, and therefore reasoning behind respondents' chosen answers was not provided, and a considered analysis of the sample's empathic tendencies, including the inherent subtle nuances of such a concept, cannot be provided using this method alone. This has in some part been addressed within qualitative stages of the research. The limitations of the self report method (discussed further within the literature review section 5.4 'Professional empathy') also apply. It should be acknowledged that respondents may instinctively select the answers they perceive to be socially acceptable, rather than what they genuinely feel or believe to be true.

Focus groups and interviews: a limitation of this method was the low availability of people to attend within working hours, particularly amongst the frontline sample invited to attend scheduled focus groups. This was in some way overcome during the interview stages with senior managers by using the telephone, rather than face-to-face, interview method. Such 'participant availability' limitations also apply to case study and research workshop methods.

Job vacancy profiling exercise: it should be noted that only a very limited number of vacancies have been profiled from one source only. It may have been beneficial for example to also undertake a systematic review of local government vacancy websites, as the majority of public library vacancies are posted locally. This was not possible, however, within the given scale of this project. It may also have been useful to request information packs, including detailed job descriptions and person specifications for each vacancy, but this was again beyond the remit of this exercise. Similarly a 'control' group was not used within the method: it may have been beneficial for example to compare social inclusion-related and community-based advertisements to other public library vacancies, and to assess if required skills and competencies differ from post to post.

5 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

5.1 Exclusion, inclusion and social policy

5.1.1 Defining social exclusion

It is important to begin by defining what is meant by the term social exclusion, how this is commonly understood by social commentators, and how the term is used and defined in political policy and associated documents.

Burchardt et al (2002a) trace the origins of the term, and note that concepts of social exclusion have been discussed by theorists since the mid 20th century in various forms, including notions of exclusionary social closure, discrimination and restricted access, intended to preserve social hierarchies and privileges (such as 'old boy networks' in higher education and the professions). The term social exclusion as a political concept originated in France, 'les exclus' describes those who have 'slipped through' the national social insurance system; those administratively excluded by the state; and increasingly since the 1970s, disabled people, lone parents, the unemployed, disaffected youth and isolated individuals (Burchardt et al, 2002a, pp. 2).

The term became prominent in political dialogue in the UK during the 1990s, as an alternative or more suitable definition of poverty, or social and economic inequality in a policy context (Walker and Walker, 1997). It came to represent not only low material or economic means, but alienation from mainstream society, and 'the inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life' (Duffy, 1995, quoted in Walker and Walker, 1997, pp. 8). When describing the impact upon an individual, Burchardt et al (2002b, pp. 30) offer the following working definition of social exclusion: 'an individual is socially excluded if he or she does not participate in key activities of the society in which he or she lives'. Key activities are further defined as *consumption* (the capacity to purchase goods and services); *production* (participation in economically or socially viable activities); *political engagement* (involvement in local or national decision making); *social interaction* (interaction with family, friends and community).

The Social Exclusion Unit (discussed further in 5.1.3 – Social inclusion and the contemporary political landscape) during its inception in 1997 defined social exclusion as:

> *'a short hand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown'* (described in renewal.net, 2002).

Levitas et al (2007) present and discuss various definitions of the concept in a study of multiple disadvantage and its impact, including:

> *'Social exclusion occurs where different factors combine to trap individuals and areas in a spiral of disadvantage' (DSS, 1999)*

'The process by which individuals and their communities become polarised, socially differentiated and unequal' (ESRC, 2004)

Agencies have identified social demographic groups that are vulnerable to social exclusion and more likely to be affected. These include those living in low income households; children suffering from some form of family conflict; young people in care; some ethnic minority groups (renewal.net, 2002); young people and adults with low literacy skills; the unemployed; refugees and asylum seekers; non English speaking communities; the homeless (ODPM, 2002). Percy-Smith (2000) categorises social exclusion using the following seven dimensions: economic; social; political; neighbourhood; individual; spatial; and group. Within each dimension, 'indicators' are listed that help to identify those vulnerable to social exclusion, including long-term unemployment and workless households (economic); unwanted teenage pregnancies and disaffected youth (social); and educational underachievement and low skills (individual).

5.1.2 Causes of social exclusion: the historical context

The political concept of social exclusion is extremely complex, and it would be inappropriate and unnecessary, within the context and scope of this project, to analyse in any great depth its historical development and political significance. It is however necessary to briefly consider the causes of social exclusion and its social and political impact to fully understand the rationale behind the project, and the true value and contribution of public libraries and other services in tackling such causes.

Poverty and economic inequality

As reflected by the definitions of social exclusion listed above, exclusion is caused by a systematic combination of social issues affecting individuals, families and communities. The common historical denominator linking the identified social issues is poverty and economic inequality, and as such social exclusion is by no means a modern phenomenon. Poverty dynamics and income mobility have been analysed as causes of social marginalisation since the late nineteenth century (Welshman, 2006). Poverty and inequality are historically and inextricably linked, with increases in the latter invariably causing increases in the former (Burden, 2000).

Payne (2000) describes social exclusion as 'political shorthand' for the consequences of poverty, which is a key element of social division and stratification. In a study of class and social stratification, Scott (2000, pp. 42) observes that manual workers in the inter-war years were often subject to long periods of unemployment, economic downturn and poverty, causing degradation and demoralisation, and a perception of them as the 'rough' and 'undeserving' members of society. Wealth inequalities in the UK increased during the 1980s and 1990s between those inside and outside the labour market, and also within working populations, with the distribution of incomes widening between the high and low paid, based on skills, qualification levels, age and gender (Pile and O'Donnell, 1997, pp. 33). The collapse of blue-collar

traditional industries in the 1980s has contributed to the increasing concentration of poverty and disadvantage on social housing estates and (once) working class communities (Page, 2000).

Themes of poverty, unemployment and social 'worthiness' link social exclusion theory with sociological concepts of the underclass, although recent writing on social exclusion has sought to distance itself from underclass discourse, both symbolically and empirically (Welshman, 2006). The two however are undeniably interlinked in terms of cause, symptoms and characteristics. Social exclusion commentators regularly speak of 'cycles of disadvantage' through successive generations, a concept widely represented in underclass research. The popular theory to emerge in the part ten years is that capitalist societies are witnessing the rise of an underclass of people, structurally and culturally distinct from traditional patterns of 'decent' working-class life, as defined by quasi-criminal, anti-social and anti-work cultures of welfare dependency, becoming a 'self-perpetuating sub-culture' (Macdonald, 1997, pp. 16). The processes of exclusion and marginalisation encourage economic, spatial and cultural isolation, prompting the growth of sub-cultural groups and 'concentrated' socially excluded communities (Katz, 1993).

Neighbourhood decline and excluded communities

Lupton and Power (2002, pp. 118) discuss the 'spatial concentration' of poverty and social exclusion in Britain, stating that the gap between the poorest and more affluent areas has become increasingly polarised: in the late 1990s, up to 4000 neighbourhoods had been identified as 'pockets of intense deprivation' caused by acute unemployment, crime, poor health, housing and education. In a study of the reality of social exclusion within communities, and particularly on housing estates, it was confirmed that those most vulnerable to social exclusion were likely to be poorly educated, low-skilled and de-motivated, with low expectations. The values and 'norms' of such vulnerable groups, despite being in the minority, were perceived as defining the culture of an estate and colouring its reputation in the neighbourhood and community (Page, 2000). Social divisions are thus reinforced by the identification of neighbourhoods and communities, and their inhabitants, as undesirable and underachieving, causing localised social fragmentation (Crow and Maclean, 2000).

A report published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2006 provides a 25 year longitudinal profile of 20 council estates in England (Tunstall and Coulter, 2006), and showed that unemployment within the estates was three times the national average in 2001. Statistics therefore can uphold the ways in which an individual's sense of exclusion can be compounded by environmental factors, as areas with a critical mass of poorer people creates fewer opportunities and more social stigma (Chanan, 2000). Commentators often comment on the 'ghettoisation' of excluded groups, the dispossessed and the urban poor in this context (Roberts, 1997).

The significance of social capital

Such spatial concentration of excluded and disadvantaged groups and their associated problems causes low levels of social engagement and civic interaction, often described as social capital. Richardson and Mumford (2002, pp. 206) define social capital as 'the shared understandings, levels of trust, associational memberships, and informal networks of human relationships that facilitate human exchange, social order, and underpin social institutions'. Hillenbrand (2005) comments that social capital remains a 'contentious subject' with no definitive conceptual definition, although its academic and philosophical popularity has increased, having transcended its original theoretical disciplines of sociology, economics and political science, to be widely discussed and acknowledged in a wide range of policy fields such as community studies, education, occupational science and governance.

Field (2003) uses the term social capital as a way of conceptualising the intangible resources, shared values and trust which people draw upon in everyday life. A consequence for social exclusion is that social capital can promote inequality as access to different networks is distributed unequally, and can therefore be used as resources of status and privilege at the expense of others. Those with high levels of financial and cultural capital are more likely to have higher levels of social capital.

Discussion surrounding the effects of social exclusion has become more centred around notions of social capital during recent years, and the impact upon 'people's ability to participate in society' (Page, 2000). A survey of poverty and social exclusion in Britain conducted at the turn of the twentieth century distinguished four elements of social exclusion, including: impoverishment; labour market exclusion; service exclusion; and significantly, exclusion from social relations (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000). The idea of developing social capital is subsequently being incorporated into policies and programmes to address social exclusion, including notions of developing community networks; encouraging civic and community engagement; establishing community identity and solidarity; and norms of trust, help and support (Percy-Smith, 2000).

5.1.3 Social inclusion and the contemporary political landscape

Tackling social exclusion has become a Government priority within public policy, with an emphasis on preventing social exclusion rather than addressing its consequences. Whilst addressing social division and inequality is not a new political concept, for the benefit of this project we shall focus on the most recent initiatives under the current Labour office, which are perceived as having the most contemporary significance. The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) was developed (with a remit for England only) as part of the first New Labour Cabinet Office in 1997 to focus on an inclusion agenda, to raise awareness about the problems which cause social exclusion and to promote departmental co-operation in effective policy application (Thompson,

2000). The Government announced the formation of the Social Exclusion Task Force (SETF) in June 2006, which replaced the SEU (Cabinet Office, 2006). The task force's action plan was subsequently published in Autumn 2006.

The SEU had commissioned extensive research looking at the drivers of social exclusion to inform policy and organisational direction (*Breaking the Cycle*, SEU, 2004a). Drivers identified include demographic, labour market and policy-related factors such as increase in lone parent families, educational under-achievement, unemployment, low income, neighbourhood decline and cuts in public spending. The research concludes that the drivers are cumulative and intergenerational, causing a continuous cycle of exclusion. As such, the resulting strategic emphasis has been to emphasise prevention, reintegration of those already experiencing social exclusion, minimum standards for everyone, joint working between different agencies, and evidence-based policy-making, with an investment in children 'to break the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage' (SEU, 2004b, pp. 8).

The Unit's Policy Action Team (PAT) has published several papers and numbered report summaries highlighting strategies for enforcing policy and change, each looking at different elements of achieving the Unit's aims. Issues including strategic partnership delivery at local level (PAT17), effective staff recruitment and training (PAT16), and the contribution that arts, sports, cultural and recreational services can make to neighbourhood renewal (PAT10) are addressed by the reports. The recently formed SETF have published 'progress made' statistics relating to rising income and living standards, rising employment and improvements in educational attainment amongst 'poorer groups', but stated that a lot remains to be achieved (SETF, 2007).

The policy response to the cycle of neighbourhood decline and exclusion discussed in 5.1.2 is reflected by a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal, including the following three specific objectives: preventing social exclusion by reducing the risk factors for vulnerable groups; reintegrating those who have become excluded; delivering basic minimum standards to all in health, education, employment and tackling crime (renewal.net, 2002). Initiatives are enforced at micro level via the New Deal for Communities (NDC), which provides a budget of £800 million to develop and facilitate community-based activities under the direction of local leaders (SEU, 2002). This is summarised as a 'drive to renew deprived neighbourhoods and to create sustainable communities' (SEU, 2004b, pp. 8). The regenerative process is driven by the theme of neighbourhood empowerment, encouraging a spirit of community enterprise, and encouraging residents to take an active interest in their communities' development and ownership of the process (Parker et al, 2002).

The issue of inequalities in social capital and the relevant consequences of exclusion and disadvantage are represented in social policy by attempts to make public services more accountable for excluded groups and communities. Education has been given a prominent role in tackling social

exclusion, in a belief that the subsequent skills and confidence can assist people in overcoming poverty and unemployment, discrimination, exploitation, inequalities and social injustices (Thompson, 2000). A review of skills in the UK published in 2005 revealed that over one third of adults do not have a basic school-leaving qualification; five million people have no qualifications at all; one in six do not have the literacy skills expected of an 11 year old and half do not have these levels of functional numeracy (Leitch, 2005) The widening participation agenda, including the Aim Higher initiative, in higher education provides an example of sector responses to inclusive agendas. The Sure Start programme, whereby education, health and social services work in partnership to improve the parenting of disadvantaged children and encourage young parents into employment, has been one of the more successful interventionist strategies in deprived areas (Levitas, 2005).

As policy has shifted towards the social responsibility of (particularly publicly funded) services and facilities such as education and health in tackling the causes of social disadvantage, policy makers have put a positive spin on the agenda by focusing on social *inclusion* rather than exclusion (Hills, 2002). Levitas (2005) links changing semantics in the social exclusion agenda to New Labour discourse and the development of 'third way' politics, including democratic ideals of civil, political and social equality. The government's view of inclusion on a community level includes participatory objectives and methods, with a view to community empowerment, and greater accountability and democracy (Hawtin and Kettle, 2000). The following chapter discusses ways in which public and cultural services are now charged with enforcing the inclusion agenda by including and empowering communities, and how this can potentially be achieved.

5.2 Social inclusion in public services and the cultural sector

5.2.1 The impact of social policy on public and cultural sectors

In relation to the political shift to social regeneration and neighbourhood renewal, the role of public services has been increasingly identified as a platform for connecting vulnerable people to mainstream society; for maintaining a physical embodiment of community and civil society; and for providing support to children and families at risk (Page, 2000). A report recommending the development of community-based learning cultures for example identified libraries and museums as important partners in 'opening up access and diversifying delivery' (Fryer, 1999). Cookman and Haynes (2002) reported that museums, libraries and archives have a valid contribution to make to inclusion initiatives including: supporting basic skills education and training for children and adults; sporting and cultural activities; providing access to ICT; supporting neighbourhood renewal programmes; encouraging volunteer work in communities.

Perceived 'public interest' reasons for increased government support for and focus upon particular leisure and cultural industries include the opportunities for extending and strengthening citizenship; boosting national, regional and local prestige and identity; proclaiming moral and aesthetic standards; triggering economic growth (Roberts, 2004). Sport has also increasingly become a target of policies within the cultural diversity, social inclusion and community cohesion remit (Woodward, 2005) for its propensity to develop both individual self-esteem, discipline and community values. Previous research suggests that museums libraries and archives see themselves as being able to contribute to personal growth and development; community empowerment; the representation of inclusive communities; the promotion of healthier communities; educational achievement and the promotion of lifelong learning; tackling unemployment and crime (Parker et al, 2002). The arts sector has also claimed to have 'positive impacts' upon the development of social capital, community identity, social cohesion, enhanced mental and physical health, reduction in offending behaviour and increased employability (Jermyn, 2001, pp. 14).

An increased emphasis on the social role and contribution of public services, cultural and leisure sectors has emerged in response to the perceived lack of engagement with such services and providers amongst identified socially excluded groups. Effective public services and facilities are defined by Richardson and Mumford (2002) as the *social infrastructure* of communities. The cycle of neighbourhood decline discussed in the previous chapter (Lupton and Power, 2002) causes disenfranchisement between social infrastructures, services provided and marginalised communities. As discussion on the causes, symptoms and impact of social exclusion and strategies for inclusion have developed, commentators have increasingly moved away from describing excluded groups has 'hard to reach', but rather the services themselves as hard to reach, and policy has become focused upon removing barriers to their use (Vincent, 2005).

This in turn has encouraged greater accountability in public services with respect to accessibility, service standards, performance indicators and the need to prove social value and impact (Percy-Smith, 2000). Policies subsequently designed to re-engage excluded groups with public services have encouraged increased partnership delivery between different sectors and organisations, in what Payne (2000) describes as New labour's 'joined up' administrative solutions. Parker et al (2002) observe that inclusive multi-agency approaches have been common in the new regeneration agenda. Partnership service delivery is regarded as a critical component in the successful tackling of social exclusion, and as significant in engaging local communities, sustaining and mainstreaming services and providing on-going staff training and support (Vincent, 2003). Cross-domain partnerships within cultural sectors aspire to support formal education and informal lifelong learning, and to tackle social issues including health education, crime reduction and prevention and environmental improvement (MLA, 2004b).

The value of social networks in targeting and providing services for particular excluded or disadvantaged groups is widely reported in the public policy literature, such as networks for encouraging the social integration of refugee and asylum seeker children (Beirens et al, 2007); the role of social networks in facilitating rehabilitation and resilience amongst disabled children and their carers (Evans and Plumridge, 2007); and the impact of networks on the development of play and leisure opportunities for traveller children and families (Mason and Broughton, 2007).

In October 2006 the Department for Communities and Local Government published a white paper detailing a vision for the delivery of local services with the aim of developing stronger communities with services that are responsive to local needs (DCLG, 2006). The paper recommended extended use of service networks, and proposed increased devolution of power to local authorities and improved involvement of community members in the development of local services, including an extension of choice for individuals and families. Government had previously advocated the increased opportunity for choice and engagement via the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's corporate plan *Living Life to the Full* (DCMS, 2005), which asserts the primary goals of promoting diversity, community action and personal freedom, via increased and sustained funding to the arts, sport, cultural and voluntary organisations. Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets include increasing the take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities (such as attending arts events/accessing museums and galleries) by adults and young people aged 16 and above from 'priority groups' (DCMS, 2005, pp. 52).

5.2.2 Enforcing policy in public services

Arts, cultural and leisure sector initiatives

A study commissioned to assess the role and contribution made my museums libraries and archives in neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion

concluded that the level of involvement between the three domains varied quite considerably, and that museums and libraries were 'significantly' more active than archives (Parker et al, 2002). Factors affecting the individual domains' capacity to contribute include funding arrangements and opportunities; access issues; cultural barriers; institutional attitudes; levels of previous involvement and awareness. Despite the relative inconsistencies, the report confirms a recognised importance and potential value for the three cultural domains with respect to social regeneration and inclusion, and recommends that the sector should adopt a more visible public profile and awareness raising campaign; increase external and pan-sectoral collaboration and partnerships; identify critical success factors; undertake consistent evaluation; develop effective communication tools.

The Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) has developed a strategic framework in accordance with national lifelong learning and social inclusion objectives, designed to establish a 'commonality of purpose' between the three cultural sectors. *Inspiring Learning for All* (MLA, 2004a) sets out key learning objectives for relevant cultural organisations designed to engage with 'new and diverse users' that are responsive to individual community needs and identities. The policy document *Investing in Knowledge* states the ideological objective of creating 'a world where creativity, enterprise, innovation and opportunities to learn are not only universal rights, but are truly a part of everyday life for everyone; where the gap between the knowledge rich and the knowledge poor does not exist' (MLA, 2004b, pp. 1). MLA has subsequently developed cross-domain social inclusion resources and initiatives, including staff training packages, guidance materials and taught programmes (Dodd et al, 2003). Their 'Access for all' Toolkit provides guidelines for individual organisations to audit good practice and identify areas for improvement; measure general accessibility; promote access for all; identify areas to increase accessibility and facilitate development; evaluate and demonstrate development for funding and other purposes (MLA, 2004c).

Research commissioned by the Arts Council of England designed to explore models of social inclusion work in the arts (Jermyn, 2001) identified the key characteristics of successful initiatives, including those related to the arts in education; arts and offenders; health and wellbeing; the creation of social capital; community development and urban regeneration. Whilst there are many individual examples of effective arts projects within such contexts, the report discusses challenges in measuring impact such as a lack of clarity in defining objectives and outcomes; conceptual confusion and inconsistent use and interpretation of key terms (e.g. 'confidence' and 'social capital'); measurement of less tangible outcomes; inconsistent methodologies; difficulties in establishing cause and effect; the determination of benefits, particularly actual versus perceived. A project undertaken for the Scottish Arts Council evaluated more specifically the National Lottery Arts and Social Inclusion Scheme, a programme that distributes funds to partnership projects within the arts sector (Goodlad et al, 2002). Findings indicate immediate positive impact on participants including the acquisition of skills and improved confidence. Authors did however report difficulties in projects achieving high profiles within their respective communities and 'widespread awareness'.

In terms of public policy and social theory, sport has often been regarded as a 'regulatory practice', used as an intervention strategy which diverts away from potential 'politically and socially disruptive practices, allegiances and identifications' (Woodward, 2005, pp.2). Long et al (2002) considered three sport-related projects in their response to PAT10, which focused on sport as constructive and socially acceptable practices for the energies of young people. Projects included a community football scheme established by the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NACRO) and a race equality initiative run in partnership with a professional football club and local authority. Outcomes have included the acquisition of employment-related skills including coaching and team manager certificates, first aid qualifications, advanced personal development and active citizenship.

Inclusive public services in practice

The SEU has considered extensively the levels of disadvantaged groups' engagement with wider public services, including adult education and training, employment and benefit services, healthcare providers and housing associations (SEU, 2005). In this specific consideration of the experiences of certain ethnic minority groups, people with low literacy levels, people with disabilities and long-term health conditions, young adults with complex needs, excluded older people and those disadvantaged by frequent relocation, stark issues were raised concerning the failings of these organisations and services. Effective communication and information sharing with excluded groups remains a challenge, and these groups are far less likely to use and subsequently benefit from discretionary services. Respondents from these groups reported poor interactions with frontline staff responsible for delivering such services. Issues affecting staff-user interactions include awareness, skills and attitudes of staff; misrepresentation of certain client bases amongst service personnel; service leadership; constraints upon staffing levels and client entitlement criteria (SEU, 2005 pp. 57).

This SEU report inferred that the transition to fully inclusive public services will challenging, and much of the literature on the role of the cultural sector in meeting inclusive policy directives is hypothetical in nature, detailing the *potential* social impact of relevant services. Research completed by the Burns Owens Partnership (2005) concluded that the existing evidence base for museums, libraries and archives in England for example had the following weaknesses: a lack of any substantial longitudinal and comparative data on social impact; and no agreed model for describing social impact. Where evidence does exist it relates most strongly to an individual's personal development or the acquisition of 'life skills'. Evidence relating to exclusion created 'a patchy picture of good practice', whereby the main response seemed to be an attempt to widen access to the sector, one that the authors of the report did not equate with tackling social exclusion.

5.2.3 Cultural idealism and social reality

It has been reported that the share of average household spending on leisure activities in the UK has doubled in the twelve year period between 1990 and 2002 (DCMS, 2005). Research in to leisure behaviours in the UK predicts that levels of engagement and leisure choices are influenced by where we live, ethnicity, religion and gender, along with social class and age (Roberts, 2004). Bennett et al (2005) undertook a survey of the cultural activities, preferences and knowledge of 1700+ adult UK residents: using sociological variables such as educational attainment and occupational groupings, the study found strong demographic tendencies in musical taste, media and television, the literary field and visual arts, providing evidence towards 'clustering of tastes'.

Usherwood et al (2005) studied the public's perceptions of museums, libraries and archives in modern Britain, with a particular focus on their relevance as traditional repositories of public knowledge in the information age. The study revealed a contradiction between respondents' use and value of cultural organisations. A relatively high 'existence value' was placed on museums, libraries and archives, in that respondents indicated a moral and ethical desire to preserve such institutions, however, actual usage figures amongst respondents were comparatively low. Barriers affecting the use of these organisations included a preference for more immediately accessible information sources that compliment daily routines, responsibilities and modern lifestyles. Other influences on information gathering and leisure choices included professional, educational and environmental circumstances, political beliefs, social systems and peer groups.

Critics of the promotion of community values and public, civic and cultural engagement argue that the concept is flawed in undermining the individual's ability to choose, and the circumstances that prevent inclusion and engagement on an individual scale. Research conducted in a New Deal for Communities neighbourhood (Wallace, 2007) for example, reveals an inherent flaw in assuming that such communities are homogenous in their experiences of social exclusion, when in reality, communities display heterogeneity in their needs, as exclusion is lived in differing and often conflicting ways by residents inhabiting the same physical space. Clarke et al (2006) argue that the indeterminacy of choice in social policy discourse presents a 'rhetoric versus reality' distinction, which impacts upon the effectiveness of public service providers and the expectations of their users.

Other critics of social inclusion policy targeted towards cultural and leisure sectors have questioned the true contribution and value, both actual and potential, of such facilities and services in tackling social exclusion and division. A distinctive role for education and informal learning in tackling social exclusion has been contested within lifelong learning literature. Edwards et al (2001; quoted in Wilson and Train, 2006) have questioned the inherent 'goodness' of making a policy commitment to social inclusion in education, training and employment and the role of education and its capacity to 'solve' social problems and issues of exclusion. It is argued that 'inclusion' by

implication breeds ‘exclusion’ to some degree; historically, socially interventionist learning has been regarded as ‘compensatory education’ which has a diversionary quality, detracting attention from real social and educational issues. The authors question the feasibility of a ‘learning culture for all’, and the true motivation behind inclusive policy in terms of establishing a social order and identity which pitches homogeneity against diversity.

Similarly Roberts (2004) infers that no causal relationship can be established between increased cultural engagement and leisure activity and equality of opportunity, social betterment and economic gain. Roberts argues that, although the assertion that ‘cultural deficits’ maintain disadvantage has gained academic credibility, this cannot be reconciled with patterns of leisure use and inequalities, and that ‘leisure initiatives will fail to haul the disadvantaged up the socio-economic ladder’ (2004, pp. 3). Ellison and Ellison (2006) argue that where free market societies endorse and facilitate the accumulation and retention of large concentrations of wealth, ‘better-off groups will always enjoy greater opportunities than poorer sections of society’ (pp. 345). Roberts (2004) cites public libraries, along with the Boys Brigade, team games and Boy Scouts as ‘failing’ in this respect, and concludes that social and therefore cultural exclusivity is inevitable in a market economy.

5.3 The role of public libraries

5.3.1 History of community librarianship and its political context

Ideologically the public library service in England has been regarded as serving the 'public good' since its inception (Hannabus, 1998; Greenhalgh et al, 1995; Usherwood et al, 2001). The role of public libraries more specifically in providing services for socially excluded groups has been historically embodied by the concept of community librarianship, which has played a very tempestuous role in the service's history and development. Black and Muddiman (1997) trace its developments to phases of 'civic' librarianship during 1850-1940 and 'welfare state' librarianship during 1940-1975. At the time of its inception, the public library role in social betterment was attributed to the 'deserving' and 'non-deserving' working classes, based on visible and discernible potential for self-improvement. In time, such 'potential means-testing' was avoided by adopting a blanket-term – the disadvantaged – a sociological description which encompasses various groups who through differing circumstances have experienced sub-standard access to public facilities.

The post-World War II period saw significant advances in social policy according to welfare state principles, encouraging a period of considerable optimism. The principle of non-means tested universal public services has in practice, it has been argued, unduly benefited the middle rather than working classes (Muddiman et al, 2001). Funded by taxation and providing a general 'safety net' for everybody, public provision is more widely used by the already educated than by those from disadvantaged and marginalised sections of society (Greenhalgh et al, 1995). The Public Libraries Act of 1964 initiated a period of comprehensive community service, and an image of 'universality' for public libraries which avoided the stigmatisation of the disadvantaged and in turn, led to a middle-class 'strangle-hold' on public libraries.

The nineteen-seventies saw attempts to re-claim the working classes, and community librarianship began to be re-invented by socially radical and committed librarians (Black and Muddiman, 1997). An element of personal commitment and belief is required from the community librarian, as the role it would seem is subject to under-funding, isolation from the 'mainstream' public library service, limited promotion opportunities and career structures, and associated stress (Datta and Simsova, 1989).

By the 1980s, community librarians had developed specialised services for perceived disadvantaged groups and potential users, such as housebound services, and tailored services for ethnic minority groups; a consumer-driven approach in the 1990s however once more threatened the role of the community librarian, and strengthened the view of the 'traditionalist' public librarian that services should cater for the cost-effective traditional user and mainstream audience (Muddiman et al, 2000). The concept of community librarianship in the twenty-first century has begun to be re-examined in light of changing social and culturally diverse communities in the UK, and responsive political agendas (Vincent and Pateman, 2006).

5.3.2 Public libraries and contemporary social inclusion policy

The Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS, 1999) published guidelines for public library services in response to the national social inclusion policy and objectives described in 5.1, entitled *Libraries for All*. The report recommends that social inclusion be mainstreamed as a policy priority within all library and information services; that public library authorities should consult and involve socially excluded groups; that libraries should be developed as community resource centres; that libraries should consider the possibility of co-locating and forming working partnerships with other local authority and learning organisations. A six point plan for strategic development is determined by the document, including the identification and engagement of socially excluded groups; assessment and review of current practice; development and prioritisation of appropriate resources; the training and development of staff; implementation and marketing of services; evaluation, review and improvement.

The generic strategic document for public libraries *Framework for the Future* (DCMS, 2003) defines the potential role of public libraries in developing social capital, including learning activities, digital citizenship and community and civic values. The framework advocates 'measures to tackle social exclusion', which are further developed using examples such as 'forging stronger partnerships with schools in the poorest areas', a greater use of partnerships and outreach in communities, and recommends that success will be dependent upon 'the outlook, skills and attitudes of the library workforce', a statement central to the aims and objectives of this research.

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) has published its own guidelines on how library and information organisations and staff can provide socially inclusive services and support diverse communities (CILIP, 2001). Sections on organisational transformation report and subsequently reinforce the need to mainstream social inclusion issues in service planning and delivery, including community involvement and capacity building; effective leadership and leadership development; 'proper' resourcing; the use of short-term projects to kick-start longer term developments; modernising library and information training and skills set. With respect to the latter issue, the report states the importance of the training needs and requirements of frontline staff, and the need to ensure that the significance of social inclusion work is fully understood by these employees responsible for the face-to-face delivery of services.

Implications for public library staff skills, experience and professional identity

CILIP (2001, pp. 6) proposes a modernising skills agenda, compliant to social inclusion objectives, that should represent a key shift in the nature of service delivery from a passive provision of information, to an active service encompassing advice and guidance. Essential components of the recommended key skills set include consultation and engagement with

excluded groups; community profiling; partnership working; learner support, mediation and advisory work; managing or leading change; advocacy. Coates (2004, pp. 13) recommends a more customer-responsive approach to public library staff education, training and development, ensuring that 'staff resources are allocated so that the service provided to the public is what the public needs, and not what traditional professional practices have determined'.

The introduction of modernised and accessible services has had however, in practice, implications for staff skills and identities: the introduction of the People's Network for example, and subsequent increased ICT use by library visitors, has changed user expectations of the type of help available to them, and some public library staff have proven to be resentful of a new perceived ICT training role, which challenges their 'traditional' professional identity (Goulding and Spacey, 2003). Cleeve (1994) observed that the theme of 'culture change' was endemic in the profession, but that there is still a role for professionals who are 'good with people'. Pantry and Griffiths (2003) note an effect of official national policies on changing employment and market conditions in the library and information sector, encouraging new areas of professional work.

Cultural diversity amongst public library staff should be considered when relating staff skills and experience to the social inclusion agenda, particularly their capacity to adapt to change, and to be 'good with people' in all given circumstances. This has been an issue of close scrutiny for some time: Datta and Simsova (1989) noted for example that ethnic minorities are 'underrepresented at all levels of public library staffing'. Ocholla (2002) observes that workplace diversity within the South African library and information profession, or attitudes towards diversity within the sector, suffer from a certain level of complacency, and a priority towards placating existing staff members rather than thinking of future workforce development. There is also an assumption that existing organisational policies relating to equal opportunities are sufficient in facilitating workplace diversity, when this is arguably not the case. Pankl (2004) states that truly diverse organisations represent ethnic groups and different generations, yet his study reveals that up to 75% of the library workforce in the USA in 2000 was aged over 45.

A social inclusion consultation project undertaken by the public library service, Nottinghamshire County Council, found that users often felt 'pre-judged' by library staff meaning that staff were, consciously or unconsciously, presenting barriers for certain people and groups, a finding that was informed by discussion with respondents from one of the most deprived estates in the county (Wright, 2002). Pateman (2002) notes the 'failure' of public library leaders in the UK to reflect race and *class* in their equal opportunity statements and their staff recruitment, development and service improvement strategies, and the failure of public library services to reflect the diversity of their communities. This raises some interesting questions over the definition of cultural diversity with reference to social inclusion, and public libraries' capacity to have a representative workforce.

5.3.3 The impact of public libraries on social inclusion

A study conducted between October 1998 and April 2000, *Open to All*, investigated the capacity of the public library to tackle social exclusion. Volume one of the report, 'Overview and Conclusions' (Muddiman et al, 2000) observed at the time that disadvantaged communities or groups had 'passive' access to materials and resources, and that service priorities favoured existing library users. Survey findings indicated that 60% of public library authorities had no comprehensive social inclusion policy and that many of the UK's marginalised and excluded groups are not prioritised in public library strategy, service delivery and staffing (Muddiman et al, 2001). Yet the public libraries' obligation to serve cultural diversity within the community is still enforced within the literature because of its capacity to inform better understanding and social coherence (Larsen et al, 2004).

A follow-up report to *Open to All,* examining the impact of the digitisation and networking of public library services in reaching out to socially excluded groups, describes the processes involved as a 'passive preoccupation with access', and explains that more needs to be done to use technological advances as a way to actively engage with local communities (Dutch and Muddiman, 2001). Goulding and Spacey (2003) however report that the New Opportunities Fund initiative the People's Network (public use of the internet in libraries) has been successful in increasing library membership (although the demographics of which are unspecified). Milner (2007) presents four case study examples of how ICT is used in public libraries to achieve social impact, including the EngAGE project in Cambridgeshire which uses ICT to engage isolated older library users in partnership with Age Concern and Adult Social Care, and the Lincolnshire Rural Activities Centre, linking eleven rural libraries and targeting older users and adults with mental health issues.

A review of the literature concerning public libraries as developers of social capital concludes that the service in general encourages civic engagement by bringing citizens together; upholds democratic ideals by making information freely available to all citizens; bridges social capital by engaging in partnerships with other community organisations; encourages trust through social inclusion and cohesion; facilitates local dialogue; fosters community participation in a public space (Hillebrand, 2005). Kerslake and Kinnell (1998) assert that is the public libraries' role as a promoter of citizenship and democracy that illustrates its true value as a socially inclusive service. Such theories however are presented as ideological assumptions on the role and value of public libraries as 'free' community spaces, and are not supported by systematic evidence.

A number of recent reports have however sought to highlight the impact, both actual and potential, that public libraries have in specific areas of targeting the causes of social exclusion, and in providing inclusive services. Proctor and Bartle (2002) investigated the impact of the public library on educational disadvantage, that being the ways in which the service meets and supports the needs of individuals and communities affected by educational

disadvantage. Impact at the time was proven to be limited in a learning context, although many low achieving adult learners were using the service on a leisurely basis. The report recommended a greater use/availability of basic user education materials, greater partnership working between public library services and local education providers, and the provision of taster sessions for specific disadvantaged groups, particularly in the area of ICT use.

The Vital Link project provides an example of a working public library contribution to social inclusion initiatives and basic skills education, using the principles of reader development (project evaluation report: Train et al, 2002). The project sought to link adult literacy and libraries via a working partnership with the adult basic education sector, involving nine participating public library authorities. The evaluation report concludes that the public library was perceived to be an appropriate venue for basic skills education due to its comfortable, non-threatening environment; the partnerships developed between the two sectors had been 'mutually beneficial; and that, potentially, reader development in public libraries could be used to enhance basic skills education in the future.

Pateman (2004) offers a more literal contribution to the social inclusion agenda from public libraries other than that relating to social impact theory, including the provision of information, advice and guidance on support relating to income and benefits, tax credits and educational maintenance allowance; partnership working with other guidance practitioners such as the Connexions service and legal advisers; and involvement with the Sure Start initiative. Other advocates of public libraries as inclusive services are more philosophical about their role: Broady-Preston and Cox (2000) advocate a return to 'the street corner university' image with respect to its marketing and alignment of the service to political objectives; Train et al (2000) describe the public library as 'the essence of inclusion' with reference to services provided for children. Study support (such as breakfast and homework clubs) does however provide a tangible output for public libraries' contribution to social inclusion, and is a key recommendation for meeting strategic goals (ContinYou, 2007).

Along with the strategic documents from professional bodies providing recommendations for how the public library service can contribute to social policy objectives (described in 5.3.2), such objectives are well communicated in the sector's professional press, illustrating a 'professional consciousness' at certain levels relating to the obligations of public service. Summaries of policy drivers published by the Social Exclusion Task Force and the Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' for example are discussed by Vincent (2007a); along with a discussion on the perceived changing political context of social exclusion, different definitions and objectives used within the debate, and questions concerning where public libraries 'fit in' (Vincent, 2007b).

Whilst the theoretical role of public libraries in meeting social exclusion objectives is well documented, the professional and cultural implications for public library staff, and the consequences for the social identity of the public

library profession as a whole, have not been empirically addressed. This project has sought to bridge philosophical interpretations of community librarianship (Williamson, 2000) and the more practical staff-profiling studies of librarianship (Afolabi, 1996; Usherwood et al, 2001) in providing a 'real world' study of contemporary social policy and its implications for community librarianship, in particular for those staff responsible for undertaking that role. Their attitudes towards governing policy, and more significantly towards the targeted groups, are integral to the successful and effective design and delivery of socially inclusive public library services.

5.4 Professional empathy: definition, development and delivery

5.4.1 Defining empathy

Empathy: *The power of projecting one's personality into (and so fully comprehending) the object of contemplation.* (OED)

When considering the role of public library staff in delivering socially inclusive services, and their attitudes towards that role in both theory and practice, the extent to which staff empathise with social inclusion policy and disadvantaged groups has been identified by the researchers as a potentially relevant phenomenon. Empathy is widely discussed in the psychology field and relevant literature as a personality trait and social construct. As such, a number of definitions of the concept are presented, reflecting a variety of theoretical and empirical perspectives (Silvester et al, 2007). The concept is described broadly by Davis (1983) as the reactions of one individual to the observed experiences of another, and by Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004, pp. 163) as the ability to 'tune into' how someone is feeling, or what they might thinking; understand the intentions of others and predict their behaviour; experience an emotion triggered by their emotion; interact effectively in the social world.

The psychology literature describes three *types* of empathy, or what Caruso and Mayer (1998) describe as 'traditions to its study'. Firstly empathy is considered as a cognitive or intellectual process, involving an imagined understanding of others and perspective taking. Hogan (1969, quoted in Caruso and Mayer, 1998) defines this as 'the intellectual or imaginative apprehension of another's condition or state of mind without actually experiencing that person's feelings'. Hogan again (1969) used the following standard definition of empathy within his research instruments: *the intellectual or imaginative apprehension of another's condition without actually experiencing that person's feelings*. Chlopan et al (1985) describe empathy in cognitive forms as a form of role-taking and the essence of social intelligence, and 'the imaginative transposing of oneself into the thinking, feeling and acting of another' (Dymond, 1949, quoted in Chlopan et al, 1985, pp. 638). Other cognitive definitions of empathy include the ability to put oneself in the other person's position, establish rapport, and anticipate the other's reactions, feelings and behaviours (Kerr and Speroff, 1954); setting aside one's own perspective to attribute a mental state or attitude to another person and infer their likely state of mind based on their experience (Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright, 2004).

Secondly, empathy is considered to be an intuitive response based on emotional reaction, personal recognition and sympathetic understanding, such as a 'heightened responsiveness to another's emotional experience' (Mehrabian and Epstein, 1972). Chlopan et al (1985, pp. 635) cite several psychologists as identifying empathy as 'an involuntary vicarious experience of another's emotional state', suggesting that empathy is an emotional response based on instinct and shared understanding. Baron-Cohen and

Wheelwright (2004) describe four interpretations of emotional, or what they define as 'affective' empathy, including the feelings of the observer matching those of the observed; the feelings of the observer being appropriate to the other person's emotional state; the observer displaying any emotional response to the other person's emotions; the feelings of the observer representing concern or compassion for the other's distress.

The emotional, affective or vicarious empathic response is developed further by Wang et al (2003), who discuss empathy as a trait or ability to *know* another person's inner experience. In this capacity to vicariously understand and relate to another person's situation, empathy has been discussed as a source of increased value of and attitudinal change towards other people's disadvantage and oppression (Wang et al, 2003, pp. 222). This concept is supported by Ickes (1997) definition of empathy as a 'complex psychological inference in which observation, memory, knowledge and reasoning are combined to yield insights into the thoughts and feelings of others'.

Thirdly, there are multi-dimensional definitions of empathy which combine or consider both cognitive and emotional elements. Levenson and Ruef (1992) offer three separate dimensions to empathy, including *knowing* what another person is feeling; *feeling* what another is feeling; *responding compassionately* to another person's distress. An individual therefore is capable of experiencing each of these empathic dimensions in differing circumstances. They take the multi-dimension aspects of empathic understanding a stage further, in exploring the concept as a physiological as well as psychological experience, with adds a new dimension to the exploration of empathy as an intuitive and vicarious response, and one that would require a 'lived' understanding of another's situation.

Rogers et al (1994) present a multi-dimensional model including perspective taking, emotional contagion, empathic concern and communicative responsiveness. Rogers (1975) upholds the multi-dimensional theory in describing empathy as a process rather than a 'state', and one that involves several facets, including entering the perceptual world of another, and being sensitive to the changing meanings that the other is feeling, without making judgements, and communicating your responses. This latter description would involve a combination of emotional and cognitive behaviours.

The problem of defining empathy

Despite the seemingly widespread acceptance of empathy as a significant human characteristic and valid variable in psychological experimentation and discussion, there has been little agreement amongst theorists and authors upon a formal and definitive definition of the term (Chlopan et al, 1985). Much of the disagreement, or rather lack of consensus, concerning a definitive definition of empathy concerns the distinctions between cognitive and emotional forms, or what Chlopan et al (1985, pp. 635) describe as 'whether or not empathy involves actual vicarious experience of another's emotions or simply the willingness and ability to put oneself in another's place'. Davis (1983) asserts that theorists' and researchers' understanding of empathy can

only improve when simultaneous affective and cognitive components to empathic response are recognised. Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) similarly argue that both approaches are valid in defining empathy, and that the two cannot be easily separated.

Empathy v sympathy: conceptual confusion

> **Sympathy:** The quality or state of being affected by the condition of another with a feeling similar or corresponding to that of the other; the fact or capacity of entering into or sharing the feelings of another or others; fellow-feeling. Also, a feeling or frame of mind evoked by and responsive to some external influence. Const. *with* (a person, etc., or a feeling). (OED)

Given definitions of empathy, particularly emotional approaches, clearly demonstrate some crossover with accepted definitions of sympathy. Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) define sympathy as a 'fellow-feeling' that is incurred when we observe another person's emotional state, which may inspire a desire to take action to alleviate their distress. The ability to show compassion, affect empathy, or appropriate your emotional response and feelings to that of another, could arguably be described as sympathetic behaviours rather than empathic. This presents some conceptual confusion, and thus may limit the validity of some studies of empathy and empathic behaviour. Goleman (1996), in his study of emotional intelligence, offers the following valuable and important distinction between empathy and sympathy: the latter can be felt for the general plight of another, with no *sharing of what that other person is feeling*. Empathy therefore requires a greater vicarious understanding of the other person's circumstances and experience.

Studies of empathy

Reasons for the previous study of empathy include its perceived association with other psychological and behavioural traits such as anxiety, socialization and locus of control. Chlopan et al (1985) for instance note that low empathic abilities have been implicated and associated with various forms of psychopathology, such as aggression, neuroticism and chid abuse, whereas high empathic abilities and related characteristics have been related to moral conduct and character, such as an individual's propensity to help, and personality traits such as introversion and arousability. Goleman (1996) considers empathy to be an essential component of emotional intelligence and an advanced form of self-awareness, making us more skilled in our ability to read the feelings of others. As such, empathy is studied within an emotional intelligence context with respect to one's ability to make ethical and moral judgements.

5.4.2 Measuring empathy

Personality tests and measures have been developed and used by psychologists within previous studies to explore levels of empathic behaviour and ability in different contexts. The origins of the development of empathy measures can be traced to the research of social intelligence in the early 20th century, which investigated social techniques, knowledge of social matters

and insights in to the temporary moods or underlying personality traits of others (Chlopan et al, 1985). Such research bears similarities to the relationships between empathy and other personality, social and behavioural traits described above. The study and measurement of empathy is also linked to 'social insight' research, which is defined as the existence of 'specific substitute responses' such as projection, rationalization and transference, and the need for a specific stimulus to adjust group conflict or tension such as a humorous remark (Chlopan et al, 1985, pp. 637).

The majority of published measures are grounded in the cognitive theory of empathy, and seek to investigate the respondent's ability to adopt intellectually another person's perspective or viewpoint (Chlopan et al, 1985), an example of which would be the multi-perspective rating test devised by Dymond (1949, 1950 cited in Chlopan et al 1985, pp. 638), which asks the respondent to rate himself , rate another subject, rate the other subject as he believes he would rate himself, and rate himself as he believes the other subject would rate him.

The Hogan Empathy Scale developed in 1969 provided a widely-used measure of cognitive empathy (Chlopan, 1985, pp. 641): items selected as the *most* descriptive of a highly empathic man included 'socially perceptive of a wide range in interpersonal cues' and 'aware of the impression he makes on others'; items that are *least* descriptive of a highly empathic man included 'uncomfortable with uncertainty and complexities' and 'extra punitive, tends to transfer or project blame'. 64 items or descriptors such as these constitute the final Empathy Scale, which has proven validity against other social intelligence measures including communication competence, level of moral maturity and effective social functioning (Johnson et al, 1983).

The *Emotional* Empathic Tendency Scale (EETS) was developed by Mehrabian and Epstein (1972), using 33 measures on 7 subscales which mostly consider empathy as an emotional response, e.g. Susceptibility to Emotional Contagion, which measures the extent to which respondent's moods are affected by others. This was later developed to become the Balanced Emotional Empathy Scale (BEES, Mehrabian, 1996). Chlopan et al (1985) refer to the Mehrabian and Epstein instrument as the Questionnaire Method of Emotional Empathy (QMEE). Caruso et al (1998) designed an emotion-based empathy measure as part of a larger investigation in to emotional intelligence, which moved away from considering emotional intelligence as a cognitive measurement or ability, and included six dimensions of empathy including Emotional Contagion and Responsive Crying (emulating the EETS).

Davis (1983) developed a multi-dimensional approach to the measurement of empathy in 1980, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), which combines the views of empathy as cognitive role-taking and vicarious arousal (Chlopan et al, 1985). The IRI is a self-report measure containing 4 sub-scales and 28 questions or items. Individual sub-scales include Perspective Taking, Fantasy Scale, Empathic Concern, and Personal Distress. Other multi-dimensional measures have been developed for use in specific professional environments,

such as the Judged Empathy measure (Silvester et al, 2007): a tool used to observe and rate physicians using a competency framework.

Issues with self-report methodologies

There are a number of issues when using a self-report methodology to investigate concepts such as empathy and other emotionally driven constructs. Caruso et al (1998) make the valid positive observation that self-report is necessary and valuable when looking for a respondent's subjective response. However, Johnson et al (1983) highlights problems in proving the validity of self-report methods where the items used are not semantically and explicitly linked to the construct under investigation. In this respect it is important that the researcher can evidence clear lines of conceptual definition between items or questions that claim to measure the same construct in different ways (Llewellyn and Wilson, 2003). Wang et al (2003) also point to honesty and subsequent quality issues with respect to the completion of self-report methods, particularly when investigating culturally sensitive topics: respondents may supply answers that they feel obliged to give, rather than genuine responses. It is recommended by Wang et al that self-report findings be supported by 'behavioural observations' (2003, pp. 231).

5.4.3 Empathy and management theory

Empathy has also been discussed within management, organisational behaviour and occupational psychology fields, particularly when analysing staff interaction and interpersonal behaviour. Situational studies have been undertaken exploring the value of empathic traits in professional transactions and relationships. Chlopan et al (1985) report that empathy studies undertaken with therapists and clinical psychologists indicate that high empathy scores amongst practitioners are linked to better client prognoses and therapeutic outcomes. Rogers (1975) for example states that clients are often empowered by interactions with empathic therapists, as when a person is sensitively and accurately understood, he then develops 'growth-promoting or therapeutic attitudes towards himself'.

Norfolk et al (2007) have studied empathic understanding and rapport within the consultation between general practitioner (GP) and patient. The role of empathy and communication in encouraging a 'shared exploration' consultation model is explored, and the quality of rapport in the consultation was judged to be defined by the GP's understanding of the patient's own perspective of their problems. The skills involved include a distinction between the GP's *desire* to understand and their *ability* to do so. Silvester et al (2007) have also studied the concept amongst physicians (medical practitioners), in the form of empathic judgements, which added a new dynamic to the role of empathy in the patient consultation by assessing the extent to which a patient judges their physician to be empathic. The study identified physician behaviours associated with empathy ratings including communication styles.

Similarly, Flanagan et al (2005) considered the role of empathy in customer service within the police force, with particular relevance to building customer confidence in communicating with the service. Familiarity was found to be a key influencer of confidence when dealing with the police, including the extent to which personnel know and are known by the community. Rogers et al (1994), in their study of front-line service personnel, state that empathy is one of five dimensions used to evaluate service quality in services marketing, and observe that staff who are highly empathic often display altruistic behaviours, i.e. genuine emotional concern during the service encounter, which is associated with high quality service and high levels of job satisfaction for the personnel involved. The study revealed that the more empathic employees are to both customers and colleagues, the less work-related tension and stress they experience. This is significant for service industries, as high staff absenteeism and turnover affects productivity and service impact.

Stauss and Mang (1999) explored the concept of culture shocks in inter-cultural service encounters in a study of air travellers from three different nations. Deviant behaviour from service personnel, in terms of the customers pre-conceived service expectations, was associated with the individual or the company's lack of willingness to engage with them. In a study of empathy towards people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, Wang et al (2003) recommend the development of an occupational empathic multicultural awareness tool to inform the recruitment and professional development of education professionals. Mann (1997) criticises any attempt to 'control' the real emotions of employees, in what is described as emotional labour, as this can have dysfunctional effects on both the individual and the organisation. This suggests that in a service profession where inter-cultural encounters are likely to take place, staff with a genuine capacity for empathic concern may have the most effective outcome and facilitate the most positive perceptions and customer evaluation of their employing organisations.

Other examples of empathy in the workplace include the perceived value of perspective taking, included as an attribute in multi-dimensional definitions of the concept. Axtell and Parker (2001) describe the concept of perspective taking as the ability to understand another person's viewpoint, and consider it to be effective where barriers exist between individuals or groups working towards the same goal. Perspective taking can be achieved via greater interaction between the respective individuals or groups; greater understanding of the work environment; broad ownership of work objectives beyond immediate task boundaries; and greater autonomy and control of own work and responsibilities. Perspective taking is especially important in management and leadership, and validation studies of empathy research and relevant measures have proven significant correlation with other measures of leadership and management capacity (Chlopan et al, 1985). Most significantly in terms of this project, Harte and Dale (1995) rate empathy as an essential component and quality dimension of a professional service, and along with more tangible dimensions such as timeliness and reliability, empathy will often be rated and used to inform clients' continued use of a service.

Empathy therefore, intuitive, cognitive or multi-dimensional, must be considered as an important variable in the transaction between public library staff and users, and perhaps more so, in the case of providing services for excluded or disadvantaged groups, due to the positive impact of empathic transactions upon client empowerment and continued service use. Its relationship with moral and ethical character and behaviours is of particular significance. As such, the theory of empathy, including the many definitions and role of the concept within management and service encounter analysis, have been used to inform the development of the Professional Empathy measure used in the first stage of our primary research (described in methodology chapter: National Survey).

6 RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 Social inclusion philosophy – policy awareness and understanding

6.1.1 Awareness of social inclusion policy

Survey respondents were asked to identify the extent to which they are aware of current national policy and debate concerning social exclusion, and their appreciation of the role of public libraries in meeting social inclusion aims and objectives. The majority claim to be partly aware of national social exclusion policy and debate (57.6%); 36.4% claim to be very aware, 3.3% not aware at all and 2.6% undecided. Of those claiming to be very aware, the majority are CILIP members in middle management roles. 10 of the 15 respondents who claim a complete lack of awareness are frontline staff.

Awareness of national policy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes very	165	36.4	36.4	36.4
	Yes partly	261	57.6	57.6	94.0
	No not at all	15	3.3	3.3	97.4
	Undecided	12	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Table 1

Reassuringly, higher proportions of respondents claim to be *very* appreciative of the role of public libraries in meeting social inclusion aims and objectives (68.7%), with 28.5% *partly* appreciative.

Appreciation of public library role

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes very	311	68.7	68.7	68.7
	Yes partly	129	28.5	28.5	97.1
	No not at all	2	.4	.4	97.6
	Undecided	11	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Table 2

Statistical tests were undertaken to ascertain whether there was any relationship between our participants' empathy scale scores i.e. Simulated Empathy, Social Identity and Service Values[6] and their responses to the above two questions:

- One-way ANOVA analyses indicated that those who were more aware of current policy and debate had greater social identity and service values (although there was no difference on simulated empathy).

[6] Survey results are presented in greater depth in Section 6.3 'Staff attitudes and engagement – motivation and barriers'

- One-way ANOVA analyses indicated that those who were very appreciative of the role of public libraries scored significantly higher on all three empathy scales than those who were only partly appreciative.

The focus group and interview sessions were used to further explore levels of social inclusion awareness and engagement amongst research participants. Conversations with front-line staff have revealed extremely low levels of awareness and engagement with social inclusion policy amongst this staff grouping, both in terms of the wider political agenda, and how policy is interpreted and administered at micro local level. There is also a certain contradiction at play with respect to front-line staff: many respondents described this group as the most important facilitators of social inclusion in their role of providing the day-to-day and face-to-face service. They were also described, however, as the least important staff grouping in terms of needing to know and understand policy and related political objectives:

"I'd call it a general acceptance rather than awareness, they know that policies and objectives are 'out there' but will be happy to accept guidance from above rather than get to grips with the actual policies" (South East FG)

"I don't think front-line staff do [need to be aware of policy] because their prime role is to serve the customer at the counter and the most important thing is how they treat that customer, not what bit of paper is saying that they should" (North East FG)

"There will be decisions made to target particular groups or to provide a particular resource or service, and they would understand why we're doing that but not how the decision was made… But then I'm not sure that I would expect them to be, it's the ability to deliver that is most important for front-line staff" (North West FG)

"… the awareness amongst authority chiefs and frontline delivery staff is very different. Chiefs are more aware of actual policies and political frameworks, delivery staff more aware of how it works on the ground" (North West: Head of Service)

The perception in some cases that frontline staff do not need to be aware of policy directives was a source of great concern for workshop participants, and a key finding of the research. The reasons cited for such low levels of engagement with policy amongst front-line staff included a lack of communication and transparency within individual authorities, and a working culture that dictates certain roles and responsibilities within and across organisational hierarchies, i.e. some front-line respondents did not think it was 'their job':

"I think most staff are aware of our need to promote services to the socially excluded – but they probably do not have any real knowledge of the policy behind it. We do not meet together enough to talk about it." (South West FG)

"I think the policy problem is that some of them are written in such an obscure language sometimes… I would say… city council is not exactly transparent… you know what you're supposed to do, and what you're aiming to do but you might not be able to recite the policy document" (West Midlands FG)

"We probably do know about social inclusion but when you start talking about policy, because of our position, it tends to be senior management who deal with policy-making in our area anyway" (West Midlands FG)

Communication and dissemination methods in particular are considered to be superficial and ineffective, with little attention paid to documents if and when they are circulated:

"For me I think that management pretend, or like to think that front-line staff are aware, but in terms of detailed knowledge, I would say not so much in reality. Things are cascaded round, but whether they are taken in by staff to the extent of having detailed knowledge, I don't know, which begs the question, should they have detailed knowledge anyway? Do they need it?" (Yorkshire FG)

"…generally what we try to stress is not the official drivers but just that everyone should be treated equally no matter what they look like… I'm not sure they know that there is a social inclusion policy and that's really as far as it goes for our staff. Occasionally we get a bulletin handed on from on high talking about the official guidance… we take probably about as much notice of it as we do of anything else!" (North East FG)

Nonetheless, it was observed that some staff engage more than others, particularly those who are motivated, curious and perhaps more career oriented:

"I would say some are some aren't… there are the ones who take direction from above, do what they're told to do and get on with it… and then there are the ones who want to know why they're doing things, and ask questions and then that motivates them even more" (East Midlands FG)

Some authorities are taking positive steps to engage front-line staff and establish a culture of awareness amongst new and existing employees, for example via briefing sessions concerning local and national government objectives. Other methods include testing levels of awareness and engagement at the point of recruitment, and the creation of specific posts within authorities, whereby staff within those roles deliver training and communicate and disseminate ideas:

"…we have had what we call staff awareness sessions and that's really to bring everybody up to speed with where we fit in to the local government agenda, and where the local government fits in to the national government agenda" (North East FG)

"…new staff are always pretty much aware because they won't actually get an interview… there's always a question about equal opportunities and how this relates to the community in [authority] on the application form, and there's always a question about how the library services relate to the community, especially harder to reach groups… so they're questions that they actually have to answer in their application and in the interview, so we tend to get some good applications." (East Midlands FG)

"In my authority yes [front-line staff are aware], and my title is access and inclusion, so personally if they weren't I'd be failing in my job! We do rounds of what we call diversity training and there is a requirement for all staff to attend" (London FG)

6.1.2 Defining social inclusion: conceptual issues

When conducting qualitative fieldwork it became clear that there is a striking misunderstanding of social inclusion policy, and a lack of conceptual clarity regarding social *exclusion* as a political reference. There is considerable

confusion and blurring between social inclusion and other social and public policy remits including community cohesion, racial equality, disability discrimination, sexual equality and other anti-discrimination objectives[7]. It was felt that more high profile legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) generated higher levels of awareness and engagement through necessity:

> "I think access is the one that most staff are aware of really… access to premises particularly… the other year when DDA came in, person after person after person rang me up about access and the legislation coming in, so we ended up *having* to understand the nitty gritty of the policy, otherwise I'd be standing there saying "I don't know about that" when people expect me to know, and you've got to be able to answer people's complaints." (Yorkshire FG)

Workshop discussions on the conceptual blurring between social policies and initiatives revealed a consistently worrying lack of distinction and comprehension, even at senior levels. Some participants felt that social exclusion was an 'outdated' term, stating that particular authorities were now referring to the concept as community cohesion. It was therefore felt that the same policies were simply being re-branded, when in fact, community cohesion is a very different policy and concept related to cultural and *religious* tolerance and understanding. One participant offered that the conceptual blurring was beneficial in opening up the inclusion agenda to mean all things, as it is 'a good idea to not just focus on socio-economic deprivation', yet another acknowledged that models of inclusion (or a focus on one particular policy or objective) change too frequently, having a damaging effect in creating a cosmetic responsive culture where nothing is actually achieved from one policy to another.

It was also noticeable during fieldwork sessions that there is an inaccurate, literal interpretation of the single word 'excluded' that is not linked to social exclusion as a political concept. Non-library users were frequently referred to as 'excluded' within the context of our discussion, thereby pointing towards a lack of the meaning of social exclusion and its effects:

> "…there are a few groups that we target, as well as traditional library users, I think we have to not forget about those because they could become an excluded group!" (North East FG)

> "Do you not find that most libraries run their lifelong learning classes during the day… most libraries are open at night time but we don't run classes then… in that case are workers not an excluded group?" (North East FG)

There was some evidence of what social exclusion means in practice (or an understanding thereof), and how library services could effectively be used to address the issue. Participants in the North West and East of England regions talked of disadvantaged neighbourhoods within their authorities, and the need to reconsider the delivery of services for these communities via outreach initiatives and partnership working. Other regions referred to projects and

[7] To help illustrate the conceptual blurring between different social policies and their relevant objectives, a diagram was used during workshop discussion, which is attached as Appendix 8.

campaigns that relate directly to the social inclusion remit by targeting the unemployed and basic skills needs:

"We've had a number of projects for the unemployed running… Bounce Back to Work comes to mind and one that's recently emerged called Fifty and not Out… which seems to be running along much the same line of getting people back in to work" (East of England FG

6.1.3 Cultural diversity and representation

The research aimed to test the relationship between the cultural and social backgrounds of library staff and their attitudes towards the social inclusion agenda, including their capacity to provide empathic inclusive services. As such it was important to establish a demographic profile of the case under consideration.

The gender ratio for our survey sample of public library staff in England is 79.2% female and 20.8% male. The predominant age group is 46-55, with 43.3% of the sample falling in to this category. A further 67 respondents (14.8%) are aged 56-65. Only 16.8% of the sample is aged 35 or less, with just 14 respondents (3.1%) in the aged 16-25 category. In terms of age and gender, the sample therefore is predominantly female and what we can describe as 'middle-aged'.

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	94	20.8	20.8	20.8
	female	359	79.2	79.2	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Table 3

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16-25	14	3.1	3.1	3.1
	26-35	62	13.7	13.7	16.8
	36-45	114	25.2	25.2	41.9
	46-55	196	43.3	43.3	85.2
	56-65	67	14.8	14.8	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Table 4

The largest ethnic grouping is 'White British', with 89.6% of the sample falling in to this category. The second largest ethnic grouping with 10 members (2.2%) is 'White other'. A range of ethnic groups are represented, including 'Indian', 'Black Caribbean' and 'Chinese', but only in very small numbers.

Ethnic group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Indian	6	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Pakistani	1	.2	.2	1.5
	Black Caribbean	6	1.3	1.3	2.9
	Black African	3	.7	.7	3.5
	White British	406	89.6	89.6	93.2
	White Irish	9	2.0	2.0	95.1
	White other	10	2.2	2.2	97.4
	White and Black Caribbean	1	.2	.2	97.6
	White and Black African	2	.4	.4	98.0
	White and Asian	1	.2	.2	98.2
	Other dual backgrounds	1	.2	.2	98.5
	Chinese	3	.7	.7	99.1
	Other	4	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Table 5

With respect to gender, age and ethnicity, the sample is therefore strikingly homogenous. The most frequent gender/age/ethnicity grouping was ‘female + 46-55 + White-British’, with 148 respondents selecting this combination, meaning that 32.7% of the sample fall in to a female White-British middle-aged category.

The survey sample also suggests a highly qualified occupational grouping, more than a third of whom (37.3%) are educated to postgraduate level (98 respondents with a postgraduate Certificate/Diploma, 70 with a Masters Degree and 1 PhD holder). A further 136 respondents (30%) are educated to degree level.

Highest educational qualification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	GCSE/O Level/CSE	46	10.2	10.2	10.2
	A Level/NVQ	63	13.9	13.9	24.1
	HND/Cert	16	3.5	3.5	27.6
	Degree	136	30.0	30.0	57.6
	Postgraduate Cert/Dip	98	21.6	21.6	79.2
	Masters degree	70	15.5	15.5	94.7
	Doctorate	1	.2	.2	94.9
	Other	23	5.1	5.1	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Table 6

Survey respondents were also asked to describe their secondary (11-16) education experience, with reference to the pupil and staff profile of their

school(s) attended, the denomination predominantly associated with their secondary education, and their school's educational performance. The aim of this section was to gather information regarding respondents' cultural and social background and experiences. The concept of social class is difficult to define, and traditional measures of social class as a concept were considered to be too ambiguous within the context of this research. It was decided therefore that the cultural experience of respondents during their formative years would be a more effective investigation.

76.8% of the sample described the pupil and staff profile of their school(s) as *culturally homogenous* (i.e. groups of people with similar ethnic, social, cultural and religious backgrounds). 76 respondents (16.8%) described the same profile as *culturally diverse* (i.e. groups of people with differing ethnic, social, cultural and religious backgrounds), and 29 respondents (6.4%) were 'undecided' on this question. Educational denomination is a little more varied, with 48.3% describing their secondary education experience as *dominated by one faith*, and 43.7% as *largely secular*. 227 respondents (50.1%) describe their school's educational performance as 'good' and 119 respondents (26.3%) describe the same as 'excellent', suggesting that the majority of respondents attended achieving schools.

Educational profile

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Culturally homogenous	348	76.8	76.8	76.8
	Culturally diverse	76	16.8	16.8	93.6
	Undecided	29	6.4	6.4	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Table 7

Educational denomination

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Dominated by one faith	219	48.3	48.3	48.3
	Largely secular	198	43.7	43.7	92.1
	Undecided	36	7.9	7.9	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Table 8

School's educational performance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Poor	17	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Average	79	17.4	17.4	21.2
	Good	227	50.1	50.1	71.3
	Excellent	119	26.3	26.3	97.6
	Undecided	11	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Table 9

The most frequent secondary education experience grouping was ‘culturally homogenous + dominated by one faith + good’, with 90 respondents selecting this combination, suggesting that almost one fifth of the sample (19.9%) had a culturally and socially homogenous and academically successful formative educational experience.

Whilst the homogeneity of the sample is an interesting research finding in itself, this has of course limited the survey research method in terms of our capacity to compare attitudes of different social, cultural and demographic groups towards the social inclusion agenda. This has in some respects been rectified during the further qualitative stages of the research, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Focus group and interview respondents were asked to comment on the homogeneity of our survey sample, and to discuss whether or not this raises issues for the provision of socially inclusive public library services. Participants tended to focus on the ethnic aspect of cultural representation (rather than gender, age or social class), and were mostly in agreement that the survey sample was an accurate depiction of public library staff demographics. The general perception was that staff profiles in individual authorities reflected that of the communities they serve, and that generally, authorities seemed to have a ‘make do’ attitude towards equal opportunities and cultural diversity in the workplace:

“I can only speak for the library service and that is 100% white, reasonably middle class, quite diverse in age and overwhelmingly female” (West Midlands FG)

“Back in the early eighties I went to a racism awareness course where we were memorably described as the white highlands… and it’s not changed an awful lot since then… I would say that the ethnic minorities in [authority] are in single percentage figures… in the library staff, because we’re such a small staff role… we’ve got one part-time library assistant who is Asian, so it probably is representative percentage-wise… but it does mean that yes our image is affected” (North East FG)

“… we have a member of staff with a hearing impairment who seems to be held up as a shining example of Equal Opps” (East of England FG)

Participants were divided as to whether or not such a homogenous workforce had implications for the delivery of socially inclusive services, with opinion shaped by personal identity and experience. Certain respondents claimed that staff are capable of empathy irrespective of their own cultural background, and that the ability to deliver socially inclusive services is dependant upon skill and personality traits rather than identity:

“…you don’t have to be the same to have empathy in a given situation” (West Midlands FG)

“I’m inclined to say yes it should [present issues], but I’m not so sure in practice, as long as the white middle aged women are open minded and good at their job. To say that it raises issues suggests that they’re not good at their job really, but again some are better than others” (South East FG)

“It’s also somewhat negatively assuming that white-British middle aged women are not capable of being socially inclusive, which isn’t necessarily correct. It’s the skills they have that matter” (North West FG)

"Also our generation, we were quite right on at an impressionable age weren't we? The sort of way that the Thatcherite generation weren't, they were told that society was irrelevant and there was no such thing as community. You know I'm not sure it's a bad thing [demographic profile]" (London FG)

"… in our defence I would say that pretty much all of the ladies that I have met and had the privilege to work with have been fantastically welcoming, open-minded, flexible… its easy to throw the charge against us that we're all middle-aged middle class white women, but I'm sorry I can't help that… I do what I'm doing and I try to do it as well as I can" (East of England FG)

Those who disagreed thought the homogenous profile would have a negative impact from a user perspective, particularly in terms of the first impressions of a library service that people may have. There was an assumption that people may have a sense of 'not belonging' if their profile differed from an all-white female middle-aged environment. One participant in the North West group observed that members of vulnerable and traditionally disadvantaged groups place a greater degree of trust in people they can recognise as familiar:

"It does have an impact though, those first impressions can turn someone round and right back out of the door. Even in a small library, if it's quiet and it's just you and one or two members of staff that you don't immediately relate to, it will feel strange and put you off, particularly if you don't go in to libraries on a regular basis. There's no denying that staff have the experience and you couldn't ask them for more, but there's no denying that at that initial point of contact you may be excluding people because they feel uncomfortable or whatever" (London FG)

"… people coming in want to see people like them in the library don't they? Otherwise they assume it's only a place for white middle-aged middle class women!" (East of England FG)

"In my own experience of doing reader development work with disadvantaged community groups, they are far more responsive to people whom they trust to be from their own world, with the same accent, the same colloquialisms, somebody they can relate to… Most of these projects are about building confidence, and there needs to be that element of trust. I'm not saying that the stereotypical white female middle class librarian wouldn't be able to do my job as well as I can, but I think they would have to work at it a bit harder to get over that initial barrier" (North West FG)

"… you don't get a second chance to make a first impression as the saying goes… but to overcome that you need staff with the right people skills" (London: Development Manager)

Workshop participants upheld the view that culturally diverse staff profiles are difficult to achieve, as any professional grouping will have its own 'typical' culture and demographic identity, and that within any professional service culture the underlying ethos *should* be empathic, irrespective of one's own cultural background. Despite this there was a suggestion that it is human instinct for staff to associate with - and perhaps better serve - people they know and can recognise. Workshop participants also made a direct correlation between living and working in the same community, and noted that this would facilitate a greater understanding of community characteristics and values, and help to inform better community-based library services.

It was noted that staff demographics are entirely symptomatic of the recruitment processes employed by libraries and the type of applicants they receive, which have traditionally been female. It was felt in particular that

central recruitment policies do not give individual libraries the freedom to recruit appropriate people:

"It's also down to the people who apply for jobs in libraries… maybe we've got to be more proactive to encourage those people to apply, but it does tend to be overwhelmingly white middle class women who apply for library jobs" (North East FG)

"… we've got targets for recruitment to match the local profile but we're a long way from achieving it, particularly disability and ethnic minority… which has got a lot to do with the way our staff are recruited, which is out of our hands and done centrally, through Manpower, which from our point of view is very unsuccessful in terms of social inclusion, and just generally really" (East of England FG)

There are significant issues with staff turnover in public libraries, which seemingly go from one extreme to another. Participants explained that a certain category of staff (older and female) has low turnover, whilst the turnover amongst younger staff members, particularly casual and part-time staff, is significantly higher. Although it was agreed that the younger profile benefits the image of the service, the high turnover affects consistency and continuity. Factors such as low pay and motivation affect the decision to leave:

"…we probably don't meet the age and culture profile of the whole of the city though… I would say that three quarters of the staff are probably white… I would say it's half and half male and female but we know that that's unusual… there are a few young members of staff but because of the way that libraries work in general, there is little movement in staff turnover, so people are there for years and years!" (West Midlands FG)

"…the other thing we have is a very low staff turnover, so when people join us as young white middle class people, they become middle-aged middle class staff! It does mean that trying to change the profile of staff is almost impossible because nobody leaves" (North East FG)

"…because we're open four nights a week we have a lot of evening staff, casuals and part-timers, weekend staff, a lot of them are students so they know that they can get better wages in Tesco… or they think it's a cushy job, finish their degree and go" (North East FG)

"We have quite a lot of younger people coming through, with different ethnic backgrounds, although our staff turnover at assistant level is quite high. We have a lot of students who move on quite quickly, but it's probably good for the image of the service" (North West FG)

The general image and public perception of the library service also has an impact on recruitment. Some participants observed that in occupational terms, the service has a 'nice and cosy' image which attracts females looking for part-time work and a secondary family income. Although it was also noted that libraries are beginning to shake off this image with the recruitment of young graduates, there is also a belief that the more driven young people are difficult to retain because of low pay and status:

"It's a historical thing of it not being a man's job, and also a lot of people are put off by the money. The perception that it's a nice little part-time job for women, with the main bread-winner, the man, off earning the real money" (Yorkshire FG)

"We've got quite a few young staff who have applied in the last 12 months. I think up to about three or four years ago when we restructured it was still definitely 'oh I need a part-time I'm in my forties let's apply to the library' sort of thing, but now we're getting college graduates coming in, we've got quite a lot of staff in their twenties with a degree" (East Midlands FG)

The East Midlands region was the only one not to conform to the demographic profile presented by survey data, as the staff demographics in participating authorities reflected the BME population of the region, with city authorities in particular having effective recruitment policies to ensure adequate community representation:

"…within the community libraries we have quite a lot of library assistants that represent the communities, especially because we need the language skills… people come in and they want to join and they don't speak English, you have to have somebody there who will speak the language that is probably the community language of that area… 80% of the community in [locality] is Gujarati speaking" (East Midlands FG)

Many participants from a range of regions reported increased numbers of 'younger' staff and notably more (again younger) *male* staff members, although this was not quantified in any way. An increase in twenty-something graduates from a range of academic disciplines in library assistant posts was noted: as one participant commented, libraries are increasingly seen as a viable option for graduates who are undecided on their career path. One London authority commented on an increased effort to ensure community representation by working directly with BME communities themselves, and without compromising recruitment policy and procedures:

"…one of the things that we're doing in [authority] is there's obviously lots of community groups, Chinese and Nepalese women's groups and so on… what I'm trying to do, because of my contacts with those groups is to set up to visits to libraries and work experience specifically for those groups and also I can let them know when jobs are being advertised… that's one way of hopefully trying to increase the number of applicants that we get from ethnic minority groups in libraries without being favouritist in the actual search" (London FG)

The issue of equal opportunities was raised as potentially sensitive and difficult when discussing the need to diversify staff profiles. There is a perceived tension between meeting expected criteria and fulfilling equal opportunities objectives, and recruiting staff with the required skills and competencies. Two respondents reported prior experience of this having occurred, with consequences for staff development and morale:

"But even when we put out adverts. for staff, there are very few alternative groups who apply for the jobs so what can you do? You can't make people apply because they fit the criteria and they're ticking the boxes… The danger is you get staff who aren't up to the job because they're there because they tick a box… We do have one of those and I think they're the only staff member who's still a level one assistant" (North East FG)

"I don't want to be seen to be criticising people from certain communities, but I will criticise the employment policy that dictates you must employ x% from this cultural background, because I've seen people employed who couldn't even read. They're trying to shelve books without knowing the alphabet, and you feel bad for them because they feel embarrassed… you shouldn't be employing these people. It's embarrassing for all concerned, but the authority can say 'look at us and our staff profile, we get three stars now', but it's wrong" (Yorkshire FG)

It was anticipated that the cultural profile of public library staff may change and develop over time, becoming increasingly diverse through successive generations of ethnic minority communities and different cultural groups:

"…we have a Bangladeshi centre, and we find that when we try to work with them it's very much a centre on it's own, replicating the culture from home to [city]… trying to get in and work with them is very hard… maybe in the future things might change with second and third generation communities" (North East FG)

Workshop respondents were 'hopeful' that this could be achieved, and considered it to be a probability due to the continually changing and developing demographic profile of the country as a whole. It was felt however that this will be more realistically and easily achieved, on a short-term basis, in high density urban regions.

Case study: Birchfield Library Community Consultation Project Birmingham City Libraries

Brief description:

Children and young people; Partnership delivery

Birmingham Libraries are planning to build an innovative 'signature' building to replace the recently demolished Birchfield library. From August 2006 to March 2007 the library service undertook a community consultation project to engage local people in discussions about the design of the new library and the ways in which they would like to use it. The emphasis was on testing ways of engaging with young people. The project featured:

- A partnership with the Youth Service to train young researchers to undertake consultations within the community on behalf of the library service (phase one)
- An outreach programme to explore the initial findings from the youth service activities and engage with a diverse range of people in the community through a range of organisations and services (phase two)
- A commission to an independent organisation (First Class Youth Direct, who specialise in communicating with young people in disadvantaged situations) to promote and hold a debate event on reading and libraries (phase three)
- Connecting Histories - A heritage and archives programme to enable people to think about library design in the context of their heritage and identity, and their sense of place and belonging, highlighting the role of libraries in community cohesion (phase three).

Duration:

August 2006 – March 2007

Funding:

The six month project was funded by The Laser Foundation, established to support research and innovation to improve library facilities available to the public.

Target group:

Children, young people and other community members of a specific, traditionally disadvantaged, diverse, inner city area called Birchfield, three miles from Birmingham city centre.

Social impact:

The young people involved in phase one and trained as community researchers have benefited from acquiring new skills and competencies, increased appreciation and potential use of library services, and community engagement. Phases two and three have also encouraged increased community engagement, awareness and appreciation of public libraries and their role in informal learning, as multi-purpose social spaces and local amenities, and an advanced sense of civic identity and cultural value amongst community members.

For a consultation like this to be effective in providing a library service that is wanted and will be used by the relevant community, it is vital to spend time working with people to enhance their general awareness of library services and what they can offer before the consultation takes place.

Personnel involved:

A library Project Worker was appointed to lead much of the work (and received induction training), but staff from across the library service were involved in promoting the consultation with local groups and schools, training young people in library service awareness, contacting groups and helping to deliver project phases and sessions, using their existing skills.

Working with external partners who have expertise in working with young people – notably the Youth Service and First Class Youth Direct - has been particularly effective, especially in establishing a rapport with groups whose awareness of library services is low.

Impact on library staff:

The project has had a profound professional impact upon participating library staff in:

- Boosting confidence with respect to consulting and communicating with diverse community groups
- Endorsing plans for modernising the library service
- Providing valuable knowledge in and experience of various approaches to user consultation

On a personal level staff have been satisfied by the successful completion of a challenging project, and in particular, one that enhances the service's reputation for innovation. It is envisaged that staff will continue to apply the knowledge and skills acquired on a smaller scale. Strategically however, delays in the planning stage of the new building risk undermining the trust and momentum established during the consultation project. Success of such a project is entirely dependent upon clear goals, adequate funding and sufficient priority within the organisation.

Further information:

Contact:
Geoff Mills, Senior Manager (Library Services)
Birmingham Library and Archive Services
geoff.mills@birmingham.gov.uk

Project report available from:
http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/birchfieldconsultation.bcc

6.1.4 Cultural awareness and training

Participants were asked to comment on the quality and effectiveness of training and communication methods within their own authorities, with reference to raising awareness and developing skills within a social inclusion context. Again in some cases respondents instinctively referred to cultural awareness training related to different ethnic communities and groups. Some felt that training events or courses they had attended, or that are provided by their authorities, are severely outdated and no longer relevant to modern British society, or to the social challenges facing minority groups and service providers:

> "I don't think that some of the attempts made at cultural awareness training are nearly appropriate… I went on a course about raising cultural awareness relating to Pakistani communities… the history of Pakistan, the culture and the food… None of it addressed the BRITISH issues of multiculturalism, which is not only Pakistan it's this and that… We've got first generation and second generation communities, and we're dealing mostly with second generation… So what are the issues? For second generation you are born into a Pakistani family and told certain things, then you go out and grow up in a British culture… These are the issues we should be talking about and how to address them" (Yorkshire FG)

> "In my authority the third generation… their greatest source of cultural influence is American hip-hop and gangster rap, which is much more relevant than having a meeting about onion bhajis… and what's happened in our authority is the chap who's involved with delivering social inclusion, he's of an ethnic background, Pakistani background, and he focuses mainly on that, he hasn't updated for recent arrivals from eastern Europe and Africa… we have a lot of French speaking Africans… it's no longer relevant" (Yorkshire FG)

There are various issues associated with the use of localised (i.e. relevant to individual authorities and communities) or more generic (in some cases referred to as 'national') training methods and materials. One respondent involved in the delivery of a national project felt that the associated generic materials were inappropriate for local delivery, and that resources could have been allocated more effectively to ensure correct or more appropriate regional training provision. Another respondent felt that training was perhaps a little too local-based and reactive, and did not facilitate understanding of wider political objectives and policy frameworks:

> "I've got already prepared really in-depth up-to-date information about asylum seekers, refugees, new communities coming to [city], EU nationals, the proportions of them, and we just have not got the budget to deliver that to staff, so I'm trying to get external funding to cover that… but the really interesting thing is as we've delivered [project], they will pay for trainers to come in and train my staff on refugees and asylum seekers, yet these trainers will probably come in from London, I can do it targeted totally to [city], yet the way their funding is set up, they can't fund to back-fill staff while I actually train them, so we're really in negotiations as to whether that can be done in some way" (East Midlands FG)

> "The training tends to be very localised and on a need to know basis, which is good for the community outlook, but less beneficial when you ask about policy and how we fit in to the wider agenda. We don't have the time or money to provide general training for that kind of generic staff development. It would be nice to be more proactive rather reactive but that doesn't seem to be the public sector way!" (North West FG)

Other factors affecting the success and effectiveness of training provision - and therefore the social inclusion offer from public libraries as a whole -

include the lack of time and resources to provide comprehensive training and development opportunities for all staff. Available specialised resources are not fully promoted or used due to a lack of staff knowledge and expertise, and there is a significant issue in terms of training part-time staff, particularly those who only work during evenings and weekends:

"Definitely it's a training issue for us from the grants perspective, for disability awareness and all those sorts of things. I mean we have IT facilities for people with disabilities, we have a programme which reads documents to you out loud, put it on a scanner and it reads the text out… but nobody is really trained to use it, nobody could show somebody how to use it if they came in, and because of this it's not promoted in anyway, it's almost like our dirty little secret that we keep hidden, do you know what I mean?" (London FG)

"… we have Saturday and Sunday staff who just don't get, or they're not there enough really to pick up on things. Training does get to them, but trying to co-ordinate it in-between whatever else they do during the week, it can be months later that they finally get the training" (East of England FG)

Interviewees (Senior Managers) believed that training provided by their individual authorities was appropriate on the whole, though several commented that provision could be improved with more investment in available time and money. It was implied, however, that senior managers view training as a supplementary activity designed to improve staff's *existing* knowledge and skills:

"…we have a rolling customer care programme… but it's the same with any training, the people attending need the right aptitude for it or it won't work… it's more about the staff you have rather than the training you give them" (London, Development Manager)

"Well these are skills that people should have before they come to the job, or bring to the job! They shouldn't be recruited otherwise. The training we provide is adequate as a bolster" (North West, Head of Service)

The attitude of Senior Managers towards training and development was criticized by workshop participants, who believe that Heads of Service are 'deluded in thinking that existing communication methods are appropriate and effective'. It was observed at this event that more targeted and specialized training is needed.

Case Study: Books on Prescription National
Brief description:
Partnership delivery; Targeted groups Books on Prescription is a partnership service between public library and information services, mental health services, social services and NHS Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). Recommended books are 'prescribed' by GPs to patients suffering from a range of mental health conditions, which may help to self-manage or further understand their symptoms (e.g. books on handling anxiety or stress, anger management, depression etc). The prescription is then taken to a partner library where the resources are made available, with the aim of increasing library footfall, membership and continued use amongst this group.
Duration:
Originally the scheme was run on a pilot basis in Cardiff during 2004, and has been gradually rolled out on a national basis, originally throughout Wales and now the UK as a whole as a mainstreamed service.
Funding:
Original funding came direct from the Welsh Assembly, but within individual participating authorities, funding is split between library services and PCTs, for example, in **Northamptonshire**[8] the library service provides core funding for all relevant book stock, whilst the PCT funds all publicity and associated materials.
Target group:
Groups experiencing social exclusion or disadvantage due to 'mild to moderate' mental health conditions such as anxiety, stress and depression. Potential users pre-identified by medical practitioners, making the group more accessible.
Social impact:
The scheme has been successful in raising awareness of mental health issues, including their scale and prevalence, and allaying fears and misconceptions associated with the various conditions. For the user it facilitates a certain amount of empowerment in helping to understand their own condition, and a more confident use of inter-connected public services.
Personnel involved:
Sally Middleton provided information on how the scheme is run in **Gloucestershire**. The project was lead by the service's existing Social Inclusion Development Officer, and supported by frontline staff who were

[8] For more details on the scheme in Northamptonshire please see http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/808CBF4A-8B1C-49A6-BE7E-E91B818CCE36/0/BooksonPrescriptionServiceAnUpdatereportMay2006.pdf

trained on the project including procedures on 'dispensing' prescribed books and collecting quantitative data.

Jacqueline Wieczorek explained that all library supervisors are involved with the project in **Cambridgeshire** libraries, where optional staff training is provided by the information team, including a visiting health information librarian.

Gloucestershire has other working relationships with relevant health services, using a department 'champion' who facilitates ongoing communication with their external partners (Champion defined as skilled in networking, partnership working, good understanding of current trends in social inclusion, ability to promote unique selling points of public libraries, translate strategy and public policy in to meaningful service delivery projects). Spin off projects include several Mental Health Drop-in sessions in selected libraries (linked with World Mental Health Day) and a Carers' Reading Group, established in one library in partnership with a GP involved in the Books on Prescription scheme.

Impact on library staff:

Some concerns were expressed by participating staff over confidentiality and sensitivity issues, particularly where participating library users may be known to them – for example 'would my neighbour want me to know that she needs a book on depression'.

Staff in Cambridgeshire however have felt rewarded by being involved in helping customers in a project that is considered to be especially 'worthwhile'.

The development of strong working partnerships with health practitioners and other public services has been particularly beneficial.

Further information:

Sally Middleton has published the following two articles on the project:

Prescription for a healthy partnership. Public Library Journal (PLJ), Vol. 20, No. 3, Autumn 2005, pp. 13-14.
Why social inclusion is beyond its sell-by date. CILIP Library + Information Update, Vol. 5 No. 3, March 2006, pp. 36-37.

A report on the scheme in Cambridgeshire libraries can be found at:
http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/B028DBEB-218A-46E1-8C8F-22DBDC9618D9/0/bop_booklet.pdf

For an example of a promotional leaflet on the scheme, please see:
http://www.hertsdirect.org/infobase/docs/pdfstore/bopguide.pdf

Contact details:
Sally Middleton sally.middleton@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Jacqueline Wieczorek jacqueline.wieczorek@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

6.2 Social inclusion practice – methods of service planning and delivery

6.2.1 The local government agenda: ticking boxes and jumping through hoops?

The influence of the political climate and local government culture has a strong impact on interpretations of, and responses to, social inclusion policy within public libraries. Library staff are highly aware of the political environment in which they operate, and this can lead to a certain cynicism or apprehension when considering their contribution to social inclusion objectives. Short-term funding and 'questionable council motives' are key issues:

"…a lot of the work with refugees and asylum seekers especially is such a political football so much that funding will change as to which way the wind blows that week… in relation to the media, politicians… and that affects you and all your partners… they're all dealing in the same area but there's a lot of short-termism" (East Midlands FG)

"I think [authority] is always national… as it appears to me… it should be more local but it's always chasing money, so tries to do anything that it can to meet any national objectives to get an extra half a star or more money" (West Midlands FG)

"…if the political situation changes, the library service may be committed but the politics may change… whether the council changes, whether the funding changes, whether the four star status changes… if we fail we lose four star status, then we lose money and don't have the resources to get it back" (East Midlands FG)

It was felt that equality and inclusion agendas are too easily manipulated in order to achieve targets. This forms some explanation for the theoretical blurring between social inclusion policy and other equality-based agendas, and serves to encourage higher levels of cynicism amongst staff:

"The need to tie in to the county council's plan [is]… about equality really in most aspects so you can hang these things on to it… I sometimes look at ours and think they've twisted that around to make that fit in there… 'give me the money'" (East of England FG)

"We're regularly touted as the council's beacon of social inclusion, but this service has run for over 25 years quietly and efficiently… it annoys me to suddenly be rebranded as something we're not" (Yorkshire: Mobile Library Service Manager)

Similarly, respondents also described a certain 'ticking boxes and jumping through hoops' culture within local government, which made them suspicious of organisational motivation in meeting the social inclusion agenda. There is a sense that local authority chief executives create a superficial and cosmetic atmosphere for staff, particularly when correlating inclusion objectives to service standards and awards:

"And many a time, you know you've got charter mark people coming round and stuff like that, and it feels very cosmetic for the front-line staff, and it is like something out of a comedy or out of Kafka… you've got people wandering round and papers everywhere and checking boxes… it doesn't mean anything… it doesn't mean the service is any better, it just means you're presenting it as if it is better" (Yorkshire FG)

"…we've got inspectors in the authority at the moment and I keep getting phone calls saying 'what are you doing for over-50 African-Caribbeans, please ring the chief with evidence and

photographs by one o'clock today', so the authority gets a sniffy couple of sentences then you have to produce the targeted stuff as well" (London FG)

"…we suffer a bit from fad-ism… buzz words [relating to the political agenda]… [we're] driven by local authority and their golden thread or flavour of the month… it feels like hoop-jumping, and can seem too transitory and superficial to staff" (London FG)

Workshop participants took the tick-box theory a stage further, claiming that some policies or political objectives seem more 'fashionable' than others. Socio-economic disadvantage for example (and therefore actual social exclusion) was considered as unfashionable compared to the more accessible equality issues such as ethnicity and LGBT. This was linked to the current media representation of 'chav' culture and how it is still apparently considered acceptable to discriminate against the white underclass. Teamed with the high expectation for library authorities to perform, this creates a tension that leads to 'quick-fix' solutions, the need to prioritise and the decision to cater for majority accessible tastes.

There are some benefits to the explicit 'buying-in' to political agendas however, as identified during our workshop discussion. Linking to Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF: the Deprivation Index Fund) in one example has led to projects with successful outcomes being adapted into mainstream services. Where there is an articulate and clearly routable link to social exclusion agendas, it is felt that results are achieved. Another group member participating in this discussion commented, however, that there are stigmas attached to NRF funding which may encourage negative responses from staff living and working in more affluent postcodes. This reinforces the belief that some excluded groups and related agendas are considered more favourably than others.

This notion of the 'quick-fix' approach links to the perceptions of library staff of their service delivery on an operational level, for example with stock collections. It is felt that a 'tick box' approach is negatively affecting stock decisions, in what one participant described as 'policy for policy's sake'. This in turn is encouraging negativity towards what is perceived to be overt political correctness:

"…when I first went to [branch library] which was five and a half years ago, we had a very small collection of books in Hindi and Punjabi, and four and half years later, those books were still sitting in exactly the same place without a date stamp in them because nobody had taken any of them out… Somebody had said at some point 'you need to have these books', and so they appeared… I'd spent four years saying we need to take these books somewhere where they'll issue, it's just a horrific waste of material, and it took four years to get them shifted because nobody listens to us." (Yorkshire FG)

"I think it's when councils or libraries have these mad cap, well not mad cap because we're not allowed to say that, but you know these short term funding projects that it goes astray… if they stopped looking at these short term little pockets of activity… and silly political correctness… we had gay and lesbian fiction, now it's gay, lesbian, bisexual, transvestite… could they add any more initials? You know does it matter? A good book is a good book, does it matter if it's written by or aimed at a gay person or lesbian?" (West Midlands FG)

"You lose track of what you can say and what you can't say… who we're targeting this week… it becomes a political minefield and you forget that public libraries have been inclusive since their inception… they are by definition" (London: Library Service Manager)

The 'tick box' approach mentioned above has implications for the practical relevance and appropriateness of service decisions and staff attitudes towards the governance of their services, their own morale and levels of engagement. The general consensus seemed to be that the concept of community librarianship is becoming lost in a culture of political pressure and that social inclusion objectives are increasingly regarded as 'add on' responsibilities:

"The trouble is though we have as I say a very mono-cultural profile but every now and again somebody somewhere will say 'what are we doing for ethnic minorities?', and the answer is 'nothing'… so in the way that local government works we have to do something… but we haven't got any ethnic minorities, so we might be prepared if any ever turn up but our training will be twenty years out of date!" (North East FG)

"… given the responsibilities of local government and the need for agencies to be politically responsive… [some of the] targets or directives we receive are unrealistic and irrelevant to our service" (London: Development Manager)

Changes in local government organisational structures, accountability and governance will present new challenges for public libraries, as commented on by workshop participants. A shift from 'best value' performance measurement to best area indicators and Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) will make it more difficult for libraries to prove value and impact within an inclusion context due to the tension between existing short-term approaches and the time required to truly engage with CPA methods.

Along with negative staff reactions to the political culture of local government, bureaucratic structures are creating logistical issues on an operational level for the social inclusion offer from public libraries. Respondents have referred, for example, to the inconsistency from one authority to another within given regions, and the frustrating committee bureaucracy of individual authorities which affects decision making processes:

"… with [authority] libraries we've gone in to ward and constituency libraries, so if your library is in a particular constituency you might get better services, more funding to pay for books and staffing, and the next constituency depends on what they consider to be important" (West Midlands FG)

"…everything has to go to committee to committee, one meeting after another, passed down and agreed by xyz… BUT everything takes forever. So it takes 5 years to get rid of a non-issue collection because no one individual can make a decision" (Yorkshire FG)

On an organisational level, respondents from every region commented on the impact of frequent restructuring within authorities, including insecurity and low morale amongst staff, and a lack of service consistency and sustainability:

"…uncertainty at local level with regards to funding, staff shortages and restructuring always get in the way when working for local government" (South East FG)

"We've changed directives so many times we don't know who we are… recreation and leisure… education and libraries…" (North East FG)

"… what is hard is that we have too much restructuring and organisation which takes away all logic… we could be running sustainable [socially inclusive] services but we have constant changes and settling in periods, all of which has a negative effect on the straight-forward delivery" (East of England FG)

One respondent, however, reported significant benefits of restructuring within the social inclusion context:

"We've benefited from moving departments because Regeneration and Culture for the past six years have got Beacon status for working with hard to reach groups… so with us joining that department, it puts the onus on libraries sustaining that as a service" (East Midlands FG)

Hierarchical chains of command in local authorities are also having a damaging impact in encouraging a loss of realism in what can be achieved at service level, and a perceived loss of managerial control:

"You do find that your faith in senior management to deal with problems is limited… To be honest I think their ability to deal with it is limited… I mean libraries don't exist in isolation, they are part of local authorities and so on, there's a long chain of command to follow" (North East FG)

"There are many tiers that we answer to, which sometimes creates problems in itself. It's where the sense of realism can be lost, in terms of what we can realistically achieve" (North West FG)

"But because of a policy or a rule that says you've got to have these collections in certain branches then you have them, and there's no flexibility on whether they're being used or not or whether they can be moved somewhere else… even though I say to my manager that it's pointless spending money on items that don't issue, even she doesn't know if she is able to redirect those funds and spend them on something else" (Yorkshire FG)

Respondents recognised the need for a greater transparency within public library services, and a more open and realistic approach to what can be offered and how. There would appear to be high levels of executive decision making, and ill-informed approaches to meeting policy objectives in a superficial way:

"There needs to be honesty from management about the true state of our service… I've worked for three different authority departments now in restructure after restructure… you can't help but feel they're glossing over something… you know are public libraries really so grossly under funded? If we know once and for all then you accept your limitations and stop trying to tick so many boxes" (Yorkshire FG)

"It becomes so bureaucratic and that's how you alienate people… there's a lot of old school resentment to what people see to be an over-politicised tick-box way of doing things… having stock but not getting it to the right people, throwing it away… it's policy for policy's sake" (Yorkshire FG)

Case study: InformU Southend Libraries
Brief description:
Targeted groups; Children and young people; Mainstreamed services InformU is an information web portal developed by Southend Libraries, designed for children and families in the immediate community. Southend has 'several pockets of severe deprivation' and the portal was designed to raise awareness of available activities, services and facilities amongst children, young people, families, parents, carers and relevant professionals, in a bid to reduce the likelihood of social exclusion and criminal activity within deprived areas. Partners (via activities such as steering group membership) include local primary care trusts (PCTs), and council departments.
Funding:
Originally funded for six months by Southend Children's Fund, work began on the project in October 2003 and the website was launched in April 2004. Additional funding was made available from sources including Southend's Department of Social Care. The project was successfully mainstreamed in 2007 as part of the council's ICT department.
Target group:
Disadvantaged children and young people in deprived areas of Southend.
Social impact:
The project was commissioned as one of 16 projects across voluntary and statutory sectors in support of the following Children's Fund key themes: • Positive family-focused support • Information on available specialist facilities and services • Crime reduction activities Other relevant social aims include e-government objectives, community and civic engagement, and *Every Child Matters* outcomes. Community consultation was undertaken during the design stages with schools and various community groups, encouraging ownership and empowerment amongst the target group.
Personnel involved:
The Project Co-ordinator was seconded from an existing children's librarian post, after the library service was approached by the project funders to host and manage the project. The library service had been identified as having relevant knowledge of local resources, skills in information gathering and impartial dissemination skills. The project assistant had existing knowledge of cataloguing, indexing, HTML and basic web design. The team was managed by the existing Access Services manager, illustrating how established collected library skills can be

applied to great effect within a social inclusion context.

Impact on library staff:

The project has injected library teams with a new enthusiasm and capacity for partnership working, via the need and opportunity to engage with multi agencies including local businesses, community groups and service providers. Due to the uniqueness of the project, staff have been enabled to utilise and develop their skills in a 'refreshing', hands-on, resourceful, organic and flexible way.

The professional marketing of the site facilitated a break into new territory for library staff in an attempt to disassociate the resource with local authority identity: methods included bus advertising, radio jingles and high-quality promotional literature.

The mainstreaming of the project however into a new corporate function has meant that library staff have had to relinquish control, and as with many funded short-term projects, the experience becomes unaccounted for and in some way 'lost' as staff move on to other projects.

Further information:

Published article:
Reaching socially excluded young people. Mandy Steel and Laurain Zialor, CILIP Library + Information Update, Vol. 4, No. 10, October 2005, pp. 39-41.

Project website:
www.informu.co.uk

Project report available from:
http://www.informu.co.uk/files/392007_Final%20v%20Southend%20annual%20report5.pdf

Contact:
Laurain Zialor, Database Officer laurainzialor@southend.gov.uk

6.2.2 Identifying the socially excluded: target groups and political objectives

Respondents identified a number of key target groups within the social inclusion agenda which conformed to both regional and national objectives and policy drivers. Frequently cited groups included speakers of English as a second language (ESOL), traveller communities, looked after children, refugees and asylum seekers. Target groups that could be defined as non-library users, rather than the socially excluded, were also included in the discussion, particularly with reference to the tension between targeting 'new' service users and alienating existing, perhaps more traditional customers:

"ESOL groups and migrant communities are a key target group, particularly when looking at stock collections… in terms of outreach we're working with other council departments to deliver services to traveller communities and looked after children… we mostly respond to the council's objectives" (South East FG)

"I would say it's probably ESOL groups… they're the only traditionally excluded group that have a programme dedicated to them" (West Midlands FG)

"I think, nationally as well, it's the travelling children with the project where they can take things back to any library with their little pass thing that they can use as they travel round the country… it wasn't so long ago that we had the email round to print out for all staff to read so everybody should be aware… I haven't come across any yet but I know it's a priority!" (North East FG)

"We've got a bit of a push on asylum seekers and refugees at the moment… that's quite a buzz one" (Yorkshire FG)

"Teenagers and young adults [16-25 age group] generally speaking, we're constantly being told to 'address' this issue but it's a very difficult thing to do. As a demographic group they're not socially excluded per se they're just non-library users, and if this is a choice then it's a choice. You can't make them, and by trying to make libraries more attractive for this group you risk alienating a lot of existing regular users. It feels like you're flogging a dead horse really" (North West FG)

Community profiling is being used as an effective tool for ensuring local relevance and value in targeting specific groups. Community consultation and working with groups themselves is also proving to be effective in certain regions:

"We recently produced a community profile that obviously helps us to highlight areas where we should be working… I'm working with young carers in my area… we have two community development workers, one works from branches and I work from central… So we have a community profile to see what we can do for the groups in our area and obviously I go and have a chat with the identified groups and see how we can fit in or help them… and the homeless, which is a really difficult one, but something that we have looked at relevant to our community" (North East FG)

"…we have all the mainstream listed groups and you're constantly reviewing what the needs are and how things change either nationally politically, locally or in one location, and because we've got a lot of embedded working with groups, the groups will come to us and say something's changed or what can you do for this" (London FG)

Other regions however reported more misguided approaches to the inclusion agenda, including making general assumptions about how particular target groups behave and how library services should be adapted to accommodate new user groups. This causes high level dissatisfaction and frustration amongst frontline staff, and highlights the need for more comprehensive and systematic consultation with communities themselves, and the need for library staff and management, particularly those in decision-making roles, to genuinely understand and empathise with community groups:

"We had one manager who said just let them do anything… food, mobile phones… it's just chasing a cloud, nothing to do with social inclusion really. It's assuming that everyone out there is a pig-ignorant idiot, and if you treat them like that they will be, you know. It becomes ridiculous." (Yorkshire FG)

Within this context, several respondents commented on the value of outreach services, i.e. working within communities themselves, in targeting and further understanding the service needs of disadvantaged groups, particularly in deprived areas or designated regeneration wards. This is particularly useful in encouraging library use amongst communities with very insular lifestyles who would never normally access library buildings and branches:

"One of our librarians goes out in to the community… we have a young women's project, young women with babies… he also goes to the Portuguese Centre, Youth Offenders… he goes to them but we don't always get those people coming in" (East of England FG)

"I sometimes think that more could be done to provide services for specific areas or communities. For instance we have a couple of estates that are quite deprived, and you know the people that live there never leave the estate and will therefore never use the library, even the local branch library which is mostly used by older regular readers. I think more could be done to take services out to those estates and reach them that way, but it always comes down to not having the time and the money to do that" (North West FG)

"… we've had a couple of schemes that operate on the… more deprived areas in [county]… and we've got these two schemes where staff do go out and conduct sessions there… rhymes and songs, stories with the children… they tell the mums and dads about library services… they make it as easy as we can for them to join and quite a lot of them do come in" (East of England FG)

Some authorities felt guilty of 'over-targeting' some user groups and of not liaising more with other service providers to ensure appropriate communication and engagement with particular communities. Linked to this perceived necessity to target particular groups and communities, respondents felt that a sense of perspective was being lost in terms of what can realistically be achieved in encouraging greater participation and increased library use amongst excluded groups, causing potential disenfranchisement from the inclusion agenda as a whole, particularly amongst frontline staff:

"…when you are working with communities, there are other people working with the same community groups and I sometimes wonder if they are being over-targeted… an example was a drop-in centre for refugees and asylum seekers… I was horrified by all these people coming in and asking the refugees questions about what their needs were… you could almost see them backing off from these people, who are there to help, but there's so many of them, they must be terrified. I think we have to be aware of that, about who exactly is contacting who, because there can be several agencies all at the same time contacting the same small group." (North East FG)

"You can only be socially inclusive of the people you can include, you can't force the issue, I think there's too much of that going on, too much attempting to force the issue" (North East FG)

As such, it has emerged that certain tensions exist between the provision of services within the inclusive agenda and more traditional or rather mainstreamed library services. Tension exists on a political level when library services are judged, by staff and customers, to be 'favouring' particular user groups over others. This can be interpreted as alienating the more traditional user, or as failing to meet the needs of other excluded groups by focusing on one particular area of development:

"They only differ in that there'll be a what might feel like a sudden and all encompassing focus on one group, but with respect to what we actually do, what we deliver, it isn't that different… some staff feel that we sometimes 'favour' media friendly [politically correct?] groups over our regular users, so there's potentially tension there but not in a major way" (South East FG)

"I've heard that a lot from library assistants when I've been going round my branches… they say that's all very well [SI provision] but what about our regular users who are also supposed to be supported… and in some cases we have had regular users leave in protest when we've had play groups in and things like that… and you know we do have to please everyone, and sometimes staff do feel compromised when a user says 'why have you got nine computers but not the book I need' (East Midlands FG)

"It's also the groups that you look to focus on… you could say we're focusing on groups with English as a second language… but there are lots of other groups out there that you don't always put first and they're still socially excluded… this can cause some frustration" (West Midlands FG)

As work with identified excluded or disadvantaged groups becomes increasingly disassociated with mainstream library services, certain logistical tensions are also emerging. Primarily these involve the allocation of staff time and resources: frontline staff in particular feel that they are being given 'additional' responsibilities, or that not enough time and resources are available to reach excluded groups effectively. The short-term project based approach to work in this area is encouraging this disassociation, along with the way in which access services such as mobile libraries are considered to be 'separate' from mainstream services with reference to performance targets and figures. Respondents recognised the need to reconsider the way in which mainstream services are delivered in order to realign the public library offer with outreach and inclusion objectives:

"There are tensions with regard to staff… already stretched staff having to do more… that's quite a big one" (Yorkshire FG)

"…it's not that we're against the policy it's almost that we're against management for not giving us the time to do it… there's people out there that we're not reaching and that is sad" (West Midlands FG)

"They don't seem particularly blended… to me it seems a bit like the icing on the cake sort of thing… they're the extras that come and go… they're not the same thing as the everyday people coming in, having books stamped… they're not interwoven as an everyday thing" (Yorkshire FG)

"… there's a bit of tension with the home service in that public libraries think we're stealing their borrowers… issues are such a major factor [issue statistics – performance measures]… sometimes I think there is a tension between access services and the main public libraries, as if we are separate from the mainstream as opposed to working alongside one another" (West Midlands FG)

"Sometimes I think that social inclusion is about changing the way we deliver services that we already have rather than throwing money at one-off full steam projects that then suddenly end, maybe working in partnership more with other agencies" (North West FG)

The tendency, however, to make assumptions about how mainstream library services need to change and adapt to meet the need of excluded groups is damaging the potential for sustained engagement of those groups, reinforcing the need for a genuine understanding of what is required:

"What does social inclusion boil down to when it comes to teenagers? Does it mean come on in, do what you like, put your feet up on tables… or does it mean come on in, very pleased to see you but please do it our way? It's very difficult" (East of England FG)

Reactive rather than proactive approaches are also sustaining this distinction between inclusive services and the day-to-day operations of public libraries, especially concerning the way in which services are seen to respond to new user groups, or to suddenly target particular communities. This increases the feeling of stress among staff:

"Do you think we're sometimes operating reactively rather than proactively…? Something happens and we have to react, rather than saying that something is going to happen and being prepared… Something I'm thinking of is that refugees and asylum seekers have only been in our area for say the past seven years, nationally it's been a lot longer, but when they did start to arrive and start to come to the library, we'd had absolutely no training, and as community development librarian I was literally learning as I went along, now we're seven years down the road and are more aware, but at the time we were literally learning on our feet" (North East FG)

Case study: Get into Reading Wirral Libraries
Brief description:
Partnership delivery; Reader development Get into Reading is a partnership between the University of Liverpool, Wirral Libraries and Wirral NHS Trust, funded from 2005 by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF), and forms part of the Merseyside Reading Communities (MRC) scheme. Reading groups meet weekly in libraries and community centres, giving people who might not normally think of joining a reading group a chance to enjoy stories and poems together. The aim of the project is to improve well-being, extend appreciation of literature and build communities, targeting hard-to-reach people across the Wirral region, and some of the most deprived areas of Merseyside. In a typical week, Get Into Reading will work with recovering drug abusers, elderly people in day centres, young homeless men, full-time carers, isolated young mums, and people with mental health or other chronic illnesses referred to the project by health professionals. Around 50 reading groups have currently been established across the region.
Funding:
Project funded by PHF. A grant from the Esme Fairburn Foundation funded the secondment of a Team Librarian to the project for one year (two days a week) to the project: continuation funding for this post (Libraries Co-ordinator) provided by Wirral Libraries from September 2007.
Target group:
The project targets traditionally disadvantaged and disaffected groups by using reading in a rehabilitation capacity, encouraging improved physical and emotional well-being through self-help initiatives.
Social impact:
The project is contributing to wider social agendas by helping to build stronger and safer communities, improving health and well-being and strengthening civic values and community life. With reference to the target group's engagement with reading and the library service, the project has encouraged increased visitor figures and engagement with reading activity in new ways, improved attitudes towards the service, and contributions towards the development of the service. On an individual basis, the project is proving to have a strong therapeutic and rehabilitative impact, with participants reporting reduced anxiety, decreases in visits to medical practitioners and medication levels, and much needed respite from pressures associated with illness, grief and caring responsibilities.
Personnel involved:
The Libraries Co-ordinator is a qualified librarian with 20 years experience in

public libraries, and previous experience of reader development, including the setting up and running of various reading groups in the Wirral region. Responsibility for reading groups has been delegated to other library staff as the project has progressed.

Impact on library staff:

Following initial formation of Get into Reading groups in various library branches by the appointed Libraries Co-ordinator, staff were trained to run and manage groups themselves. It is however a big time commitment and there are occasional staffing difficulties. Some staff were unwilling to become involved due to a lack of confidence, but this has been overcome in some cases via project training.

Those library staff who are actively involved have reported enhanced job satisfaction, particularly as they have developed new skills.

Ongoing training, Read to Lead, is delivered to library staff by the academic partner (Project Manager) on a monthly basis. The Libraries Co-ordinator and another colleague are now studying for the new MA award in Reading in Practice at the University of Liverpool.

Further information:

Contacts:
Project Manager: Dr Jane Davis jane.davis@liv.ac.uk
Assistant Project Manager: Kate McDonnell kate.mcdonnell@liv.ac.uk
Julie Barkway: Libraries co-ordinator juliebarkway@wirral-libraries.net

Project website:
http://www.getintoreading.org/index.php?pid=100

Project interim report published October 2006 available from:
http://www.getintoreading.org/uploads/docs/gir_report_oct06.pdf

Article published in The Guardian 5 January 2008:
http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,2235352,00.html?

6.2.3 Working practices: logistical issues in providing socially inclusive services

Certain working practices are being introduced in order to more clearly align mainstream services with social inclusion objectives. Specific posts have been created for example, such as Inclusion Officer and Outreach Development Worker, which help to visibly establish and personify policy objectives. The obvious benefits of such posts include having a sustained and familiar contact with community groups, an increased capacity to design and develop services, and the capacity to cascade training and awareness amongst all staff within authorities:

"my job is to be engaged with hard to reach groups, it was designed to establish contact with new communities, refugees, asylum seekers, EU nationals, travellers etc, and I had really carte blanch as to how I did that… so basically all the planning and design of services to those socially excluded groups were really down to me, of which, really I worked with partners and tried to get the actual groups involved themselves so that we actually started devising the services they wanted" (East Midlands FG)

"Well I have a library outreach worker who works with me and we do a lot of partnership working and then involve other staff… it's headed by myself and the outreach worker for the entire county, we plan and look at targeted groups… we deliver via library managers who would look at projects and decide what to do" (London FG)

Despite these benefits, respondents also noted certain negative aspects of creating these specific roles for the delivery of inclusive services. For example, it was felt that the responsibility for this area of work would thereby be delegated to one individual, thus encouraging other staff to abdicate responsibility and ownership. Community association with one individual member of staff would also add pressure to the relevant post-holder, perhaps limiting community engagement with the library service as a whole:

"…the feeling is that library staff feel 'oh god, not something else to do' as part of their daily duty, so in relation to social inclusion policy, at the moment they say that's my job [speakers: inclusion officer] but I'm trying to get across that it's everybody's job, which is difficult" (North East FG)

"In [county] we've got an equal access librarian and that is her job, to devise policies and work out ways of reaching socially excluded people… so she comes up with the ideas and they are cascaded down to us" (West Midlands FG)

"…we have senior community librarians that are dedicated to particular communities… it's now mainstreamed but we're working for libraries so we are doing everything that the librarians are doing, as well as all the outreach, going out to see all the groups, trying to get them to come in and then helping them when they do, because they're looking for you when they come in because you know you're their first point of contact" (East Midlands FG)

Logistically the lack of available resources, namely time and money, were consistently quoted as barriers to general staff engagement with the social inclusion agenda. This particularly affects authorities' capacity to deliver cohesive staff training and development in this area. Staff feel that the time is not available for them to engage new user groups as effectively as desired due to the pressure of day-to-day operational responsibilities, even those staff

in designated posts. Some excluded groups are considered to be more 'labour intensive' than others, and when working with skeletal staff structures and numbers, the quality of service given to these users can be seriously undermined, putting additional strain on frontline staff:

"With being on the front-line staff you are so horrendously busy that we haven't even got time to say 'yes we should be doing that, we need to be doing this'… training could be better, but the library would need to be closed for everyone to benefit" (North East FG)

"I think in general the inclination to do it is there, its kind of finance and staff training budget issues that are restricting you from doing it a lot better" (East Midlands FG)

"For me the main barriers to involvement and that's across the board is the time factor, because we're a small county, it sounds like a similar position to you, I'm a senior librarian for access and inclusion but I still have to do book selection, stock maintenance, enquiry desk… so I do all the team librarian bits as well but then I do all the outreach in the community, so I'm hands on… the outreach worker is the same… it's balancing all the core librarianship bits that you have to do, and that's the same with all the frontline staff" (London FG)

"Owing to pressures to staff frontline service points, not as much as used to be possible even a couple of years ago. Ideas and suggestions are encouraged, but often there aren't the resources of time or money to implement them… When things seem to be working out, and there is pressure to get on with the next project, there isn't time or enthusiasm to review older ones." (South West FG)

"I think it's a fair generalization to say that socially excluded groups are labour intensive in terms of the needs that they have for support, and our library is cutting back staff so in the long term they're reducing staff but looking to increase usage and provision for people who need more support… there's a major surge in socially excluded ESOL groups coming in to use the PCs, it takes an enormous amount of time and staff resources and the staff aren't really there to help them" (West Midlands FG)

"… we've been getting volunteers who speak specific languages to get involved and to be the contact for that group… although that didn't last very long because the money ran out, and then you go back to the beginning as usual" (West Midlands FG)

Other logistical issues such as inconsistent administrative policies are felt to be affecting the social inclusion offer from public libraries. For example, joining procedures vary from region to region, and even from authority to authority:

"…to get back to homeless groups, I think one of the biggest problems libraries have still got… although we've modified the joining procedures and made them so much simpler we still ask people for identification and we now put information straight on to the screen but I'm sure there are some people who still ask for signatures… so somebody who's maybe unlikely to access the service is those who can't read or write because you're walking in to places full of books and you're being asked to sign something… and if you're homeless the first thing we ask for is an address" (North East FG)

"With respect to no longer needing a proof of ID, our Head of Service just made the complete decision to put the person before the stock" (East Midlands FG)

Working practices related to projects and temporary fixed-term contracts are also felt to present problems when trying to develop sustained relationships with communities, particularly when funding ends and services and initiatives

cannot be continued. Temporary employment creates issues with staff training and development and, perhaps even more damaging within this context, respondents feel that they are losing 'good' staff members through an inability to offer secure and sustained employment. It is felt that some examples of good practice and successful initiatives are too short-lived through incapacity to incorporate project-based work within mainstream services:

"It's difficult to mainstream outreach services when the funding ends and specific partnerships or jobs [secondment/project workers] cannot be sustained… I know that can cause frustration, particularly when you just feel that you're getting somewhere with that particular group… Rome wasn't built in a day and it can take time when working with particular groups" (South East FG)

"…that's another issue with people on short-term contracts or part-time contracts… because they will think well why do I need to know what's happening with policies for asylum seekers and refugees when I'm just standing here for eight hours a week" (East Midlands FG)

"Short term funding and fixed term contracts are an issue… good staff disappear" (London FG)

"It can be a little depressing when big amounts of money, staff time, enthusiasm and energy are thrown at projects or ideas with a very short lifespan. More attention should be given to adapting the mainstream service, or more money allocated to mainstreaming projects that have been proven to be successful" (North West FG)

The ways in which inclusive services are delivered are also believed to affect their potential impact and value. Again the issue of assuming what users want is raised, with some staff uncomfortable with the concept of making value judgements based on stereotypical ideas of certain communities. Marketing services and initiatives to excluded groups is considered to be especially difficult, with too many 'standard methods' being used that are inappropriate and subsequently ineffective. Overcoming the assumptions of the general public regarding the role and purpose of libraries is also a problem. All of these issues can only be overcome by more consultation and engagement with the public and communities, but this again is hindered by a lack of time and resources to do so:

"…how do we identify them? It's still very hard with some socially excluded groups to know what is what, and to not upset people or come across as quite patronising… when we've discovered how to do that a whole new universe will open up to us" (West Midlands FG)

"…the problem we have is how do we contact these groups… the groups that are properly excluded and not coming in, we're not going to target them with a poster in the library… which they might not actually be able to read anyway… its madness, you know, how on earth do you get the right people in? Like you said, we've had a lot of takers [for emergent reader campaigns], but these are people that have been taking out a lot of books, they can already read" (Yorkshire FG)

"… we want to tell people about our services, particularly those who have poor literacy skills, so what do we do? We put a poster up in the library!" (East of England FG)

"Sometimes though the problem is how to market ourselves… we're there for socially excluded groups in the main, but how you market yourself to people that are socially excluded, we're finding a real struggle… especially when you're so short on staff, finding

someone to market, even when you've got the ideas… just give us an old kitchen roll tube and sticky back plastic because we're library staff" (West Midlands FG)

"Sometimes I think we give out the wrong message about who we're for… adults will think we're for children, children will think we're for adults, families think we're for elderly people… we need to get that message across that we're for everybody but it's difficult" (West Midlands FG)

Case study: Community Outreach in Essex
Essex County Council
Including Essex Libraries' service for traveller sites:
winner of *Libraries Change Lives Award* 2004

Brief description:

Mainstreamed services; target groups; outreach

Essex libraries have developed a new corporate strategy based on a more outward looking community focus, in response to declining numbers in library use and linked to Framework for the Future recommendations. Strategic elements include changes to staffing structures, recruitment, and training and development policies.

The new post of Service Development Officer was created (team of 5) along with specialist teams including:

- Reader development
- Services to children
- Community and civic values

The 'community and civic values' team has a strong social inclusion and integration remit, bringing together staff with different skills and professional experiences, including education and marketing backgrounds. The team works with targeted excluded groups and has a 'pathfinder' philosophy, encouraging innovation in the delivery of services to traditionally excluded communities, opening up choices and challenging colleagues within the library itself. Works on the principle that enthusiastic staff will generate enthusiasm in potential new user groups, which is also dependent upon building trust with the target group and offering flexible services.

A specific example of good practice in the county is the libraries' service to traveller sites.

Duration:

Restructure implemented in 2005, bringing changes to all mainstreamed services.

Service to traveller sites initiated in 2000 following an informal approach from Essex's Traveller Education Service (TES), who continue to work with mobile library staff providing on-site support. Site visits began in 2001.

Funding:

A successful bid to the Children's Fund Essex (for 5-13 age group) in 2002 has enabled the sustained delivery of services to traveller sites, including the appointment of a co-ordinator and extension of the service to more sites and relevant schools**.**

Target group:

Along with specific services for traveller communities, the 'community and civic values' team also target specific groups and communities. Projects include work with young (under sixteen), disengaged teenage mums in Chelmsford, delivered in partnership with the Connexions service, who conduct parenting skills classes in libraries. The project is integrated with Bookstart to encourage continued library use amongst this group.

Personnel involved:

New mainstream post and team creation described above. Service Development Officers are expected to have the following four key competencies:

- Personal effectiveness and self development
- Interpersonal skills
- Customer/client orientation
- Working in partnership

Original mobile library staff were given 'cultural awareness' training sessions from TES before delivering services to traveller sites. The mobile service also works extensively with other external partners including Surestart and Gypsy Services team.

Impact on library staff:

The restructure has meant increased delineation between enquiry (on site) and outreach roles, i.e. separate teams for each, including staff in libraries and staff in the community. Staff are therefore not expected to do both, facilitating more effective recruitment and training methods, and reduced role strain amongst employees.

Further information:

Published articles:
Refocusing traditional roles: the Essex approach. Michelle Jones, CILIP Library + Information Update, Vol. 4, No. 10, October 2005, pp. 36-38.

Breaking the cycle of poor literacy: Essex County Libraries' service to traveller sites. Nicola Baker, CILIP Library + Information Update, Vol. 3, No. 10, October 2004, pp. 38-39.

Contacts:
Anne Brimlow, Social Inclusion and Access Manager
Anne.brimlow@essexcc.gov.uk

6.2.4 Socially inclusive services, professional skills and identity

Issues concerning the ways in which services are marketed and delivered to excluded groups raises questions regarding appropriate staff skills and experience. The job vacancy profiling exercise[9] has revealed varied approaches to recruitment for social inclusion and community-based vacancies. During the 24 month period of the study (January 2006 to December 2007) a total of 37 relevant vacancies were advertised in the CILIP Library + Information Gazette. Cumulatively, 197 skills and attributes were specified within and across the advertised vacancies. These have been categorised as such:

- Library specific - knowledge or experience explicitly/specifically linked to library work and the requisite skills
- Social inclusion/community based - such as prior experience of working in a community setting, or of working with socially excluded groups
- Interpersonal - such as communication skills, or behavioural skills linked to personality traits
- Generic - generic skills and attributes that could be associated with a wide range of posts and sectors, e.g. time management, organizational skills, creativity etc

Of the 197 specified skills and attributes, 99 (50%) have been categorized as 'generic', including customer care skills, ICT skills and previous experience of managing staff. 58 (29%) are 'interpersonal' skills, such as communication skills, enthusiasm and having an 'outgoing' personality. Library specific and social inclusion or community based skills were therefore the least requested, with the former accounting for 15% of the total, and the latter 6%. Of the 37 vacancies, 17 (46%) specified that candidates should have an accredited library and information management qualification (i.e. be of professional status).

Focus group and interview respondents were asked to name the skills required to deliver socially inclusive services: invariably responses included similar generic and transferable skills involving communication, creativity and problem solving, and interpersonal traits and characteristics such as patience, enthusiasm and friendliness. Interestingly, given our observations on levels of policy awareness, an understanding of the social inclusion political agenda was also considered to be essential:

> "In no particular order: open mindedness, flexibility, lateral thinking, ability to network, partnership working, interest in languages and communication, knowledge of relevant legislation, statutory requirements, case law, ability to educate & train staff (& users), marketing skills, understanding of demographics & statistics, persistence." (South West FG)

> "Sensitivity, flexibility, awareness, understanding of the culture, problems, difficulties faced by the group, training and reinforcement, the support of a caring organization, ability to take action or make decisions to ensure that the person's needs are fully met" (West Midlands: Head of Service)

[9] For a full summary of the vacancy profiling study, please see Appendix 6

"Communication… listening skills… awareness of social policy" (North West: Head of Service)

The skills required to deliver socially inclusive services were described as advanced customer care skills, and there was an assumption that all library staff should and do possess these skills, irrespective of their community role:

"…its hard to get staff with all the skills that you might require, it's difficult to get the language skills for example, but you need someone with the ability to deal with people with developing English language skills, and some cultural and even religious background knowledge… ultimately its customer care skills with add ons that you need, because I think most people would accept that if they're coming in to a service they won't necessarily have access to somebody that can speak their language, just somebody who is *sympathetic* and willing to help them" (East Midlands FG)

"To be approachable, compassionate, friendly but professional, which I think library staff are. You wouldn't put yourself out there to work with the public otherwise. You have to be" (North West FG)

However, when discussing work with traditionally excluded groups and communities, it became apparent that a little more than advanced customer care skills may be required, and that not all (existing) library staff considered themselves to be suitably trained or qualified for the role. This was particularly evident during conversations about working with children from disadvantaged areas, or disaffected young people, which encourages indifference from staff and other library users towards this group, and in more serious cases towards the social inclusion agenda as a whole:

"We have had a massive problem with children in one particular branch library… all I hear is 'oh we had to get the police last night… this happened on Monday… this happened on Tuesday'… Thursday was my late night last week there and I didn't have a problem, we didn't have many kids in, maybe there was something else going on in the area I don't know but I must admit, when I left on Monday I did have to call the street wardens [community support officers] in because they were just horrendous" (North East FG)

"… after a couple of bad experiences with young people recently… after last Saturday I was ready to come in here and tell you exactly what I thought of social inclusion… but I've come down to earth a little bit since then" (East of England FG)

"We've just opened another teenage library [14-19] and again that was about managing change… bean bags!... and you know it comes round again and again… now that had to be managed in terms of acceptance from the rest of the staff and the rest of the customers… we had to tell some customers to come in at two in the afternoon when they [young people] wouldn't be there" (London FG)

Fortunately, respondents also gave positive accounts of working with young people[10]:

"We've got a new library in one of the most troubled housing estates in [locality]… they've set up a homework group with a lot of the problem children and that's been hugely successful… it's a new building, they feel as if they own it, it's their library whereas the old one wasn't" (West Midlands FG)

[10] See Studio12 and InformU case study profiles for specific examples of successful work with children and young people

With reference to working with other groups, there is considerable evidence of role strain and conflict within our discussions when referring to working with other groups. Social problems linked to exclusion such as mental health issues, drug abuse and alcoholism are causing concern for public library staff, who do not feel qualified to respond appropriately, or feel that it is not necessarily their responsibility to do so:

"… we're all aware of physical disabilities but mental health issues cause us problems because we're not trained for that… some of the people that we go to see you can be quite frightened by them and you're in their home… but we have to get on with it, otherwise they wouldn't have a library service, tomorrow they'll be OK with you again" (West Midlands FG)

"It's not considered by management… we're now open on Sundays with skeleton staff, just four library staff and no caretaker… we said what happens if we get a drunk, because normally you'd get the caretaker to deal with them… 'oh well perhaps if two of you tackle them'… and I thought oh great, two middle aged ladies can tackle a drunk, super, thanks very much" (West Midlands FG)

"There is a question to what extent is it our job? I mean yes, we're working in a public service you're going to get a bit of that, but you're not a youth worker, you're not a social worker, so down which road do you go?" (North East FG)

Despite feeling that certain aspects of the social inclusion remit are not necessarily 'their job', respondents recognised that the changing culture and role of public libraries will mean more of this type of work in the future, as a direct result of changing demographics amongst library users, and service developments causing job re-evaluation. It was noted that increased outreach and community roles will be necessary in order to justify continued staff numbers and employment:

"…the excluded groups may form a huge part of our membership in the future because people who traditionally came to libraries in the past, they're buying books, you know? It's quite easy to go in to Waterstone's and buy a book, they're nice and new as well… and they're the people who are disappearing from libraries to be replaced by asylum seekers and the homeless, people see it as a community centre" (North East FG)

"…in the future this is going to be more and more what they're going to have to do with getting self-issue in and that kind of thing in [authority], so we have to justify the number of staff we have. If we want to keep the same number of staff then we have to be more proactive about getting out there and getting in touch with the community ourselves as opposed to waiting in our library for them to come to us. So that's hopefully the future perspective of what the front-line staff are going to be doing, much more community work and running services like that" (London FG)

Workshop participants observed that social inclusion objectives are too easily regarded as an obligation rather than as a 'good idea' or positive social agenda. It was felt that, in accordance with the above comments about future library service development and in order to improve levels of engagement amongst staff, inclusion and diversity issues should be 'sold' as a positive business development approach in terms of thinking about library users of the future and potentially increasing footfall and borrowing statistics.

This presents issues for library authorities and their existing staff concerning change management (discussed further in chapter 6.3 'Staff attitudes and

engagement'). There is seemingly a difference between 'older' and 'younger' staff members in their propensity to adapt to change, or retreat to 'comfort zones'. This presents the theory that, within the empathy dynamic, some people have a natural aptitude to relate to communities and groups, which can't necessarily be defined as a set of skills, or be achieved via training and development:

"…the older front line staff members will stay in their comfort zones, but I don't know if this is through choice or necessity… whether they think it's not their place, or whether they don't want it to be their place" (South East FG)

"… our younger staff just seem to be so much more pragmatic in approaching certain situations [with excluded groups]… they know what modern life is like, their from the community, they went to school with some of our young parents… they have a much better handle on things" (East Of England: Library and Customer Services Manager)

"So much depends on individual staff though doesn't it… we've got a branch in [locality] which is a deprived area with a lot of unemployment, drug abuse, yada yada yada… and they have a lot of problems with people coming in, trashing the library and one staff member after another there has gone off on sick leave with stress… and the only one that's there now, she's very sparkly, she's very bright… she's like the character in Shameless, I can't remember her name [Fiona]… but Lucy is just the type who will say to those young people 'right settle down and get on with what you want to do if you want to stay'… she can relate to them, she's got that gift, and if we lost her we'd be back to people going off with stress every six months" (North East FG)

With reference to the perceived problems with children and young people, perhaps understandably, younger staff seem more able to engage with them on an empathic level:

"… in the evenings we tend to get quite a lot of trouble with younger teenagers, because we're assuming they have nowhere else to go and they get bored and agitated…generally a lot of them come round eventually because we have a lot of younger staff in this particular library, to the point where they probably don't respect you as such but they can identify with you because you're being friendly and on their terms, first name terms, things like that" (East of England FG)

With respect to role strain and the subsequent training/experience dilemma, respondents were extremely appreciative and respectful of the benefits gained from working with other agencies and drawing upon the skills of other sectors working in the social inclusion arena. Sectors mentioned in this context include the youth service, adult education, police and probationary services, the Red Cross, health workers and family learning practitioners. The success of partnership-based approaches encourages a new perspective and provides the required balance between existing provision and what can be realistically achieved by public libraries:

"I suppose sometimes the staff are not trained to do that kind of work. I was in a library in Scotland where they actually brought in a youth worker because of the troubles they had with young people and that helped the library staff to do their job but also to help with that problem, and then once that was resolved she was able to step back, because she had those skills… so I suppose it's just somewhere between training and inclination and how far you think you can go" (North East FG)

"There's some work going on with young refugee women with children, and young disadvantaged teenage mums… reading groups with the little ones trying to get mums to use

the library… we have health visitor sessions in the library and that's how we get them in, and we're also working with the police… the youth service and young offenders team" (East Midlands FG)

"We're doing quite a bit of work with travellers which is a result of having a restructuring in the county council, so we're working much more closely with adult education and family learning service… we've just had a very successful project in [locality], a boxing project where we had the young men in researching their boxing which is apparently a huge thing for that community… they produced a book and were really excited about it… that's resulted in more site visits across the county, and after school groups with traveller children using the IT suite… we're hoping to really achieve something with them" (East of England FG)

"…we've got a pretty good idea from working with partners, because if you can get your partners to understand library and information services to the point where they can actually make a logical link… because we've got the red cross, refugee action, adult education… all working together with us" (East Midlands FG)

Other successful examples of partnership working with external agencies include the Surestart initiative, which helps to effectively target traditionally hard-to-reach groups. Cross-sectoral and inter-library working has also proved to be beneficial in providing joined-up thinking and seamless library provision:

"I do a lot of work with Surestart and we have very similar objectives to meet, so it's an extremely useful partnership for us and a good way to reach hard to reach groups" (North West FG)

"I'm trying to get local authorities to agree to sign prisoners up to libraries before they leave prison… the reason being that they do actually become library users in prison, maybe for the first time… and we don't want to lose that… but once they leave they tend to leave it all behind them, so I want them to go out with a library card and a leaflet in their hands, and maybe an appointment with a learning buddy… marrying it up is the bit with family learning, trying to educate them to take their kids to the library and tell them what goes on there. I think bringing those two things together could bring in that group of library users that haven't been in before, I hope so anyway" (North East FG)

"…working as a consortium [on WTYL] has been really informative, and finding out what other authorities have been doing has been really good" (North East FG)

Working with specialist partners, other sectors and perhaps more significantly *volunteers* also helps to establish a 'common core' between library services, staff and users, and provide effective examples of genuine empathy in practice, which help to overcome cultural gaps between established library staff and community groups. Gaining the help of community volunteers for example helps to overcome issues surrounding trust and language barriers, and working in partnership with other agencies provides transitional benefits for users:

"…Mesa [youth volunteer] helped us with BME women's groups and having her along with me when we had coffee mornings and stuff, just so she could be an extra person to chat to the women… we had an interpreter who came with us but it was nice to have a member of library staff who could chat to the group" (North East FG)

"It also benefits the community when people come in and see different people working there… its easier for them if they don't speak English, or are refugees themselves, its easier for them to see other people and think OK, they're not white, or traditionally white English" (East Midlands FG)

"We had another guy from prison… he pitched up at membership and put down his address as Bedford prison… the girl on membership slightly panicked… we have instant tickets where you don't need any proof of ID, so she rang me in the office… I rang the prison, he'd been discharged, we gave him his instant ticket, put him on the internet and he did a search for accommodation that night. What better socially inclusive library service can you have? But the message had been got there because we have a prison library, and when I spoke to my colleague there she had done all the work, done all the selling that the library service is a good place to go" (London FG)

Respondents also commented on the operational benefits to the service of working with community volunteers, particularly from language and collection development perspectives:

"It helps to work with the communities themselves… we've been very fortunate in having some of Chinese community members catalogue our Chinese collection in English and Mandarin, so things like that help enormously" (East of England FG)

"…at the moment we've got a Polish volunteer at central and she's really starting to sort things out, looking at the stock. It's interesting in [authority] because we've got the older post-war Polish community and then there is this quite big gap before a new Polish community, which is creating some really interesting dynamics. Part of the benefits of working with communities themselves and volunteers is not just to get them working on assistant duties but actually looking at the service critically and looking at our stock, making suggestions and making sure they improve and develop" (East Midlands FG)

Staff themselves can benefit enormously from working alongside community volunteers in terms of learning about different cultures and overcoming any prejudices or uncertainties that may exist. One respondent in the East Midlands region commented on the interpersonal benefits for staff of working with refugee volunteers as part of the Welcome to Your Library project:

"And to hear especially the stories of refugees and asylum seekers [from WTYL volunteers]… for staff it really broke down a lot of those, not prejudices but the fact that they [library staff] didn't really know what the difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker was, or what the processes they went through was, or their experiences in getting to that point… so a real major important area was for the staff really with people interacting, and in terms of the service that's really benefited us, for communicating with people" (East Midlands FG)

Within the social inclusion context, this presents some interesting questions for public library authorities about established structures and practices within the profession, particularly with regards to professional qualifications, recruitment strategies and the traditional concept of the librarian. Respondents were asked to discuss the relevance of the traditional professional/non-professional structure for the twenty-first century public library. It would appear that authorities have different policies regarding the professional bar and appointment of qualified librarians for specific posts. It was felt in many cases that there had been a gradual flattening of the traditional professional hierarchy, and a considerable amount of work assimilation has already occurred in the mainstream service:

"…that hierarchical distinction doesn't really exist in [authority] any more, it did once upon a time, a lot of people are doing jobs, non-qualified staff, that a few years ago would only ever have been done by qualified staff" (North East FG)

"From the opposite side of the coin, we don't have that many library assistants around either so you know it's all very well saying 'this is not my job, I'm not doing that, that's not a professional task', but if you don't do it then it ain't going to get done" (North East FG)

Some respondents defended quite strongly the position of the professional librarian, and their relevance to the contemporary public library service. Arguments 'for' included a need for professional standards and accountability; the needs for specific training with regards to senior service management, finance, marketing and traditional skills such as subject knowledge, stock selection and cataloguing; the professional staff member's ability to do 'additional' work in the community when not responsible for manning service points etc:

"…we have to keep professional standards… I disagree with the move towards retail standards and the negative assumption that library work is easy… librarians are as qualified as doctors and should be recognised as such… as the remit of public libraries gets more and more challenging we need professional skills to deliver the best service" (South East FG)

"…internally promoted experienced non-professionals can get caught up in restructurings and end up struggling and out of their depth... How much better to have professionally designated roles for librarians, finance, marketing, training, senior managers and leaders so people have some professional training for what they are doing? Now that professional librarians rarely work on the front counters, the standard of service to the public has dropped hugely as the non professional staff struggle to answer detailed enquiries, and keep having to seek a professional librarian to help them. Specialist librarians have an essential body of knowledge, whether cataloguing, local history resources, children's literature, stock, indexing etc. It gives a far better service to the public for a qualified librarian to establish and run a service than for someone who has to make it up as they go along." (South West FG)

"I think to answer the question, there is still a place for professional staff. Also I mean speaking from my own point of view, the library assistants are tied to the branch, they don't go out in the community, because they're only employed for the time that they need to be in the branch, so any promotional work or outreach would be down to senior staff" (North East FG)

"I find the lack of appreciation that is becoming apparent in some authorities lately for the fact that professionals have committed themselves to the profession by qualifying very depressing." (South West FG)

How do the 'for' arguments relate to comments already made concerning the (arguably generic and interpersonal) skills and attributes needed to engage with communities, target the socially excluded and provide relevant services? Those in the 'against' camp argue that experience of working with communities is more relevant than professional training and qualifications:

"…in the old days we used to only have chartered librarians but now in the city they've taken off that as an essential, you can actually be a senior community librarian if you have experience of working with the communities and not necessarily a degree, so that barrier has gone and its opened it up to what experience people actually have when looking at is as a career… maybe they started off as library assistants and move on to become SLAs [Senior Library Assistants] and community librarians, and then senior community librarians" (East Midlands FG)

"There was a restructuring about 3 years ago and a ring-fenced librarian was given the new post of Social Inclusion Officer. Should that librarian leave, then a non librarian would probably be appointed, and at that time the job description & person specs would probably be amended to encourage a wider range of applicants." (South West FG)

"We have what we call as I say a library outreach worker… so her job now is very specific to undertake outreach all the time and it's not a requirement that she is a qualified librarian, so what we've said is that outreach and communication in the community [associated skills and experience] is a vital thing" (London FG)

Experience of working in other sectors was also considered to be more appropriate than a library qualification, particularly in sectors where identifying and responding to the needs of the customer are essential:

"I'm a senior librarian with no library background… I've only worked in the library service for two and a half years and I was managing bars and things like that before this… they wanted a degree in something and a certain amount of experience… from their position they had started to see that you can bring in skills from other areas and maybe even bring a whole new aspect to working in libraries" (London FG)

"…there are all sorts of skills that you get from other professions where there is a more direct or stronger link with customers, which isn't necessarily something that you can get from a management course either. To take on staff from the private sector who have had to make their business make money, they've had to listen to the customers that they're dealing with otherwise they go under, it's a different way of thinking" (London FG)

The flattening of traditional hierarchies and work assimilation is also causing tension within services concerning pay and status, questioning the organisational relevance of the professional bar. It is accepted that public library staff need a certain level of educational attainment, but given the continuously changing demands and expectations of the sector as a whole, the given role conflicts and increased benefits of partnership working, the usefulness of a prescribed course of study or training programme has been questioned:

"I think you have to respect the skills and experience of qualified librarians, but then again, I know that people are basically doing the same job for a lot less status or recognition and money. We're lucky in that we're a relatively small, mostly community based service and are never made to feel conscious of hierarchy and status, but it is a growing problem for some I know working in other services. It generates a lot of demotivation and low staff morale" (North West FG)

"When you say non-professional staff, with the experience they've got they know so much more and out-professionalize those higher up the food chain every time" (East of England FG)

"I think it's important to have literate, articulate, learned people who can appreciate the quality of the information they're providing on behalf of their customer… if someone is educated to degree level they should certainly be able to do that, irrespective of what the degree is in" (West Midlands FG)

"…who knows what a twenty-first century public library is really going to develop in to? Its really mutable at the moment and if they try to prescribe it with regards to training, some of it will be relevant but some won't… by the time I'd done my chartership training at [university], by the time I actually worked in a library, it didn't seem relevant to the job I got, so it makes you wonder… they should be looking at trends ahead rather than what used to be… you can do individual core modules on human resources and so on, but if you don't work in human resources they're not much use" (East Midlands FG)

Case study: Welcome to Your Library National *Winner of 2007 CILIP LiS Libraries Change Lives Award*
Brief description:
Targeted groups Building upon previous work achieved with this specific target group by Birmingham City Council, Kent County Council and the London Borough of Merton (winner of Libraries Change Lives Award in 2001), the Welcome to Your Library (WTYL) project aims to increase opportunities for active engagement and participation by refugees and asylum seekers in public library service planning and delivery. Methods for increased participation include 12-week work placements, facilitating skills development and community engagement for the individual, and the development of library services that are responsive to new community needs. Other methods include events, tours, reading groups, new stock collections, ICT taster sessions and outreach work.
Duration:
WTYL began on a pilot basis in 2003 in the five London Boroughs of Brent, Camden, Enfield, Merton and Newham, and was rolled out nationally in 2005 incorporating the London Borough of Hillingdon, Leicester, Liverpool, London Borough of Southwark and Tyne and Wear (the latter consisting of a consortium of five local authorities including Newcastle, Gateshead, North and South Tyneside and Sunderland).
Funding:
The project was originally developed through funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation[11] and is co-ordinated through the London Libraries Development Agency (LLDA).
Target group:
Refugees and asylum seekers, who account for approximately 8% (or more) of the population of some London Boroughs, including Somali, Roma, Congolese and Albanian speakers. The effective targeting of these groups can be difficult and needs sustained commitment, for example, if individuals are not granted asylum, they can disappear from the system. Success dependent upon effective community profiling.
Social impact:
The work placement schemes contribute to refugee integration objectives, a core component of participating authorities' inclusion strategies. Positive outcomes for those participating in the scheme include increased confidence, self-esteem and community engagement, skills development and subsequent employment.

[11] Through the Reading and Libraries Challenge Fund: http://www.phf.org.uk/landing.asp?id=90

Personnel involved:
Each participating library service has a part-time Welcome to Your Library Project Officer (equivalent 0.5FTE) and requires 'senior management commitment'. During the pilot phase in London, two Project Officers were recruited internally, with the remaining three coming from a range of different backgrounds and sectors.
Impact on library staff:
All staff within participating library services have received training to raise awareness of the key issues facing refugees and asylum seekers, and of the cultural background and values of emerging communities. Staff have been empowered with a sense of ownership of the project, especially where new joining procedures and administrative systems have been introduced. One of the key common findings of the project has been the importance of assessing the welcome that the target group receive both from library staff and environment. The single factor for determining long-term success of the initiative has been identified as 'changing organisational culture and attitudes and taking a dynamic approach where all staff are involved in engaging with external partners'. Anecdotal evidence from staff involved in Leicester and the Tyne and Wear consortium (focus group members) suggests that the initiative is having an extremely positive effect in developing staff's understanding of and compassion towards the target group involved, and in engaging users from such communities.
Further information:
Project website: http://www.welcometoyourlibrary.org.uk/ Libraries Change Lives Award website: http://www.cilip.org.uk/aboutcilip/medalsandawards/LibrariesChangeLives/finalists07.htm Project Contact: Helen Carpenter, WTYL Co-ordinator helen.carpenter@llda.org.uk Helen Carpenter has published the following article on the project: *Welcome to your library.* CILIP Library + Information Update, Vol. 3, No. 5, May 2004, pp. 40-41.

6.3 Staff attitudes and engagement – motivation and barriers

6.3.1 Exploring cognitive and intuitive empathy

Having established a baseline demographic data set for public library staff in England, and considered extensively the philosophical and practical implications of interpreting and applying national social policy at local government and service level, it is important to further explore the relationship between staff's own cultural identity and their capacity to empathise on both cognitive and intuitive levels.

Scores on the *Professional Empathy* measure included in the national survey suggest that the predominantly white middle-aged female survey sample, and the lack of diversity in cultural representation amongst staff, is not necessarily an issue. For example, looking at the responses to the five items originally proposed to the Simulated Empathy scale, the picture below emerges.

The five items of the original Simulated Empathy scale were:

SE1 When I watch a film, I find it difficult to put myself in the place of one or more of the characters (-)

SE2 In social situations, I make a conscious effort to understand the feelings and experiences of others

SE3 I get very involved with the feelings of a character in a novel

SE4 I feel obliged to express compassion for those suffering disadvantage and/or distress

SE5 It isn't important that other people consider me to be sensitive and responsive to their circumstances (-)

Summary of cumulative responses to SE scale

	SE1 (-)		SE2		SE3		SE4		SE5 (-)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	35	7.7	1	0.2	8	1.8	12	2.6	59	13
Disagree	300	66.2	9	2	62	13.7	194	42.8	288	63.6
Undecided	79	17.4	31	6.8	69	15.2	104	23	64	14.1
Agree	37	8.2	361	79.7	258	57	126	27.8	37	8.2
Strongly agree	2	0.4	51	11.3	56	12.4	17	3.8	5	1.1
MEAN SCORE	3.7		4.0		3.6		2.9		3.8	

Table 10

The Simulated Empathy scale has encouraged slightly lower responses to the Sympathetic Tendency[12] in measuring respondents' attitudes towards others and their perceptions of their own interpersonal skills. SE1 and SE3 explore respondents' responses to fictional and dramatic experiences in seeking to differentiate between genuine and simulated empathic behaviour. 66.2%

[12] For cumulative scores for each of the Professional Empathy scales please see Appendix 4

disagree and 7.7% strongly disagree with SE1 *'When I watch a film, I find it difficult to put myself in the place of one or more of the characters',* whilst 57% agree and 12.4% strongly agree with SE3 '*I get very involved with the feelings of a character in a novel'*, which suggests significant simulated empathy tendencies in non-interpersonal situations.

If we look at SE2 '*In social situations, I make a conscious effort to understand the feelings and experiences of others'* responses suggest that the majority of the sample are able to maintain simulated empathy skills in social interactions, as 79.7% agree and 11.3% strongly agree with this statement. The statement recognizes the 'conscious effort' associated with cognitive empathy rather than emotional intuitive responses, thus helping to reinforce the distinction between genuine and simulated empathy.

SE4 takes this a stage further with the statement '*I feel obliged to express compassion for those suffering disadvantage and/or distress'.* Respondents however score lower on this item (the lowest of the SE scale) with 42.8% disagreeing with the statement. Sympathetic Tendency scores illustrate a capacity to express compassion, so we can assume that respondents are rejecting the idea of feeling obligated to do so. ST5 '*It isn't important that other people consider me to be sensitive and responsive to their circumstances'* tests the role of image projection in simulated empathy, and again respondents score higher this time with 63.6% disagreeing and 13% strongly disagreeing.

Again, we can look at the five items originally under the heading of the Social Identity scale:

SI1 Community has no real value in modern society (-)

SI2 Individuals are responsible for their own successes, failures and position in life

SI3 Every citizen has the right to equal access and opportunity

SI4 Members of culturally diverse communities have a lot to offer one another

SI5 Thriving societies should not be expected to support those vulnerable and at risk from less secure environments (-)

Summary of cumulative responses to SI scale

	SI1 (-)		**SI2**		**SI3**		**SI4**		**SI5 (-)**	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	231	51	10	2.2	4	0.9	1	0.2	140	30.9
Disagree	186	41.1	163	36	4	0.9	5	1.1	244	53.9
Undecided	22	4.9	130	28.7	7	1.5	38	8.4	48	10.6
Agree	13	2.9	122	26.9	188	41.5	274	60.5	18	4
Strongly agree	1	0.2	28	6.2	250	55.2	135	29.8	3	0.7
MEAN SCORES	4.4		3.0		4.5		4.2		4.1	

Table 11

This scale was included to compare empathic and sympathetic tendencies against attitudes towards society, diversity and equality. When seeking to define professional empathy within a public service environment, particularly within the context of social inclusion policy, it was considered appropriate to include an exploration of attitudes towards society in general. The SI scale has encouraged the highest scores of the Professional Empathy measure, demonstrating a significant social conscience amongst the sample.

51% strongly disagree with SI1 '*Community has no real value in modern society',* and a further 41.1% disagree with this statement. Similarly a significant number (55.2%) strongly agree with SI3 '*Every citizen has the right to equal access and opportunity',* with 41.5% of respondents agreeing. The only relatively contested item on the SI scale is SI 2 *'Individuals are responsible for their own successes, failures and position in life'.* It was decided to include this item as a positive statement within the SI measure, as social inclusion policy is concerned with empowering individuals within traditionally disadvantaged groups. As 36% of respondents have chosen to disagree with this statement within an otherwise highly scored scale, it may have been interpreted more negatively by the sample. This is again evidenced by the relatively high proportion of respondents (28.7%) who remained 'undecided'.

In order to see if there were significant differences in Professional Empathy between subgroups in the sample, a range of statistical tests were undertaken. For these tests, we selected only the three reliable scales (Simulated Empathy, Social Identity, and Service Values).

- Gender - An independent samples t-test indicated that there were significant differences between male and female responses to 2 of the 3 scales, i.e. service values and simulated empathy (but not social identity), with female respondents scoring higher than male respondents.

- Age – A Spearman's nonparametric rank correlation test indicated that older respondents were significantly less likely than younger respondents to show simulated empathy.

- CILIP membership – An independent samples t-test showed that CILIP members were significantly more likely to score higher on the social identity scale than non-members (CILIP members mean score = 4.36, non-CILIP members = 4.23).

- Length of time in service - Correlation tests indicated that respondents with longer tenure or who were older were significantly less likely to show simulated empathy. Partial correlations controlling for either tenure or age revealed that age was the most important factor out of the two i.e. it does not matter how long you have been in employment, it is how old you are.

- Role in organization - We recoded our sample into 3 groups (Frontline (136) versus Team Leader / Middle Management (222) versus Senior Management / Head of Service (61) and one-way ANOVA analysis (n= 419) showed:
    - Senior Management /HOS score significantly higher than the Frontline staff on social identity.
    - Senior Management /HOS score significantly higher than the Frontline staff on service values.
    - There were no significant differences on simulated empathy.

- Ethnic group - We recoded our sample into two groups – White British (90% of sample) versus Non-white (10%) of sample. T-test showed no difference between the two groups on the four scales. This is probably not particularly indicative as the non-White sample is so small.

- Educational denomination - T-tests showed no significant difference on the three scales between those who went to a culturally homogeneous school (77%) with those who went to a culturally diverse school (17%). The majority of the sample did not experience diversity at school but this may be because most of the sample were middle-aged and hence forty or so years ago, the population would not have been as diverse as today.

In a discussion on the merits of cognitive versus intuitive empathy, some workshop participants in general did not think it necessary that public library staff demonstrate intuitive empathy, and believed that cognitive empathy skills would be sufficient and appropriate within a professional service context. In fact, one participant spoke of the potential dangers of intuitive empathy, in that staff may refer back to their own experiences rather than offer an objective and supportive service. They believed that the most important skill in this context is ‘concerned detachment’ and used a doctor’s ‘bedside manner’ analogy. This suggests that, along with survey respondents’ apparent cognitive empathic tendencies, library staffs’ own social and cultural experiences and identity may (or rather *should*) be of little relevance and significance within the service culture in which they work.

Case study: Right to Read National
Brief description:
Targeted groups; Children and young people; Partnership delivery A scheme set up and funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation in 2001 to improve access to books and reading for looked-after children and young people, becoming part of the foundation's Reading and Libraries Challenge Fund (up until April 2006). Right to Read has funded The Network to produce training materials that support library staff in developing services for looked-after children. Between 2001 and 2006, a total of 37 relevant projects had been supported by the Foundation nationally.
Target group:
Looked after children and young people i.e. young people in care, including their carers.
Social impact:
The aim of the project was to make books and reading part of the everyday lives of young people in care so that they can benefit from creative reading. Evaluation findings suggest that there is evidence of impact relating to the importance of books and reading to looked after children's quality of life, both in developing their own interest and involvement in reading and literacy, and raising awareness within the care system. Increased confidence and self esteem amongst the children and their carers has been a significant outcome.
Personnel involved:
The Foundation has prioritised projects involving partnerships between libraries, social services and local education authorities, which facilitate systematic change in the reading habits and needs of the target group. The provision of appropriate training for all key staff is integral to the management and delivery of the scheme. Evaluation has revealed that the stronger the partnership, the more likely individual projects were to succeed and overcome arising barriers, including respect for, and learning from, one another's respective expertise.
Impact on library staff:
All projects commented on the need to change negative attitudes of library staff before progress could be made, which tailored training has in some part helped to address. This is a particular concern, as the success of the project has depended upon significant changes to traditional library procedures, including joining requirements and administrative functions, removing barriers such as fines and charges, and making library environments accessible and welcoming. One-to-one contact has proven to be the most effective way of working with the target groups, which requires commitment and dedication from relevant staff.

The Right to Read training materials have been designed to improve awareness and understanding, and provide guidance of effective service delivery, including:

- Facts and figures on looked-after children
- Range of possible tailored library services
- Library and information needs of carers
- Recommendations for successful partnership working

Further information:

Evaluation summary available from:
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/educationprotects/upload/ACF83F3.doc

Project website:
http://www.phf.org.uk/page.asp?id=148

On-line support for Reading and Libraries Challenge Fund projects provided by The National Literacy Trust:
www.readon.org.uk/phffund/

Training materials available from The Network:
www.seapn.org.uk/phf.html

Discussed in article by John Vincent (of The Network):
Working with looked after children. Public Library Journal (PLJ), Vol. 20, No. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 15-17.

6.3.2 Public libraries as inclusive organisations: practising what we preach?

Within this context, it is important therefore to consider the service and organisational culture of public libraries, and the impact of staff's working environment upon their perceptions of and attitudes towards the social inclusion agenda. The main consideration for the research was to test the hypothesis that an inclusive organisational culture would encourage and facilitate an inclusive service. This proposed theory was explored extensively during focus group sessions.

Our discussions have revealed that there is still a hierarchical system in place across the regions, particularly with respect to approaching social inclusion and the design of relevant services. Front-line staff in particular feel that there is poor communication and consultation, which encourages a lack of front-line confidence in presenting ideas and being proactive. Respondents spoke of a certain 'brick wall syndrome' linked to the bureaucratic structures outlined in the 'Social inclusion practice' chapter (6.2); ideas become lost in committee systems causing staff to become disillusioned:

"Picking up on the point of being proactive… often it's the case that people are proactive but then they're stopped from going too far… they're brought back in to line with what management wants" (North East FG)

"It's true that there is a lack of commitment, ideas and action from front-line staff, but on one hand people think, 'well what's the point? You can voice things but they have to be a voiced to a system that is receptive to the voice, otherwise…" (Yorkshire FG)

"I feel that we're not particularly encouraged to come up with ideas… I remember a few years ago suggesting that because the facilities in central library are quite poor for people with visual impairments… I suggested approaching an organisation that could help to assess us… and an acknowledgement of my email was as far as that went" (West Midlands FG)

The maintenance and prevalence of hierarchical structures is preserving on some level a 'them and us' culture within public libraries, which is perhaps a little depressing for a twenty-first century public service:

"There's a lot of good intention there from front-line staff…some fall short of that intention but I think that's inevitable… I think some members of front-line staff suffer from feelings of inadequacy partly because of this top down mentality and a lack of involvement" (Yorkshire FG)

"You can put ideas forward for certain things and very occasionally an idea will be taken forward by the management team and discussed there, and you might even be invited to present it but there is a kind of communication gulf between the people actually delivering the service and the managers who stay in their offices… which might be a central library thing, because there are so many people, and senior managers are not involved in the delivery of services in any way at all…" (West Midlands FG)

"We went to the Framework [for the Future] training and people were saying 'yeah but we're understaffed, we don't have the basics'… and the answer was 'oh yes but my job is hard as a manger too'… but you [managers] get the acknowledgement, and you get it financially too… And it's good that the job is challenging, but we need more than the occasional pat on the back, we need to be part of the development of the library… and to get paid more of course!" (Yorkshire FG)

Senior Managers upheld the view that responsibility and ownership of service design and evaluation is predominantly held by management teams:

"Currently the planning of services is the responsibility of library managers under the direction of the libraries management team… all staff are involved in the delivery of these services… lead managers are responsible for evaluating and reposting to the management team" (West Midlands: Head of Service)

The lack of inclusion and consultation was a real issue for respondents. This is especially true for front-line staff, and the apparent contradiction within their roles mentioned previously. Some felt that their knowledge of library users and communities in providing day-to-day services was not fully taken advantage of, and not adequately translated into policy and service design:

"Do management listen enough to staff working on the front-line hearing the complaints and the moans of the people that come in? I think we tend to compose solutions that are meant to be community-led, but I don't see much evidence of that, we decide to have a reading group to attract a certain type of people rather than them coming to us and saying they want a reading group. I don't feel like the staff on the front-line are listened to when they say 'Mr so and so said such and such', these people aren't vociferous enough to fill in forms which seems to be the only way to get management's attention. Paperwork, paperwork, paperwork!" (North East FG)

"… sometimes we will approach particular groups of front-line staff if we're in the planning stage of something to see what their take on it might be, particularly if its something that will be based in a certain area… but I fear there are probably a lot of projects that come from higher up and don't get the I suppose multi-layered input" (East of England FG)

"I'm not sure results of the evaluation are communicated either, so you might deliver the service but you've no idea where it came from or what's happened to it afterwards!" (East of England FG)

"Where is that structure for consulting front-line staff… It's just 'today this happens' and you don't know where it's come from, yet we're the people the customers see… According to them we're responsible for everything little thing that goes on… But at the end of the day I have agreed to work for the public library and I am agreeing to these policies by proxy, and that's were the frustration comes in. Once I've signed the contract I become the face of these policies, but then I think, 'hold on a minute, nobody asked me'" (Yorkshire FG)

Some 'top-down' instructions and guidelines relating to social inclusion objectives were perceived to be condescending and contradictory:

"…a lot of people feel like "well I've always done that", and the now the manager says you have to look out for this, that and the other… it's patronising and can get a bit too much" (Yorkshire FG)

"…and I can't stand the culture of the mystery shopper… that really makes me not want to give a shit, saying it as it is… it's like your teacher or mum checking on you… I feel like you're not trusted as adults with common sense" (Yorkshire FG)

Staff once again recognised themselves that being, or rather feeling, more included would be beneficial to the service, something that was similarly acknowledged by workshop participants, who believed that staff empowerment would result in increased engagement and productivity, and

that resources are being wasted if front-line staff do not understand the rationale behind policy decisions.

"It's like the perfect customer service mission, you'll only have good customer service if you've got happy enthusiastic staff. The *right* staff. Social inclusion comes from a happy environment… social inclusion also means including us!" (Yorkshire FG)

Authorities in the East Midlands region gave examples of good practice regarding inclusive training, communication and support systems for frontline staff, including briefing sessions, the provision of thorough background information and support in relation to project work, staff conferences and the recognition of the value of continued and consistent communication and inclusion:

"… I'm particularly keen to have more briefings in to things where actual front-line actions are influenced by key policy drivers, because I think once people actually know, people can actually relate to it a lot more and things start to make a lot more sense." (East Midlands FG)

"I was actually amazed when we were running our project last year to get refugee volunteers in to get work experience in the library… we had 23 volunteers across the year and the staff were all really supportive to the extent whereby the evaluators of the project were saying 'but surely you've had problems with your staff doing this' and I said well no not really, the only real concern they had was that we were exploiting people to get free labour… once we'd actually explained why they needed the work experience it was fine, but again with that there was quite a lot of information provided… we made sure they knew what the background to the project was" (East Midlands FG)

"We started doing last year, and I think they're doing it again this year, we've started having a one day conference… they had staff from everywhere, library assistants, managers, community workers… and they get speakers in… everybody is allowed to talk and discuss things, which was very successful, and its certainly helped the library assistants" (East Midlands FG)

"Even talking about it like this is good because we are seeing that problems are solvable… it's the communication that's important down and up… if people know why they're doing it, and management know how its been for them and get feedback, then things can only improve" (East Midlands FG)

The conditions of frontline employment in public libraries are encouraging increased apathy and dissatisfaction amongst this group of staff, and a reluctance to engage in what are perceived as 'higher level' policy-related roles and responsibilities. Relevant factors include low levels of pay, status and recognition:

"We're talking about front-line staff on low pay scales, should they be expected to know the ins and outs of absolutely everything… expected to know more than the managers… well pay them more. That's what comes across from people that I talk to. All these different agendas from different departments that are being thrown at people, I think sometimes they feel a bit overwhelmed" (Yorkshire FG)

"The job is scaled for a working mum to earn pocket money, but I am a young single woman and I struggle to survive working in a library. There are no fulfilling full-time jobs. There are too many barriers to making an employee independent, so young driven people move on, leaving the same part-time middle aged middle class women staffing the library. It doesn't help those people to gain new perspective" (Yorkshire FG)

Subsequently there appears to be high levels of apathy and resignation amongst older established members of frontline staff, and a growing tension in some cases between them and younger, newer recruits. This is a serious issue for library managers to address:

"We have all raised issues, because we're all fairly new, and found ourselves banging our heads against a brick wall, because it changes for a bit and then reverts. And then you get people saying 'well I tried that about eight years ago and didn't get anywhere with it'. You get the feeling that staff were not always quite so passive in their criticism, they were perhaps more active, but it's been drained out of them… Older staff will say about new members 'oh they're very enthusiastic'… as though that zapping of enthusiasm is an inevitability that will happen to us all… "*you'll learn*"!" (Yorkshire FG)

"… even now there is some friction concerning certain views, different views if you like, between older and younger staff… it's not a huge problem, but you can still see that there are people who won't always agree if a youngster has an idea for instance, even if it's a fairly good idea its almost sneered at a bit because its come from somebody who is perhaps 19" (East of England FG)

Although reassuringly some respondents did report positive relationships between different staff groups, and the benefits of mixing established staff members with newer recruits:

"… we have a lot of staff who have been with us a long time, it's been really nice getting that young enthusiasm and their first response isn't 'no' it's 'why not'… it's really lovely. They might lack a bit of experience but they more than make up for it in keenness, enthusiasm and commitment" (East of England FG)

6.3.3 Attitudes towards the socially excluded: empathy in practice

In addition to providing evidence of organizational strain, qualitative fieldwork has also revealed some tension between the Professional Empathy survey scores (and respondents' relatively high assessment of their own sympathetic and empathic tendencies), and working practices and attitudes towards the social inclusion agenda. When asked if they had experienced any opposition to the provision of socially inclusive services, respondents in each focus group described a certain 'low level resistance' amongst some (usually described as 'older') staff members. Although described as low level, the frequency with which the topic was raised within and across groups is notable. Many respondents described it as a resistance to change rather than to social inclusion policy per se, with particular reference to cultural changes in libraries such as the large scale introduction of IT and the internet:

"I think with any kind of service it can depend on the person, like somebody said earlier, people will adopt new practices and some people won't let go of the old ones" (North East FG)

"There is a lot of low level antagonism… for example there was a lot towards the introduction of IT, and it's still there" (Yorkshire FG)

"Most of the staff are quite willing, you do have the one or two, you know, who try to be difficult because they're used to the traditional concept of the library being a quiet place… it was the same when computers came in" (East Midlands FG)

"The only opposition I can think of to something that is aimed particularly at the socially excluded is the free access to the internet… central library has 120-30 PCs which is free to everyone… the only opposition I can think of is low level mumblings about the internet access, because we get so many users with poor English skills, or none at all… they come up to the counter and just bark 'internet' at us which gets a certain degree of resentment… I wouldn't say it's out and out opposition as such, it's more sort of cynicism" (West Midlands FG)

Positive comments were made regarding the capacity of library staff to embrace change, and it was accepted that some resistance to change is inevitable in any organization:

"… what is lucky about the people that do work in public libraries… in the main people are empathic… they're open to new ideas… yes we've still got dinosaurs but there are dinosaurs wherever you work and I think in the main library staff are open to change… if you think how far we've come in the last fifteen years it's amazing. I can't believe how much everything has moved on and it's the same staff taking the new ideas forward" (West Midlands FG)

"The grumblings are inevitable, but everybody comes round eventually… we have a fantastic group of people working for us who take whatever's thrown at them" (North East: Senior Library Manager)

Respondents reinforced the idea that any resistance is linked to cultural changes and a re-thinking surrounding what kind of space a public library should be. Some members of staff were described as traditionalists, who rejected new concepts and ideas in the first instance, but were beginning to embrace and take forward ideas:

"It is the modernisation that causes tension and it has to be well managed… we brought in that people would be allowed to use mobile phones and have discrete drinks and snacks, because people come in for whole days, but we had a huge backlash against that… we had to take down all negative notices, no 'do nots'… it had to be very carefully managed with meetings with operations staff… but diversity no, they're just another customer" (London FG)

"Some of our older members of staff have been a little unsettled by the changing culture of the service in general, IT [internet access] is still a huge cross to bear for some of them, but I wouldn't say that's because of the people we may be targeting, it's more about their own perceptions of what a library should be" (North West FG)

"…it's not diversity that's the issue its introducing new ways of doing things… we've got a senior management that has been there for a long time and suppressed any new ideas and they're a bit resentful of change… I keep getting 'well that won't happen', 'you won't be able to do that'… but then it does and it motivates other people to come up with ideas… I'm not sure whether the cultural change has happened but we're certainly moving towards it" (London FG)

Respondents defended this resistance to change adopted by older colleagues, stating that such attitudes were influenced by a lack of security, stability and confidence in public library services and their position within them:

"…it's because they don't understand what the future holds, what will change next, it's all so unpredictable. There's constant restructures, job changes, lack of promotion but more and more individual responsibility. Are libraries even going to be here in 10 to 20 years? When people don't know, they cling to what they've got and do know." (Yorkshire FG)

"I think it is the change element rather than what it's for… it just comes across as another directive as in 'we are doing this and that from Monday', and its not because we're targeting a specific group it's because it's another change" (East Midlands FG)

"The phenomenal rate of change has to carefully managed… you get blasé about it, but it can be quite distressing for people who have been with us for a long time" (South East: Head of Service)

"It's the uncertainty… really I'm too old to care" (East of England FG)

Despite claims of low-level resistance *not* directed towards social inclusion policy or excluded groups themselves, respondents did reveal evidence of antagonism towards certain initiatives and a wide range of groups within the social inclusion agenda. When giving details, respondents would invariably refer to 'older members of staff'. Comments reflect prejudices towards certain groups, and a worrying distinction between deserving and non-deserving users of public library services:

"Would you want your council tax to go up to pay more for libraries to train people to do these things [work with disaffected children and young people]… should that not be done by, I don't know, parents at home, things like that… Because it always seems to be the bad ones that get the attention and money spent on them… not the good child that comes in, who's nice, gets on with things, asks for help and is genuinely a nice child" (North East FG)

"I have had problems with LGBT issues from staff and users… if the gay collection is very in your face the users get a bit uptight… I was aware of one member of staff who would carefully move the pink paper… I once worked in a library that put Gay Times in a brown envelope, that was three or four years ago, I don't know if they do it now… but there are still pockets of resistance on occasion. "(East of England FG)

"We've had issues over providing women-only desks for female Muslim users… we've had to keep a record of how many male and female members of staff are working on each desk at any time… it gets silly" (West Midlands FG)

In some cases staff members have not been averse to voicing or demonstrating their opposition, both to colleagues and users themselves:

"…we've still got the power tricks from staff… shouting out really loud that a user has a fine, which for some cultures or age groups is a huge embarrassment, especially for people who are feeling insecure about how they're perceived, like asylum seekers or refugees." (Yorkshire FG)

"Somebody actually said to me [with reference to ESOL provision] 'well if they've been here 30 years and haven't bothered to learn the language then why should we bother?' What do you do?" (East Midlands FG)

"A couple of years ago we had a change to the membership criteria, so you could join without producing any form of ID, and we had a lot of opposition to that! Some of the staff were not at all happy about that because they said 'oh but we'll be getting all the rough sleepers coming in and they'll be stealing the books'… somebody else pointed out that in fact we've always had books stolen or 'lost', and that's not by rough sleepers it's people with permanent names

and addresses, so that's gone ahead and it's been very successful but there was a lot of opposition from some of the slightly older library staff" (West Midlands FG)

Library managers need to consider the role of other influences on staff perceptions and attitudes. Certain prejudices towards the inclusion agenda for example are established by association with previous incidents and experiences, which undoubtedly affect staff's ability and capacity to empathise with certain groups on a professional basis:

"We have actually had, a few years ago, a member of staff assaulted… and someone who was clearly mentally ill smacked a member of staff in the face and cracked their cheek bone… and I think the fear that has maybe been caused by that, causes staff in the branches when their confronted with hoodlum teenagers to worry about the situation because of what happened to a colleague" (North East)

Resistance from existing user groups and customers to cultural change is also key, especially for frontline staff who are usually the recipients of complaints and objections. In terms of sensitivity to all users this can be a difficult thing for them to manage:

"I think sometimes a bit of reaction from traditional readers can be an issue… they've been with us for a long time and want a nice quiet tranquil space… not all these IT users rattling their keyboards" (East of England FG)

"I mean obviously some racism comes in to this because an awful lot of our users are asylum seekers and foreign students who come in principally to go on the internet… it becomes a dog fight for places on the computers and we get a lot of quarrels about people jumping queues, staying on too long… there's an underlying tension almost the whole time, it's quite a stressful job trying to manage it" (West Midlands FG)

"We've interestingly enough just put out a selection of local government brochures in a variety of different languages and one comment from a gentleman that came in, one of our regular readers was 'oh is this available in English then?'" (East of England FG)

"We've had several comments from library users, when we have had displays or whatever for particular groups, either the homeless or migrant workers… and the comments are 'well they don't pay any rates, why should they use our library'… and that's quite a difficult one for me" (West Midlands FG)

Despite the difficulties that they encounter, and the problem of rationalising service objectives with personal beliefs and perceptions, respondents were generally accepting and supportive of cultural change in public libraries, and recognised the need for social responsibility:

"Unfortunately we can't isolate libraries from society… that's what life is like in the east end of Newcastle" (North East FG)

The relationship however between staff inclusion and confidence with new initiatives and approaches is imperative:

"I have noticed that emergent readers are a group we focus on quite a lot which I thought there might be some hostility from staff in that its difficult to spot emergent readers, they could be anybody… but there hasn't been, I don't know if its because we have quite a big collection of Quick Reads… we've done a lot of promotion and the brand is more well known amongst staff so they feel more comfortable with that" (East of England FG)

Workshop participants recognised the identification of worthy and non-worthy users, and a particular problem in dealing effectively or sensitively with homeless people. It was felt that some staff are prone to making judgements about 'who should come in to the library', which perhaps contradicts their previous assessment of the value of cognitive empathy, and the assumption that all that staff 'should' (or rather *do*) possess this skill. Survey data suggests that those members of staff more inclined to work within the social inclusion agenda do in fact have empathic tendencies:

- Involvement in delivery of social inclusion services: one-way ANOVA analyses showed that those involved most closely with the delivery of social inclusion services scored higher on all three empathic scales (i.e. simulated empathy, social identity and service values). This is encouraging; however it is difficult to know if this increased empathy developed because these individuals were working in social inclusion, or whether they were chosen to work in the field of social inclusion because they were felt to be more empathic.

- Desire to be involved in social inclusion provision: one-way ANOVA analyses showed that those who appeared to be significantly more empathic (as indicated by their scores on all three of the above scales) wanted to be more involved in inclusive service provision. This would seem to suggest that the more empathic people are, the more likely they are to become involved in social inclusion initiatives at work.

Workshop participants supported this view, in observing that staff involved in outreach and home-based services usually have advanced empathic skills and tendencies. A greater focus on performance management is perhaps required to reinforce this throughout library services, as workshop members felt that it is not possible to dictate how people think, but rather to focus on how they behave. Training is essential to achieve this in encouraging a greater acceptance amongst staff at all levels of the benefits of an inclusive agenda, addressing ignorance and removing prejudice. Focus group participants shared this view, and felt that in order to overcome the hostility and some of the related insecurities shared by staff members, a greater sense of inclusion was required with reference to policy design and implementation, which would in turn encourage a greater understanding and appreciation of the social inclusion agenda:

"I have to admit that I've heard some quite dodgy comments behind the scenes… about whether we should be providing services for non-rate payers, things like that… if we were more involved in policy decisions there would be less negativity. Instructions from on high will always prompt people to be negative and defensive" (Yorkshire FG)

One of the most challenging themes to emerge from the research, and one which was discussed at great length during our workshop session, is ‘what encourages and motivates people to work in public libraries?’ The question is particularly pertinent when considering those members of staff with negative attitudes towards the social inclusion agenda, but who still choose to work in a public sector service profession in the current inclusion-driven political climate. No definitive answers or conclusions were arrived at, but this is an issue that will be further explored within the recommendations chapter, and will inform how to take the research forward.

Case study: Studio 12 Leeds Library and information Service
Brief description:
Partnership delivery; Targeted groups; Young people; Outreach The Studio 12 project is a partnership between Leeds Library and Information Service and external arts and multi-media organisation *Pavilion.* The scheme provides free access to a production studio and training opportunities, including Open College Network (OCN) qualifications, design, music, video, multi-media and arts industry professionals, all originally based in Leeds Central Library. Touring studio sessions are also undertaken in community and prison libraries across the city, with three 'mini studios' rolled out to other inner-city libraries. Close working relationships have also been developed with Leeds City Council's Jobs and Skills Service and Leeds Connexions Service, providing seamless youth guidance opportunities.
Duration:
Originally commissioned on a project basis between 2003 and 2005, now a mainstreamed partnership service.
Funding:
Funded by Leeds Equal e-Employability Development Partnership[13] along with Leeds Library and Information Service and Pavilion.
Target group:
The scheme works with young people (aged 16-25) living in the 12 most deprived wards of Leeds. Accredited training provision is targeted towards the unemployed as a priority. Participants have a history of linked social issues including mental health problems, drug and alcohol abuse, insecure housing and fragile domestic circumstances.
Social impact:
Along with targeting a specific demographic group within the inner city areas of Leeds, the Studio 12 initiative has a planned programme of • Practical skills and qualifications • Information, advice and guidance • Activities designed to improve motivation, confidence and attitudes All participating young people join the library, and library services are actively promoted in the Studio space, which has its own selection of materials. The project helps to overcome employment barriers traditionally faced by the

[13] For more information please see: http://www.equal-works.com/DPDetail.aspx?ety=4bcc4795-ecfb-4d34-95da-3b7cf1ec4de4

target group by providing opportunities for self-exploration and reflection, skills analysis, establishing likes, dislikes and setting achievable goals. The opportunity to display and promote work and receive supportive critical feedback acts a considerable confidence boost, raising aspirations and self-esteem.

Personnel involved:

A specialist tutor is available at all times, along with a librarian for 'part of the week'. A specially created industry panel gives feedback on work and constructive advice and support.

Impact on library staff:

No information available, possibly as most of the personnel involved are based in alternative sectors.

Further information:

Project workers have published the following article:
Studio 12 inspires the socially excluded. Jacqueline Stevenson, Britta Heyworth and Emily Wolton. CILIP Library + Information Update, Vol. 5 No. 5, May 2006, pp. 26-28.

Project website:
http://www.studio12.org.uk/home.asp

Host external organisation *Pavilion*:
http://www.pavilion.org.uk/

Contact:
studio12@pavilion.org.uk

7 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

7.1 Skills, partnerships and professional identity

The research has revealed a predominant generic skills base when seeking to audit the required skills and competencies for staff working with socially excluded groups. Interpersonal traits such as communication skills, enthusiasm and an 'outgoing' personality, along with generic skills such as customer care, time management and ICT capabilities are the most frequently asked for in job descriptions and person specifications.

With respect to staff skills, there is evidence of role strain and a lack of confidence amongst some public library staff working with some of the more challenging excluded target groups, including disaffected teenagers, and adults with mental health and substance abuse problems. Staff do not feel that they have the necessary skills and experience to work under such conditions, or feel that they should be expected to do so within their roles as public library staff.

Throughout the project, the benefits of working on a partnership basis with relevant external agencies have been strongly communicated, and are clearly evident within case studies profiles. The ability to draw upon the skills, knowledge and experiences of professionals from other sectors and social services, and to use networks to effectively target new user groups and communities, is invaluable within the social inclusion context.

The use of volunteers from community groups themselves is also important in facilitating genuinely empathic library services that are relevant and responsive to actual community and user needs.

Issues relating to the previously identified generic skills base, and the benefits of drawing upon the knowledge and experiences of alternative sectors and community volunteers, have raised some debate over the role and value of accredited library qualifications and 'professional' status for library staff working in community-based and social inclusion roles. There is already evidence of growing recruitment from alternative sectors within case study profiles and focus group discussions, and a certain level of acceptance amongst some participants that a library qualification is not a prerequisite for effective community-based library services.

Those who wish to preserve professional status at all levels of public library service, and within all aspects of service provision, feel that within a social inclusion context, libraries are starting to provide too many non-library services (the Studio12 project would be described as such), and that the service is going too far in destabilising traditional roles and concepts of the profession. Such perceptions could be very damaging to the social inclusion offer from public libraries within modern society, and should be explored further.

7.2 Empathy and cultural representation

Our research sample of public library staff in England proved to be culturally homogenous, with respondents being predominantly female, White-British, middle-aged and what we can describe as middle class. It was felt that, on the whole, this was a fair representation of the occupational group on a national basis.

When asked to discuss cultural representation, respondents at all levels instinctively referred to ethnicity in the first instance, rather than age, gender and social class, cultural characteristics that are arguably of equal (if not greater in the case of the latter variable) importance when describing cultural representation in a social inclusion context. This infers a lack of clarity and understanding of the multi-faceted nature of social exclusion, and how those affected may feel under-represented in public services and civic life.

Some respondents believe that within the empathy dynamic, staff cultural profiles are irrelevant, and that they themselves as public library staff have sufficient cognitive empathy skills, and are therefore able to provide responsive and sensitive library services for a wide range of users and social groups. This is evidenced by both quantitative and qualitative data. Others however felt that traditionally disadvantaged groups place a greater degree of trust and confidence in people they can recognise as familiar, relate to and understand, such as people of a similar age or people from the same neighbourhoods. A direct correlation was similarly made between effective staff performance and the concept of living and working in the same communities.

This concept was developed further as respondents began to differentiate between staff members with a natural aptitude (which can be described as intuitive empathy) for working with excluded groups, and those without. Survey results suggest high levels of cognitive empathy within a culturally homogenous workforce sample. Qualitative data however strongly challenge this assumption, as anecdotal evidence suggests strong resistance to cultural change in libraries, to certain traditionally excluded groups, and to the social inclusion agenda as a whole amongst public library staff.

Within this context, there have been clear distinctions made between ‘older’ and ‘younger’ members of staff, with the former group more likely to be resistant to cultural change and objectionable towards the targeting of excluded groups and communities. This raises issues concerning this staff group’s motivation in deciding to work for the public library service, and in particular, their reasons for remaining in public library service for long periods of time. There is a feeling that a certain ‘nice little job’ syndrome may still exist amongst some staff groups, particularly those in part-time posts, where staff do not want to feel challenged by their role.

7.3 Social inclusion and community librarianship

The research has revealed a lack of clarity and understanding within public library services of what social exclusion means and its relationship with other social policy objectives, particularly within the access and equality agendas. Over 50% of survey respondents claimed to be partly aware of national social exclusion policy and debate, yet qualitative data suggests that awareness is considerably lower than this.

The role of, and need for, effective training in this area was discussed and prioritised by research respondents. Some participants reported certain dissatisfaction with 'outdated' training methods administered within their relevant authorities, particularly those delivered with the aim of improving cultural awareness amongst staff. This is a key issue, as case study profiles suggest significant benefits of tailored training in improving staff confidence and capacity to deliver inclusive services, particularly with targeted disadvantaged groups. Some respondents, particularly during the workshop session, made a direct link between training received and improved empathy skills amongst staff. There is some debate over whether or not empathy, as a personality trait, can be taught, but it is assumed that increased awareness and understanding of excluded groups and related policy will facilitate improved empathy amongst those with the emotional capacity to do so.

The non-inclusive organisational culture of public libraries themselves is seemingly having, in some cases, a negative impact upon staff engagement with and contribution to the social inclusion agenda. The maintenance of hierarchical management structures and executive decision making procedures, combined with a perceived lack of transparency and ineffective communication mechanisms, is causing apathy and demoralisation amongst staff, particularly front-line employees, who feel that their experience and opinion is undervalued and ignored.

There is however strong evidence of good practice in providing successful services for targeted groups, as illustrated by case study profiles and within focus group discussions. The value of community profiling and consultation cannot be underestimated in this context, and the research has also revealed examples of good practice in this area. Outreach work in deprived areas and regeneration wards has also proven to be particularly effective.

The research has revealed some interesting issues relating to the contemporary concept of community librarianship. The impact of local government culture and political objectives is putting a strain on the traditional ideology of the concept, as social inclusion objectives are inter-linked with what are described as quick-fix and 'tick box' approaches and solutions from governing authorities. This also goes some way to explaining the theoretical blurring between social inclusion and other public policy objectives.

Particularly damaging is the theory that some policies, and related target groups, are considered to be more immediately feasible, and therefore more attractive in a 'quick fix' capacity, than others. This is causing considerable

disillusionment, cynicism and low job satisfaction for those public library staff charged with community-based and social inclusion objectives, which are increasingly seen as ‘add on’ responsibilities for staff involved.

Another consequence of this is the apparent pockets of tension between what are considered to be ‘add-on’ services relating to the social inclusion agenda, and what are accepted as mainstream public library services. The additional demands on staff time, resources and service capacity are the main causes of tension in this area. Case studies however provide examples of how projects can be effectively managed and resourced, and ultimately merged with mainstream services. The creation of specific posts has helped to facilitate this, and create new roles and identities for the modern community librarian.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this national study present a strong argument for radical and far-reaching strategic changes to English public libraries. Given the comments made by respondents to both the quantitative and qualitative data collection phases, one recommendation would be for the development of a public library service that is managed strategically from regional centres, funded by central government, with the opportunity for match funding on charitable and project bases. Such a system could arguably allow greater flexibility in responding to local needs, particularly when not obliged to explicitly conform to local government agendas, and adhere to stringent bureaucratic procedures and policies.

However, such radical changes are clearly beyond the remit of this project, and it would be inappropriate for the authors to make suggestions as to the governance and political ownership of public library services, nor are they in a position to do so based on the findings of this research. It is nonetheless recommended that this continues to be an issue for debate within the sector.

8.1 Redefining public library roles and services

Within the social inclusion agenda, it is recommended that individual library authorities decide and define what can realistically be achieved by their respective services, and then relate their objectives more explicitly to individual areas of social policy relating to inclusion, equality and access. A one-size-fits-all categorization of services and initiatives as relating to social inclusion is inappropriate, and potentially damaging to service effectiveness and outcomes.

A clearer conceptual clarity would help public libraries to:

- Establish where they ‘fit in’ with local public service provision and what contribution they can make
- Enable public library staff to understand the social mission of their organisation
- Enable public library staff to understand and deliver their individual roles in meeting social objectives.

Where possible, social inclusion objectives and related services should be more explicitly associated with traditional concepts of community librarianship, to help staff align policies with their existing understanding of their own skills, competencies, experiences and professional identity.

This can be assisted by bringing work in disadvantaged and regeneration areas into greater focus within the inclusion context. Arguably we can differentiate between the services (and necessary staff skills) associated with inner city libraries and those offered by reference libraries in city centre locations for example. This again will help staff to understand where they fit in, and what their capabilities really are.

8.2 External partners and service networks

The benefits of working with external partners and extended service networks as presented in this report, will not read as something new to public library practitioners. Such outcomes are widely reported in the literature and individual evaluation studies, and subsequently widely accepted and understood, within the sector. The recommendation that partnership delivery be extended and sustained therefore is obvious.

What is perhaps less obvious is that the sector should find a way of consolidating and extending this knowledge, providing the opportunity for others to learn from, buy into and apply previous experiences and successes. In order to bring this about, a website – or similar interface – could be developed to present and communicate experiences of existing service networks[14]. Such a resource would operate on the same principles of existing social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, MySpace), whereby individual public library services and practitioners would link to partners and associated service providers in the same way that internet social network users link to 'friends'. The resource would demonstrate the interconnectedness of public service providers, and enable users to connect with new potential partners and networks. Ideally, it would be sector-led and managed by a body such as the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), or by members of CILIP special interest groups such as the Public Libraries Group (PLG).

Potential benefits of such a tool would include:

- Availability of a national service development resource
- Improved sharing of best practice in an accessible format
- Improved communication within the sector
- Improved promotion of the sector to other service providers
- Extension of regional and national service networks

The resource would need to be developed on an inclusive basis, with considerable input from and involvement of frontline staff. If presented as a 'top down' initiative, this would undermine the principles and values of the proposed tool.

[14] A similar resource is currently being proposed by a research team convened to investigate and measure the impact of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture status 2008, which is based at the University of Liverpool. The resource will provide a database of organisations and partnerships within the arts industry and cultural sectors in Liverpool. For information on the research team please see: http://www.liv.ac.uk/impacts08/index.htm

8.3 Staff recruitment and selection

Given the findings of the research, it is recommended that recruitment teams consider staff from other service sectors when seeking to fill posts with a strong social inclusion remit. Issues surrounding role strain, stress in the workplace and staff de-motivation and dissatisfaction could be significantly reduced with increased and sustained partnership delivery. The public library service has demonstrably gained from extending its recruitment policy to organisations such as the youth service, and to other social welfare, guidance and support services.

Within recruitment procedures, all job descriptions and person specifications designed to recruit staff to social inclusion-related posts should be adapted and developed to include an assessment of candidates' awareness and understanding of social inclusion policy and objectives.

When considering the cultural diversity of staff members, and seeking to adhere to equal opportunities and related employment policies, it is important to remember and acknowledge that cultural representation within a social inclusion context is not merely a matter of ethnicity and the appropriate recruitment of ethnic minority groups.

8.4 Internal communication and staff support systems

It is clear that public library services need to develop comprehensive, transferable and systematic structures for the support, encouragement and development of frontline staff. This is especially true within the context of change management, and leading staff through policy implementation, organisational restructures, and what are perceived to be new, challenging, destabilising and in some more serious cases threatening service developments.

Frontline staff need to feel considerably more empowered concerning the development and delivery of services for socially excluded groups, which requires a more inclusive approach to service planning and an attempt to avoid the presentation of decisions that are perceived to have been made on an executive basis.

Possible methods include:

- The formation of lateral communication groups where staff at all levels of the organisation's hierarchical and operational structures are represented
- More one-to-one meetings between individual staff members and line managers to facilitate the sharing of ideas and experiences
- The communication of policy directives and organisational information needs to be shared on an interpersonal basis via team meetings or seminars, facilitating the opportunity for response and discussion.

8.5 Staff training and development

Knowledge

The priority for public library managers within a staff training capacity is to address the apparent gap amongst staff in knowledge and understanding of social inclusion policy and political drivers. Staff at all levels working within services and projects that are responsive to such drivers should be fully informed of relevant external and political influences, and given the opportunity to question and discuss them further, and thus fully engage with the reasons for particular service developments and initiatives.

Similarly, greater effort should be made to provide *relevant* training and information on groups affected by social exclusion, in an attempt to significantly raise levels of awareness and cultural sensitivity amongst all staff.

Staff need the intellectual time and space to fully engage with and consider these issues, so the ‘away day’ method may be appropriate, particularly in reducing the risk of staff feeling additional pressure in having to absorb new information in their day-to-day work environment, and subsequently form a negative perception of inclusive approaches as ‘add-on’ responsibilities.

This needs to be carefully planned and scheduled into all new projects and service developments as an important part of the process, particularly in over-coming the ever-present ‘lack of time and money’ barrier.

Skills

Research participants have defined the skills required to work in socially-inclusive services as ‘advanced customer care’ skills, and many public library authorities are already providing valuable training in this area. Again this should be prioritised within project and service development plans.

The concept of advanced customer care could be broken down as such:

- Communication skills
- Listening skills
- Influencing relationships
- Reflective practice
- Improved confidence and assertiveness
- Negotiation skills
- Dealing with conflict.

Can empathy be taught?

It would be fair to conclude that it would be difficult to 'teach empathy', to train staff to develop an emotional response that is informed and influenced by personality, belief systems and other individual characteristics. However, the development of certain empathic skills can be encouraged by providing public library staff with the right knowledge and circumstantial information, involving them in decision-making processes, and facilitating the development of appropriate skills.

As a result of such interventions, staff can be enabled to show higher levels of empathy towards members of all communities, provided that they are willing – and have some natural capacity – to do so. This is a significant finding in supporting library staff at all levels to communicate with library users from all cultural backgrounds and, in the longer term, to deliver a more effective service.

As such, the future recruitment of the right 'man' for the job will be intrinsic to the effectiveness of public libraries' contribution to the social inclusion agenda, and should be an absolute priority for the future of community librarianship.

REFERENCES

Afolabi, M. (1996). "Holland's typological theory and its implications for librarianship and libraries." Librarian Career Development 4(3): 15-21.

Axtell, C. and Parker, S. (2001) “What is perspective taking?” Available from: esrccoi.group.shef.ac.uk/pdf/whatis/perspective.pdf

Baron-Cohen, S. and Wheelwright, S. (2004) “The Empathy Quotient: an investigation of adults with asperger syndrome or high functioning autism, and normal sex differences” Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders 34 (2): 163-175.

Beirens, H., Hughes, N., Hek, R. and Spicer, N. (2007) “Preventing Social Exclusion of Refugee and Asylum Seeking Children: Building New Networks”. Social Policy and Society, 6 (2), 219-229.

Bennett, T., Savage, M., Silva, E., Warde, A., Modesto, G. and Wright, D. (2005) “Cultural Capital and the Cultural Field in Contemporary Britain”. CRESC Working Paper Series No. 3. Centre for Research On Socio-Cultural Change, The University of Manchester.

Black, A. and Muddiman, D. (1997). Understanding Community Librarianship: the public library in post-modern Britain. Aldershot, Avebury Press.

Black, A. (2001) “The Victorian Information Society: surveillance, bureaucracy and public librarianship in 19th century Britain” The Information Society 17: 63-80.

Broady-Preston, J. and Cox., A. (2000). "The public library as street corner university: back to the future?" New Library World 101(4): 149-161.

Burchardt, T., Le Grand, J. and Piachaud, D. (2002a) “Introduction” in Hills, J., Le Grand, J. and Piachaud, D. (eds) Understanding Social Exclusion. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Burchardt, T., Le Grand, J. and Piachaud, D. (2002b) “Degrees of Exclusion: Developing a Dynamic, Multidimensional Measure” in Hills, J., Le Grand, J. and Piachaud, D. (eds) Understanding Social Exclusion. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Burden, T. (2000) “Poverty” in Percy-Smith, J. ed. (2000) Policy Responses to Social Exclusion: towards inclusion? Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Burns Owens Partnership (2005) “New Directions in Social Policy: developing the evidence base for museums, libraries and archives in England”. London, MLA.

Cabinet Office (2006) Social Exclusion Task Force – About Us. Available from: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/about_us.aspx

Caruso, D.R. and Mayer, J.D. (1998) "A Measure of Emotional Empathy for Adolescents and Adults". Unpublished manuscript available from: http://www.unh.edu/emotional_intelligence/EI%20Assets/Empathy%20Scale/Empathy%20Article%202000.doc

CILIP (2001) "Making a difference – Innovation and diversity. The report of the Social Inclusion Executive Advisory Group to CILIP". London, CILIP. Available from: http://www.cilip.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/6315E6DA-785D-4A08-9FCD33C07A57CAA1/0/sereport2.pdf

Chanan, G. (2000) "Community responses to social exclusion" In Percy-Smith, J. ed. (2000) Policy Responses to Social Exclusion: towards inclusion? Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Chlopan, B.E., McCain, M.L., Carbonell, J.L. and Hagen, R.L. (1985) "Empathy: review of available measures" Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 48 (3): 635-653

Clarke, J., Smith, N. and Vidler, E. (2006) "The Indeterminacy of Choice: Political, Policy and Organisational Implications" Social Policy and Society 5 (3) 327-336

Cleeve, M. (1994). "Dicing with the Common Denominators." Librarian Career Development 2(2): 32-35.

Coates, T. (2004) "Who's in charge? Responsibility for the Public Library Service. Libri. Available from: http://www.goodlibraryguide.com/libri/WhoInCharge.pdf

ContinYou (2007) "Strategy Guide: meeting your strategic goals in England through study support". Available from: http://www.continyou.org.uk/uploads/documents/doc_683.pdf

Cookman, C. and Haynes, C. (2002). Strategic Review of Statistical Requirements: Report and recommendations to Resource: the council for museums, archives and libraries. Available from: http://www.resource.gov.uk/information/evidence/ev_imp.asp

Crow G. and Maclean, C. (2000) "Community" in Payne, G. ed. (2000). Social Divisions. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Datta, S. and Simsova, S. (1989) Cultural Diversity & Libraries: today and tomorrow. London, PNL Press.

Davis, M. H. (1983). "Measuring individual differences in empathy: evidence for a multi-dimensional approach." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 44(1): 113-126.

DCLG (2006) “Strong and Prosperous Communities: the Local Government White Paper”. The Stationary Office, London. Available from:
Volume 1
http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/98/StrongandProsperousCommunitiestheLocalGovernmentWhitePaperVol1_id1504098.pdf
Volume 2
http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/99/StrongandProsperousCommunitiestheLocalGovernmentWhitePaperVol2_id1504049.pdf

DCMS (1999). Libraries for All: Social Inclusion in Public Libraries. Policy guidance for local authorities in England, Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Available from:
http://www.dcms.org.uk/global/publications/archive_1999/

DCMS (2003) “Framework for the Future: Libraries, Learning and Information in the Next Decade”. Available from:
http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2003/framework_future.htm

DCMS (2005) “Living Life to the Full: Department for Culture, Media and Sport Five Year Plan”. Available from:
http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2005/dcms_5yr_plan.htm

Dodd, J., Sandell, R. and Vincent, J. (2003) “Cross-domain training for social inclusion: Report on lessons from phase one”. London, MLA.

Dutch, M. and Muddiman, D. (2001). "The Public Library, Social Exclusion and the Information Society in the United Kingdom." Libri 51: 183-194.

Edwards, R., Armstrong, P. and Miller, N., (2001) “Include me out: critical readings of social inclusion and lifelong learning”. International Journal of Lifelong education, 20:5, 417-428.

Elliott, P. (1999) “Research into public libraries and ethnic minority communities in the UK, from Clough and Quarmby to Roach and Morrison: a review article” Journal of Librarianship and Information Science 31 (3) 174-177

Ellison, N. and Ellison, S. (2006) “Creating ‘Opportunity for All’? New Labour, New Localism and the Opportunity Society” Social Policy and Society 5 (3) 337-348.

Evans, R. and Plumridge, G. (2007) “Inclusion, Social Networks and Resilience: Strategies, Practices and Outcomes for Disabled Children and their Families”. Social Policy and Society, 6 (2), 231-241.

Field, J. (2003) Social Capital. Abingdon, Routledge.

Flanagan, P., Johnston, R and Talbot, D. (2005). "Customer confidence: the development of a "pre-experience" concept." International Journal of Service Industry Management 16(4): 373-384.

Fourie, I. (2004) “Librarians and the claiming of new roles” Aslib Proceedings 56 (1): 62-74

Fryer, R. H. (2002). Creating Learning Cultures: Next steps in achieving the learning age. Second report of the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning. Available from: http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/nagcell2/index.htm

Goleman, D. (1996) Emotional Intelligence. London, Bloomsbury.

Goodlad, R. et al (2002) “Not just a treat: Arts and Social Inclusion” A report to the Scottish Arts Council. Centre for Cultural Policy Research. Available from: http://www.culturalpolicy.arts.gla.ac.uk/Research%20documents/Not_just_a_treat_summary_report.pdf

Goulding, A. and Spacey, R. (2003) “The People’s Network and Cultural Change” Journal of Librarianship and Information Science 35 (2): 75-77

Greenhalgh, L., Worpole, K. and Landry, C. (1995). Libraries in a World of Cultural Change. London, UCL Press.

Hannabus, S. (1998). "Information ethics: a contemporary challenge for professionals and the community." Library Review 47(2): 91-98.

Harte, H. G. and Dale, B.G. (1995). "Improving quality in professional service organizations: a review of the key issues." Managing Service Quality 5(3): 34-44.

Hawtin, M. and Kettle, J. (2000) “Housing and social exclusion” in Percy-Smith, J. ed. (2000) Policy Responses to Social Exclusion: towards inclusion? Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Hillenbrand, C. (2005) “Public Libraries as Developers of Social Capital” APLIS 18 (1) 4-12.

Hills, J., Le Grand, J. and Piachaud, D. (eds) (2002). Understanding Social Exclusion. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Ickes, W. ed. (1997) “Empathic Accuracy”. New York, Guildford Publishing.

Jermyn, H. (2001) “The Arts and Social Exclusion: a review prepared for the Arts Council of England”. Available from: http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/documents/publications/298.doc

Johnson, J.A., Cheek, J.M. and Smither, R. (1983) “The Structure of Empathy” Journal of Personality and Social Psychology” 45 (6): 1299-1312

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2000). Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain. Available from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/details.asp?pubID=302

Katz, M.B. ed. (1993) The “Underclass” Debate. New Jersey, Princeton University Press.

Kerr, W.A. and Speroff, B.J. (1954) “Validation and Evaluation of the Empathy Test” The Journal of General Psychology, 50, 269-276.

Kerslake, E. and Kinnell, M. (1998) “Public Librraies, Public Interest and the Information Society: theoretical issues in the social impact of public libraries” Journal of Librarianship and Information Science 30 (3): 159-167

Larsen, J. I., Jacobs, D.L. and Vimmerman, T.V. (2004). Cultural Diversity: How public libraries can serve the diversity in the community. Available from: http://www.public-libraries.net/html/x_media/pdf/cultural_diversity_040217.pdf

Leitch (2005) Skills in the UK: The long-term challenge. Interim report, Leitch Review of Skills. The Stationery Office. Available from: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/1FE/8E/pbros_leitchreviewexecsummary_255.pdf

Levenson, R.W. and Ruef, A.M. (1992) “Empathy: a physiological substrate”. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63 (2), 234-246.

Levitas, R. (2005) The inclusive society? Social Exclusion and New Labour. 2nd ed. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Levitas, R., Pantazis, C., Fahmy, E., Gordon, D., Lloyd, E. and Patsios, D. (2007) The Multidimensional Analysis of Social Exclusion: a research report for the Social Exclusion Task Force. Available from: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/publications/research/multidimensional.asp

Llewellyn, D.J. and Wilson, K.M. (2003) “The controversial role of personality traits in entrepreneurial psychology”. Education + Training, 45 (6), 341-345.

Long, J. et al. (2002). Count me in: the Dimensions of Social Inclusion through Culture and Sport. Leeds Metropolitan University for DCMS, London.

Lupton, R. and Power, A. (2002) “Social Exclusion and Neighbourhoods” in Hills, J., Le Grand, J. and Piachaud, D. (eds) (2002). Understanding Social Exclusion. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

MacDonald, R. ed (1997) Youth, the 'Underclass' and Social Exclusion. London, Routledge.

Mann, S. (1997) "Emotional Labour in Organisations" Leadership and Organization Development Journal 18 (1): 4-12

Mason, P. and Broughton, K. (2007) "Gypsy/Traveller Children and their Families: The Potential of Working with Networks". Social Policy and Society, 6 (2), 243-253.

Mehrabian, A. and Epstein, N. (1972) "A Measure of Emotional Empathy". Journal of Personality, 40, 525-543.

Milner, H. (2007) "Demonstrating Social Impact: a blueprint for partnership". CILIP Library + Information Update, 6 (5), 40-43.

MLA (2004a) "Inspiring Learning for All – Detailed framework". London, MLA. Available from: Available from: http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/introduction/default.aspx

MLA (2004b) "Investing in Knowledge: a five year vision for England's museums, libraries and archives" London, MLA. Available from: http://www.mla.gov.uk/website/policy/investing_in_knowledge/00iik/

MLA (2004c) "Access for All Toolkit: enabling inclusion for museums, libraries and archives" London, MLA. Available from: http://www.mla.gov/resources/assets//A/access_mla_tk_pdf_5670.pdf

Muddiman, D., Durrani, S., Dutch, M., Linley, R., Pateman, J. and Vincent, J. (2000). Open to all? The Public Library and Social Exclusion. Library and Information Commission Research Report 84, Resource: The Council for Museums Archives and Libraries.

Muddiman, D., Durrani, S., Dutch, M., Linley, R., Pateman, J. and Vincent, J. (2001). "Open to All? The public library and social exclusion: executive summary." New Library World 102(1163/1164): 154-157.

Norfolk, T., Patterson, F., Birdi, K., Walsh, D. (2007) "Developing therapeutic rapport in the GP consultation: a competency based model." Medical Education, 41, 690-697.

Ocholla, D.N. (2002) "Diversity in the Library and Information Workplace: a South African perspective" Library Management 23 (1/2): 59-67

ODPM (2002) Department for Communities and Local Government. Available from: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pns/index.asp?id=1127160

Page, D. (2000). The Reality of Social Exclusion on Housing Estates, The Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Available from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/housing/n120.asp

Pankl, R. R. (2004). "Baby Boom generation librarians." Library Management 25(4/5): 215-222.

Pantry, S. and Griffiths, P. (2003) “Your essential guide to career success” Facet, London.

Parker, S., Waterson, K., Michaluk, G., Rickard, L. (2002) Neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion: The role of museums archives and libraries. Northumbria University and Marketing Management Services International for Resource. Available from: http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//N/neighbourhood_pdf_5678.pdf

Pateman, J. (2002). "Reasons to be Wrathful." Library Management 23(1/2): 17-22.

Pateman, J. (2004). "Tackling Social Exclusion: The Hardest to Reach." Information for Social Change 19. Available from: http://www.libr.org/ISC/articles/19-Pateman-1.html.

Payne, G. ed. (2000). Social Divisions. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Percy-Smith, J. ed. (2000) Policy Responses to Social Exclusion: towards inclusion? Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Pile, H. and O’Donnell, C. (1997) “Earnings, taxation and wealth” in Walker, A. and Walker, C. (eds) (1997). Britain Divided: The growth of social exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s. London, Child Poverty Action Group.

Preece, J.K. and Ghozati, K. (2001). “Experiencing Empathy Online”. In Rice, R.R. and Katz, J.E. (2001) The Internet and Health Communication: Experience and Expectations. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications Inc: pp. 237-260.

Proctor, R. and Bartle, C. (2002) “Low Achievers Lifelong Learners: an investigation into the impact of the public library on educational disadvantage”. CPLIS, Sheffield. Available from: http://cplis.shef.ac.uk/lowachievers.pdf

Renewal.net (2002). Tackling Exclusion, Social Exclusion Unit. Available from: http://www.renewal.net/Nav.asp?Category=:neighbourhood+renewal:tackling+exclusion

Richardson, L. and Mumford, K. (2002) “Community, Neighbourhood and Social Infrastructure” in Hills, J., Le Grand, J. and Piachaud, D. (eds) (2002). Understanding Social Exclusion. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Roberts, K. (1997) “Is there an emerging British ‘underclass’? The evidence from youth research.” In MacDonald, R. ed (1997) Youth, the ‘Underclass’ and Social Exclusion. London, Routledge.

Roberts, K. (2004). "Leisure Inequalities, Class Divisions and Social Exclusion in Present-day Britain." Cultural Trends 13(2): 1-15.

Rogers, C.R. (1975) “Empathic: an Unappreciated Way of Being”. Centre for Studies of the Person, California. Available from: http://elementsuk.com/pdf/empathic.pdf

Rogers, J. D., Clow, K.E. and Kash, T.J. (1994). "Increasing Job Satisfaction of Service Personnel." Journal of Services Marketing 8(1): 14-26.

Scott, J. (2000) “Class and Stratification” in Payne, G. ed. (2000). Social Divisions. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

SETF (2007) Reaching Out: Progress on Social Exclusion. Social Exclusion Task Force: Cabinet Office. Available from: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/documents/reaching_out/progress_report.pdf

SEU (2002) New Deal for Communities. Available from: http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=617

SEU (2004a) “Breaking the Cycle: taking stock of progress and priorities for the future”. Social Exclusion Unit Report. Available from: http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/socialexclusion01.htm

SEU (2004b) “The drivers of social exclusion: a review of the literature for the Social Exclusion Unit in the Breaking the Cycle series”. Available from: Available from: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/upload/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/publications_1997_to_2006/drivers_literature.pdf

SEU (2005). Improving Services Improving Lives: Evidence and key themes, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Available from: http://www.socialexclusion.gov.uk/downloaddoc.asp?id=752

Silvester, J., Patterson, F., Koczwara, A. and Ferguson, E. (2007) “’Trust me’… Psychological and Behavioural Predictors of Perceived Physician Empathy”. Journal of Applied Psychology, 92 (2), 519-527.

Stauss, B. and Mang, P. (1999) “Culture Shocks in Inter-cultural Service Encounters” Journal of Services Marketing 13 (4/5): 329-346

Thompson, J. (2000). Social Exclusion. NIACE Briefing Sheet 10, NIACE. Available from: http://www.niace.org.uk/information/briefing_sheets/Social_Exclusion.pdf

Train, B., Dalton, P. and Elkin, J. (2000). "Embracing inclusion: the critical role of the library." Library Management 21(9): 483-490.

Train, B., Usherwood, B. and Brooks, G. (2002) “The Vital Link: an evaluation report” CPLIS, Sheffield. Available from: http://cplis.shef.ac.uk/vitallinkfinal.pdf

Tunstall, R. and Coulter, A. (2006) Twenty-five years on twenty estates: Turning the tide? Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Available from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/1812_progress_unpopular_estates.pdf

Usherwood, R. C., Proctor, R., Bower, G., Coe, C., Copper, J. and Stevens, T. (2001). Recruit, Retain and Lead. The public library workforce study. Library and Information Commission Research Report 106. Available from: http://cplis.shef.ac.uk/workforce.pdf

Usherwood, B., Wilson, K. and Bryson, J. (2005) “Relevant repositories of public knowledge? Libraries, museums and archives in the ‘information age’.” Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 37 (2), 91-100.

Vaagan, R. and Holm, S. (2004) “Professional values in Norwegian Librarianship” New Library World 105 (5/6): 213-217

Vincent, J. (2003) “Cross-domain guidance materials on social inclusion: Definitions – what is social inclusion?” London, MLA. Available from: http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//S/socialinc05_doc_5676.doc

Vincent, J. (2005). The Network Newsletter: tackling social exclusion in libraries, museums, archives and galleries. Subscribers, The Network: Organisational newsletter number 41.

Vincent, J. (2007a) “Social exclusion: looking forwards – again!”’ Public Library Journal, 22 (1), 19-21.

Vincent, J. (2007b) “Social exclusion: changing, going, gone?” Public Library Journal, 22 (3), 15-19.

Vincent, J. and Pateman, J. (2006) “From equal opportunities to tackling social exclusion”. In Bowman, J. ed. British Librarianship and Information Work 1991-2000. Aldershot, Ashgate.

Walker, A. and Walker, C. (eds) (1997). Britain Divided: The growth of social exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s. London, Child Poverty Action Group.

Wallace, A. (2007) “We have had nothing for so long that we don’t know what to ask for: New Deal for Communities and the Regeneration of Socially Excluded Terrain”. Social Policy and Society, 6 (1), 1-12.

Wang, Y., Davidson, M., Yakushko, O.F., Savoy, H.B., Tan, J.A. and Bleier, J.K. (2003) “The scale of ethnocultural empathy: development, validation and reliability” Journal of Counselling Psychology 50 (2): 221-234

Welshman, J. (2006) Underclass: A history of the excluded. London, Hambledon Continuum.

Williamson, M. (2000). "Social exclusion and the public library: a Habermasian insight." Journal of Librarianship and Information Science 32(4): 178-186.

Wilson, K. and Train, B. (2006) “The lifelong impact of lifelong learning: using qualitative evaluation to measure the less tangible outcomes of adult basic education”. Journal of Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, 8 (1) 14-26. Available from: http://www.staffs.ac.uk/journal/Volume81/contents.htm

Woodward, K. (2005). On and Off the Pitch: Diversity policies and transforming identities. CRESC Working Paper Series, Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change, Open University.

Wright, M. (2002) “Social Inclusion Consultation Report”. Public Library Service, Nottinghamshire County Council. Available from: http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/consultation/si_consultation_report.doc

APPENDICES

1 Pilot survey feedback form
2 Survey questionnaire (including cover letter and information sheet)
3 Survey data – demographic summary
4 Survey data – cumulative Professional Empathy scores
5 Focus group and interview questions
6 Job vacancy profiling summary
7 Workshop questions
8 Workshop themed session handouts
9 Summary of workshop findings
10 Case study interview questions

Appendix 1 – Pilot survey feedback form

Pilot survey – respondent feedback sheet

Thank you very much for taking the time to assist us with our research by completing the pilot questionnaire. We would appreciate your feedback on the following elements:

Were instructions on how to complete the questionnaire clear and easy to understand?
Were individual questions easy to understand? Please give examples if 'no'
Were any of the questions difficult to answer? Please explain why if 'yes'
Did you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions asked? Please give examples if 'yes'
Was the structure of the questionnaire easy to follow?
Are definitions, where given, appropriate and helpful?
Is the presentation of the questionnaire appropriate? For example, is the chosen font size readable, are the questions evenly spaced
Did the information sheet/cover letter provide enough information on the content and purpose of the questionnaire?

Thank you again for your time and co-operation

Appendix 2 - Survey questionnaire (including cover letter and information sheet)

Head of Department
Professor Sheila Corrall

Regent Court
211 Portobello Street
Sheffield
S1 4DP

Telephone: +44 (0) 144 222 2630
Fax: +44 (0) 144 278 0300
Email: dis@sheffield.ac.uk
Website: www.sheffield.ac.uk/is

23rd September 2006

Dear Sir/Madam

The Centre for the Public Library and Information in Society (CPLIS), part of the Libraries and Information Society research group based at the Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield, is currently undertaking a research project investigating the role of public libraries in meeting the social inclusion agenda. The first significant stage in the research is a national survey of approximately 1100 public library employees in England, in which you are now invited to participate.

Please find enclosed a four-page questionnaire. We would be most grateful if you could spare the time to complete the questionnaire, and then return it to us in the pre-paid envelope provided by Tuesday 31st October 2006. The following information may help:

- The questionnaire follows a tick-box format which should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete
- There are 3 sections covering 4 sides of A4 size paper – please ensure that all sections are answered fully
- The A4 insert sheet contains some notes which may help you to complete the questionnaire (e.g. definitions of key terms)
- All questionnaire respondents are assured complete anonymity

The following section contains some general information about the research project as a whole, which you may find useful:

Research Project Title:
The right 'man' for the job? The role of empathy in community librarianship

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Take your time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the project?
The project is investigating public library staff attitudes towards social inclusion policy and disadvantaged groups in society. It began in April 2006, and will end in February 2008.

Why have I been chosen?
The questionnaire survey is being distributed on a national basis (within England) to a sample of 1,100 public library employees, and you have been randomly selected as one of this sample group.

Do I have to take part?
Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?
Your involvement would consist of answering a series of questions, and expressing your opinion, in response to a questionnaire survey. Your responses will be used anonymously with others, in order to provide data concerning the public library's role in supporting socially excluded groups in society. Completing the questionnaire should take no more than 20 minutes of your time.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
There are no foreseeable disadvantages or risks involved in taking part in this study. However, it will involve you expressing personal opinions, which some participants may find uncomfortable.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this research will lead to a greater understanding of the public library's work with socially excluded groups.

What if something goes wrong?
Should you wish to make a complaint about this research or the way in which it is being conducted, contact the Principal Investigator (contact details below). Complaints will be taken very seriously. However, if you feel that the complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the University's Registrar and Secretary.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
The results of the study are intended to be published as part of a report in February 2008, which will be available on our research group website (http://cplis.shef.ac.uk) and via the organisation funding the research, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/).

Who has reviewed the project?
This project has been ethically approved via the Department of Information Studies' ethics review procedure. The University's Research Ethics Committee monitors the application and delivery of the University's Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

Contact details for further information
Kerry Wilson (Research Associate)
Email: k.m.wilson@sheffield.ac.uk
Tel. 0114 222 6345

Briony Train (Principal Investigator)
Email: b.train@sheffield.ac.uk
Tel. 0114 222 2653

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. We hope that you will consider taking part in the project.

Yours faithfully

Kerry Wilson
Research Associate, CPLIS

Section 1: About you

Please answer the following questions about yourself by ticking the appropriate box:

A Are you:

Male		Female	

B To which age group do you belong:

16-25		26-35		36-45		46-55		56-65	

C To which ethnic group do you belong:

Indian		Pakistani		Bangladeshi		Asian other	
Black Caribbean		Black African		Black other		White British	
White Irish		White other		White and Black Caribbean		White and Black African	
White and Asian		Other dual backgrounds		Chinese		Other	

D What is your HIGHEST educational qualification:

GCSE/O Level/CSE		A level/NVQ		HND/Cert		Degree	
Postgraduate Cert/Dip		Masters Degree		Doctorate		Other	

E How would you describe your secondary (11-16) education experience:

Pupil and staff profile

Culturally homogenous		Culturally diverse		Undecided	

Denomination

Dominated by one faith		Largely secular		Undecided	

School's educational performance

Poor		Average		Good		Excellent		Undecided	

F In which English region do you currently work:

East Midlands		East of England		London		North East		Yorkshire	
North West		South East		South West		West Midlands			

G How long have you worked for the public library service (cumulatively):

< 5 years		5-10 years		10-15 years		15-20 years	
20-25 years		25-30 years		> 30 years			

H For which type of local authority do you currently work:

Metropolitan Council		Unitary authority		County Council		District Council	
Borough Council		London Borough Council		Other			

I Are you a member of the *Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals* (CILIP):

Yes		No	

If 'yes', what type of membership do you hold:

Chartered Member (MCLIP)		Chartered Fellow (FCLIP)		Associate		Honorary Fellow	
Student Member		Affiliated Member		Supporting Member		Other	

J How would you describe your current role within your organisation:

Front-line		Team Leader		Middle Management	
Senior Management		Head of Service		Other	

Section 2: Exploring social issues

Please consider the following statements very carefully and identify the extent to which you agree with each statement by ticking the appropriate box:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
I often have feelings of concern for people less fortunate than myself					
Members of culturally diverse communities have a lot to offer one another					
My sector should have the same professional standing as medical, legal and financial sectors					
Every member of my organisation has a valuable role and contribution to make					
I often respond emotionally to things that I see happen					
Individuals are responsible for their own successes, failures and position in life					
Members of a profession are bound by their professional code of practice rather than by an individual organisation's policies and values					
I can become very involved with the feelings of a character in a novel					
Publicly funded services should not necessarily be available and accessible to all members of the community					
It isn't important for me to be regarded as a 'Professional' in my field					
I am less likely to defend another person if I have not experienced their particular disadvantage					
I have a clear understanding of my organisation's roles and responsibilities					
I am more attracted to people from a similar background to my own					
I often feel that the desired service standards and expectations within my organisation are unrealistic					
Thriving societies should not be expected to support those from less secure environments					

Continued on next page…

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
Community has no real value in modern society					
I find it easier to understand another person's situation if I have experienced the same thing					
I believe in the organisation I work for and what it is trying to achieve					
I am unlikely to form a friendship with somebody whose values are different from my own					
In social situations, I make a conscious effort to understand the feelings and experiences of others					
Every citizen has the right to equal access and opportunity					
I accept that more generic skills and attributes, rather than traditional librarian skills, are required to deliver services with contemporary value and meaning					
Sometimes I find it difficult to feel sorry for others when they are describing their problems					
It isn't important that other people consider me to be sensitive and responsive to their circumstances					
I am more likely to form successful working partnerships with colleagues who have similar principles to me					
I sometimes feel that government policy and 'top down' objectives challenge my professional status and identity					
When I see someone being treated unfairly, I don't always feel pity for them					
When I watch a film, I find it difficult to put myself in the place of one or more of the characters					
I feel obliged to express compassion for those suffering disadvantage and/or distress					
I would describe myself as a warm-hearted person					

Section 3: Social inclusion and your public library authority

A As far as you are aware, has your organisation undertaken any community profiling exercises in the last 12 months:

Yes		No		Don't know	

B To your knowledge, are any of the following social groups or categories represented significantly in your organisation's local community:

Unemployed		English language difficulties		Low literacy skills		Homeless	
Registered disabled		Elderly and/or housebound		Refugees and/or asylum seekers		Low-income single parent families	
Looked after children		Other potentially socially excluded groups					

C.i Is your organisation currently providing services targeted specifically to one or more of the previously selected groups:

Yes		No		Don't know		Not applicable	

ii If 'yes', which of the following services are being provided for these groups:

Outreach services		Specific library collections		Partnership-based services	
Events		Funded projects		Other	

If 'no', 'don't know' or 'not applicable', please move on to question D.

iii Are you involved in the provision and delivery of these services:

Yes, directly		Yes, indirectly		No	

D Would you like to be directly involved in any future service provision targeted towards these user groups:

Yes		No		Undecided	

E Are you aware of current national policy and debate concerning social exclusion:

Yes, very		Yes, partly		No, not at all		Undecided	

F Are you appreciative of the role of public libraries in meeting social inclusion aims and objectives:

Yes, very		Yes, partly		No, not at all		Undecided	

Notes for completing the questionnaire

Section 1: About you

1.C – categories are adapted from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) 'Ethnic Monitoring Categories for England and Wales':
http://www.cre.gov.uk/gdpract/em_cat_ew.html

1.E – Definitions:
Culturally homogenous: groups of people with similar ethnic, social, cultural and religious backgrounds
Culturally diverse: groups of people with differing ethnic, social, cultural and religious backgrounds
Denomination: base your response on your own interpretation of your school's religious education and promotion, for example, an Anglican state school may have an official single denomination, but be culturally open in its attitudes towards other faiths
Educational performance: base your response on your own interpretation of your school's academic output and performance in relation to other schools within the Local Education Authority (LEA)
NB: if you attended more than one secondary school, relate your answers to the school attended for the longest period, or the one that you remember and identify with the most

1.F – based on the English regions as defined by the nine Regional Agencies of the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA): www.mla.gov.uk

1.G – please indicate the total amount of time you have worked in public libraries, including all employers/authorities and allowing for career breaks etc

1.H – local authority categories taken from:
https://www.labour.org.uk/councillors/newsite/index.php?id=574

1.I – CILIP membership categories taken from:
http://www.cilip.org.uk/membership/categories

Section 2: Exploring social issues

As we are interested in your own interpretations of and considered responses to section 2 of the questionnaire, no definitions or notes for completion are included. Please consider each statement carefully before giving your response.

Section 3: Social inclusion and your public library authority

3.A – *Community profiling exercises* involve the creation of profiles to inform the identification of community needs from public library services and facilities, and the setting of targets, service planning and performance measures. Identified as a service priority by Public Library Service Impact Measures (April 2005),
http://www.mla.gov.uk/webdav/harmonise?Page/@id=73&Document/@id=24640&Section[@stateId_eq_left_hand_root]/@id=4332

3.B – categories of (potentially) socially excluded groups taken from Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Department for Communities and Local Government
http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pns/index.asp?id=1127160

3.C.ii – Definitions
Outreach services – i.e. where services are taken out of the library and in to the community or other organisations and services, e.g. mobile libraries, books in GP surgeries/health centres
Special library collections – such as book stock in a specific language; jobseeker materials
Partnership-based services – mainstream services delivered in partnership with other organisations and services, e.g. housing services, Connexions.
Events – events targeted towards specific groups and communities, e.g. reading groups/promotions
Funded projects – fixed term projects that are funded internally or externally and designed to target specific groups.

Appendix 3 – Survey data: demographic summary

The first section of the questionnaire included questions of a demographic nature, and respondents where asked to define and describe their gender, age, ethnicity, highest formal education qualification, their secondary (11-16) education experience, region of work (geographical), length of time in public library service, type of local authority (employed by), membership of the professional body CILIP (the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals), and their current role within their respective organisations.

Age, gender and ethnicity

The gender ratio for the sample is 79.2% female and 20.8% male. The predominant age group is 46-55, with 43.3% of the sample falling in to this category. A further 67 respondents (14.8%) are aged 56-65. Only 16.8% of the sample is aged 35 or less, with a mere 14 respondents (3.1%) in the aged 16-25 category. In terms of age and gender, the sample therefore is predominantly female and what we can describe as 'middle-aged'.

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	94	20.8	20.8	20.8
	female	359	79.2	79.2	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16-25	14	3.1	3.1	3.1
	26-35	62	13.7	13.7	16.8
	36-45	114	25.2	25.2	41.9
	46-55	196	43.3	43.3	85.2
	56-65	67	14.8	14.8	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

The largest ethnic grouping is White-British, with a huge 89.6% of the sample falling in to this category. The second largest ethnic grouping with 10 members (2.2%) is White other. A significant number of ethnic groups are represented, including Indian, Black Caribbean and Chinese, but only in very small numbers.

Ethnic group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Indian	6	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Pakistani	1	.2	.2	1.5
	Black Caribbean	6	1.3	1.3	2.9
	Black African	3	.7	.7	3.5
	White British	406	89.6	89.6	93.2
	White Irish	9	2.0	2.0	95.1
	White other	10	2.2	2.2	97.4
	White and Black Caribbean	1	.2	.2	97.6
	White and Black African	2	.4	.4	98.0
	White and Asian	1	.2	.2	98.2
	Other dual backgrounds	1	.2	.2	98.5
	Chinese	3	.7	.7	99.1
	Other	4	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

With respect to gender, age and ethnicity, the sample is therefore strikingly homogenous. The most frequent gender/age/ethnicity grouping was 'female + 46-55 + White-British', with 148 respondents selecting this combination, meaning that 32.7% of the sample fall in to a female White-British middle-aged category.

Formal education experience

The sample suggests a highly qualified occupational grouping, the majority of which (37.3%) are educated to postgraduate level (98 respondents with a postgraduate Certificate/Diploma, 70 with a Masters Degree and 1 PhD holder). A further 136 respondents (30%) are educated to degree level.

Highest educational qualification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	GCSE/O Level/CSE	46	10.2	10.2	10.2
	A Level/NVQ	63	13.9	13.9	24.1
	HND/Cert	16	3.5	3.5	27.6
	Degree	136	30.0	30.0	57.6
	Postgraduate Cert/Dip	98	21.6	21.6	79.2
	Masters degree	70	15.5	15.5	94.7
	Doctorate	1	.2	.2	94.9
	Other	23	5.1	5.1	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Respondents were also asked to describe their secondary (11-16) education experience, with reference to the pupil and staff profile of their school(s) attended, the denomination predominantly associated with their secondary education, and their school's educational performance. The aim of this section was to gather information regarding respondents' cultural and social background and experiences. The concept of social class is difficult to define, and traditional measures of social class as a concept were considered to be too ambiguous within the context of this research. It was decided therefore that the cultural experience of respondents during their formative years would be a more effective investigation.

76.8% of the sample described the pupil and staff profile of their school(s) as *culturally homogenous* (i.e. groups of people with similar ethnic, social, cultural and religious backgrounds). 76 respondents (16.8%) described the same profile as *culturally diverse* (i.e. groups of people with differing ethnic, social, cultural and religious backgrounds), and 29 respondents (6.4%) were 'undecided' on this question. Educational denomination is a little more varied, with 48.3% describing their secondary education experience as *dominated by one faith*, and 43.7% as *largely secular*. 227 respondents (50.1%) describe their school's educational performance as 'good' and 119 respondents (26.3%) describe the same as 'excellent', suggesting that the majority of respondents attended achieving schools.

Educational profile

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Culturally homogenous	348	76.8	76.8	76.8
	Culturally diverse	76	16.8	16.8	93.6
	Undecided	29	6.4	6.4	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Educational denomination

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Dominated by one faith	219	48.3	48.3	48.3
	Largely secular	198	43.7	43.7	92.1
	Undecided	36	7.9	7.9	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Educational performance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Poor	17	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Average	79	17.4	17.4	21.2
	Good	227	50.1	50.1	71.3
	Excellent	119	26.3	26.3	97.6
	Undecided	11	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

The most frequent secondary education experience grouping was 'culturally homogenous + dominated by one faith + good', with 90 respondents selecting this combination, suggesting that nearly one fifth of the sample (19.9%) had a culturally and socially homogenous and academically successful formative educational experience.

Regional representation

The regional representation amongst the sample is satisfactory when compared proportionately to regional response rates. The most significantly represented regional group is the South East (19.6% of the sample) but this is one of the largest regions in terms of the number of public library authorities within that region.

Regional response rates:

- East Midlands (110 questionnaires received; response rate 41%)
- East of England (50 questionnaires despatched; 58%)
- London (190 questionnaires despatched; 31%)
- North East (50 questionnaires despatched; 58%)
- North West (195 questionnaires despatched; 27%)
- South East (205 questionnaires despatched; 43%)
- South West (100 questionnaires despatched; 64%)
- West Midlands (105 questionnaires despatched; 48%)
- Yorkshire (100 questionnaires despatched; 37%)

Region of employment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	East Midlands	45	9.9	9.9	9.9
	East of England	29	6.4	6.4	16.3
	London	58	12.8	12.8	29.1
	North East	29	6.4	6.4	35.5
	Yorkshire	37	8.2	8.2	43.7
	North West	52	11.5	11.5	55.2
	South East	89	19.6	19.6	74.8
	South West	64	14.1	14.1	89.0
	West Midlands	50	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

The East of England and London regions had the greatest proportion of male respondents (9 out of 29 from East of England; 18 out of 58 from London). The South East region had the highest number of respondents from the younger age ranges (5 in '16-25' and 14 in '26-35'). The South West region had the highest number of respondents aged 56-65 (12). The West Midlands region had the highest number of respondents from other ethnic groups (i.e. non White-British), and along with the East of England, the highest proportion

of ‘poor’ and ‘average’ school’s educational performance selections (East of England 1 ‘poor’ and 9 ‘average’; West Midlands 2 ‘poor’ and 11 ‘average’).

The most represented ‘authority type’ amongst the survey sample is County Council (38.4%), followed by Unitary Authority (23.2%).

Authority type

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Metropolitan council	74	16.3	16.3	16.3
	Unitary authority	105	23.2	23.2	39.5
	County council	174	38.4	38.4	77.9
	District council	12	2.6	2.6	80.6
	Borough council	22	4.9	4.9	85.4
	London Borough Council	58	12.8	12.8	98.2
	Other	8	1.8	1.8	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Professional identity

Questions relating to professional identity included total length of time in public library service, CILIP membership and current roles within respondents’ respective organisations. The majority of respondents (19.6%) have more than 30 years service with the public library service, which is less surprising given the average age range amongst the sample. There follows an even distribution amongst the remaining time scales, the smallest percentage of 9.7 having 10-15 years service.

Length of time in service

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 5 years	63	13.9	13.9	13.9
	5-10 years	70	15.5	15.5	29.4
	10-15 years	44	9.7	9.7	39.1
	15-20 years	53	11.7	11.7	50.8
	20-25 years	65	14.3	14.3	65.1
	25-30 years	69	15.2	15.2	80.4
	More than 30 years	89	19.6	19.6	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

There is almost a 50/50 split amongst the survey sample relating to membership of the professional body CILIP, with 226 respondents (49.9%) belonging to the organisation. This demonstrates a strong sense of professional identity and commitment amongst the sample. 69.5% of those

belonging to the professional body are Chartered Members; the next most significant type of membership is Associate (19.9%).

CILIP membership

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	226	49.9	49.9	49.9
	no	227	50.1	50.1	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

CILIP membership category

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Chartered member MCILIP	157	34.7	69.5	69.5
	Chartered Fellow FCILIP	3	.7	1.3	70.8
	Associate	45	9.9	19.9	90.7
	Student member	4	.9	1.8	92.5
	Affiliated member	17	3.8	7.5	100.0
	Total	226	49.9	100.0	
Missing	System	227	50.1		
Total		453	100.0		

Of the 169 respondents with postgraduate qualifications, 117 are members of CILIP. Given the high proportion of chartered members, we can assume that significant numbers of the sample hold specific library and information management qualifications (a prerequisite to chartered membership). Respondents with the most length of time in service are more likely to be CILIP members; only 18 out of 63 respondents with less than 5 years service are members of the professional body, whereas 39 out of 65 respondents with 20-25 years service are members, along with 54 out of 89 respondents with more than 30 years service.

The majority of respondents are currently undertaking middle management roles within their organisations (33.1%), closely followed by front-line roles (30%). 13 Heads of Service responded to the survey, along with 48 Senior Managers (10.6%) and 72 Team Leaders (15.9%).

Role in organisation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Front-line	136	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Team leader	72	15.9	15.9	45.9
	Middle management	150	33.1	33.1	79.0
	Senior management	48	10.6	10.6	89.6
	Head of Service	13	2.9	2.9	92.5
	other	34	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	453	100.0	100.0	

Only 39 out of 136 members of front-line staff and 31 out of 72 Team Leaders are members of CILIP, compared to 92 out of 150 Middle Managers, 37 out of 48 Senior Managers and 10 out of 13 Heads of Service, suggesting a greater level of professional identity amongst senior staff, reflective of the traditional professional/non-professional hierarchical structures in the profession. The majority of frontline staff (44 out of 136) have les than 5 years service in the public library sector, followed by 35 with 5-10 years service; middle managers most frequently have more than 30 years service (41 out of 150).

The majority of front-line staff are aged 36-45 (41 out of 136) closely followed by 26-35 (39 out of 136). The majority of Middle Managers are aged 46-55 (75 out of 150). Of the non-White-British ethnic groups represented in the sample, the majority work in front-line roles, for example 3 out of 6 Indian respondents, 4 out of 6 Black-Caribbean respondents and 3 out of 3 Chinese respondents. 48 out of 136 members of frontline staff are educated to degree level; a further 31 frontline respondents hold postgraduate qualifications, and the one respondent with a PhD also categorised themselves as front-line staff. This demonstrates a highly qualified sample at all levels of the respective organisations.

Appendix 4 - Survey data – cumulative Professional Empathy scores

The Genuine Empathy scale

The five items of the GE scale are:

GE1 I am unlikely to form a friendship with somebody whose values are different from my own

GE2 I find it easier to understand another person's situation if I have experienced the same thing

GE3 I am more attracted to people from a similar background to my own

GE4 I am less likely to defend another person if I have not experienced their particular disadvantage

GE5 I am more likely to form successful working partnerships with colleagues who have similar principles to me

	GE1		GE2		GE3		GE4		GE5	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	21	4.6	10	2.2	20	4.4	65	14.3	4	0.9
Disagree	233	51.4	125	27.6	166	36.6	292	64.5	122	26.9
Undecided	88	19.4	40	8.8	96	21.2	62	13.7	52	11.5
Agree	105	23.2	253	55.8	159	35.1	30	6.6	255	56.3
Strongly agree	6	1.3	25	5.5	12	2.6	4	0.9	20	4.4
MEAN SCORE	2.7		3.4		3.0		2.2		3.4	

Summary of cumulative responses to GE scale

The Sympathetic Tendency scale

The five items of the ST scale are:

ST1 I often have feelings of concern for people less fortunate than myself

ST2 Sometimes I find it difficult to feel sorry for others when they are describing their problems (-)

ST3 When I see someone being treated unfairly, I don't always feel pity for them (-)

ST4 I would describe myself as a warm-hearted person

ST5 I often respond emotionally to things that I see happen

	ST1		ST2 (-)		ST3 (-)		ST4		ST5	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree			29	6.4	67	14.8	1	0.2	3	0.7
Disagree	15	3.3	261	57.6	306	67.5	18	4	82	18.1
Undecided	36	7.9	83	18.3	51	11.3	48	10.6	111	24.5
Agree	309	68.2	76	16.8	27	6	315	69.5	213	47
Strongly agree	93	20.5	4	0.9	2	0.4	71	15.7	44	9.7
MEAN SCORE	4.1		3.5		3.9		4.0		3.5	

Summary of cumulative responses to ST scale

The Simulated Empathy scale

The five items of the SE scale are:

SE1 When I watch a film, I find it difficult to put myself in the place of one or more of the characters (-)

SE2 In social situations, I make a conscious effort to understand the feelings and experiences of others

SE3 I get very involved with the feelings of a character in a novel

SE4 I feel obliged to express compassion for those suffering disadvantage and/or distress

SE5 It isn't important that other people consider me to be sensitive and responsive to their circumstances (-)

	SE1 (-)		SE2		SE3		SE4		SE5 (-)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	35	7.7	1	0.2	8	1.8	12	2.6	59	13
Disagree	300	66.2	9	2	62	13.7	194	42.8	288	63.6
Undecided	79	17.4	31	6.8	69	15.2	104	23	64	14.1
Agree	37	8.2	361	79.7	258	57	126	27.8	37	8.2
Strongly agree	2	0.4	51	11.3	56	12.4	17	3.8	5	1.1
MEAN SCORE	3.7		4.0		3.6		2.9		3.8	

Summary of cumulative responses to SE scale

The Social Identity scale

The five items of the SI scale are:

SI1 Community has no real value in modern society (-)

SI2 Individuals are responsible for their own successes, failures and position in life

SI3 Every citizen has the right to equal access and opportunity

SI4 Members of culturally diverse communities have a lot to offer one another

SI5 Thriving societies should not be expected to support those vulnerable and at risk from less secure environments (-)

	SI1 (-)		SI2		SI3		SI4		SI5 (-)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	231	51	10	2.2	4	0.9	1	0.2	140	30.9
Disagree	186	41.1	163	36	4	0.9	5	1.1	244	53.9
Undecided	22	4.9	130	28.7	7	1.5	38	8.4	48	10.6
Agree	13	2.9	122	26.9	188	41.5	274	60.5	18	4
Strongly agree	1	0.2	28	6.2	250	55.2	135	29.8	3	0.7
MEAN SCORES	4.4		3.0		4.5		4.2		4.1	

Summary of cumulative responses to SI scale

The Service Values scale

The five items of the SV scale:

SV1 I have a clear understanding of my organisation's roles and responsibilities

SV2 I often feel that the desired service standards and expectations within my organisation are unrealistic (-)

SV3 Every member of my organisation has a valuable role and contribution to make

SV4 Publicly funded services should not necessarily be available and accessible to all members of the community (-)

SV5 I believe in the organisation I work for and what it is trying to achieve

	SV1		SV2 (-)		SV3		SV4 (-)		SV5	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	3	0.7	11	2.4	1	0.2	221	48.8	4	0.9
Disagree	13	2.9	183	40.4	9	2	169	37.3	17	3.8
Undecided	30	6.6	77	17	18	4	27	6	55	12.1
Agree	296	65.3	152	33.6	237	52.3	27	6	299	66
Strongly agree	111	24.5	30	6.6	188	41.5	9	2	78	17.2
MEAN SCORES	4.1		3.0		4.3		4.3		3.9	

Summary of cumulative responses to SV scale

The Professional Ethics scale

The five items of the PE scale are:

PE1 It isn't important for me to be regarded as a Professional in my field (-)

PE2 I sometimes feel that government policy and 'top down' objectives challenge my professional status and identity

PE3 Members of a profession are bound by their professional code of practice rather than an individual organisation's policies and values

PE4 My sector should have the same professional standing as medical, legal and financial sectors

PE5 I accept that more generic skills and attributes are required to deliver services with contemporary value and meaning (-)

	PE1 (-)		PE2		PE3		PE4		PE5 (-)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	68	15	5	1.1	5	1.1	1	0.2	5	1.1
Disagree	187	41.3	83	18.3	123	27.2	62	13.7	51	11.3
Undecided	50	11	164	36.2	186	41.1	92	20.3	64	14.1
Agree	123	27.2	181	40	127	28	212	46.8	241	53.2
Strongly agree	25	5.5	20	4.4	20	2.6	86	19	92	20.3
MEAN SCORES	3.3		3.3		3.2		3.7		2.2	

Summary of cumulative responses to PE scale

Professional Empathy measure summary

Genuine Empathy	Sympathetic Tendency	Simulated Empathy	Social Identity	Service Values	Professional Ethics
2.9	**3.8**	**3.6**	**4.0**	**3.9**	**3.1**

Mean scores per Professional Empathy scale (cumulative)

Appendix 5 – Focus group and interview questions

Focus groups with front-line staff – QUESTIONS

Staff social inclusion awareness, participation and involvement
1 In your opinion, are front-line staff generally aware of social inclusion policy and the drivers behind the objective to provide services for socially excluded groups?
Your answer:
2 How involved are you as front-line staff in the • Planning and design of services for socially excluded groups? • The delivery of services to socially excluded groups? • The evaluation of these services?
Your answer:
3 What are the barriers to your involvement, if any? Describe
Your answer:
4 Has there been any internal opposition to the development of such services, or the implementation of social inclusion policy? Describe
Your answer:
Organisational culture and its impact
5 How 'culturally diverse' is the staff profile of your PLA/organisation?
Your answer:
6 In a recent survey of public library staff (conducted as part of this project), the majority of respondents were aged 45-55, White-British, female and educated to degree level. How fair is it to say that public libraries are mostly staffed by White-British, middle-aged, middle class women?
Your answer:
7 Does this raise issues for the provision of socially-inclusive services? Describe
Your answer:

8 Has there been any additional/specialised staff recruitment in your organisation to provide socially inclusive services? Describe (different to standard recruitment? Changes to job descriptions/person specifications?)
Your answer:
9 What skills do staff need to provide services for socially excluded/disadvantaged groups?
Your answer:
10 Are the staff training and communication methods in your organisation appropriate and effective in equipping staff with the skills and attributes to deliver such services?
Your answer:
11 Is the traditional professional/non-professional staffing structure appropriate for the 21st century public library?
Your answer:
Excluded groups
12 Are there any particular, traditionally excluded groups currently being targeted or prioritised by your PLA/organisation? How?
Your answer:
13 Are any groups particularly marginalised, albeit unintentionally, by your service? Why?
Your answer:
14 How do these initiatives differ, if at all, from 'mainstream' public library services? Is there a tension between the two?
Your answer:
15 What issues does/has your organisation faced in meeting these objectives?
Your answer:

Local interpretations of national policy
16 Are there any on-going or future plans relating to social inclusion policy in your organisation?
Your answer:
17 How does this relate to regional or national objectives?
Your answer:
18 In your opinion, does your PLA/organisation provide a sustainable, socially inclusive service?
Your answer:

Interview questions

Social inclusion awareness, participation and involvement
In your opinion, how aware of social inclusion policy, and the drivers behind the objective to provide services for socially excluded groups, is your PLA?
Your answer:
Does awareness differ within and across the staffing structure?
Your answer:
Who primarily (within your organisation) is responsible for the • Planning and design of services for socially excluded groups? • The delivery of services to SE groups? • The evaluation of these services?
Your answer:
What are the barriers to staff involvement, if any? Describe
Your answer:
Have you experienced any internal opposition to the development of services for SE groups? Describe
Your answer:
Organisational culture and its impact
How 'culturally diverse' is the staff profile of your PLA/organisation?
Your answer:
In a recent survey of public library staff (conducted as part of this project), the majority of respondents were aged 45-55, White-British, female and educated to degree level. How fair is it to say that public libraries are mostly staffed by White-British, middle-aged, middle class women?
Your answer:

Does this raise issues for the provision of socially-inclusive services? Describe
Your answer:
Has there been any additional/specialised staff recruitment in your organisation to provide socially inclusive services? Describe (different to standard recruitment? Changes to job descriptions/person specifications?)
Your answer:
What skills do staff need to provide services for socially excluded/disadvantaged groups?
Your answer:
Are the staff training and communication methods in your organisation appropriate and effective in equipping staff with the skills and attributes to deliver such services?
Your answer:
Is the traditional professional/non-professional staffing structure appropriate for the 21st century public library?
Your answer:
Excluded groups
Are there any particular, traditionally excluded groups currently being targeted or prioritised by your PLA/organisation? How?
Your answer:
Are any groups particularly marginalised, albeit unintentionally, by your service? Why?
Your answer:
How do these initiatives differ, if at all, from 'mainstream' public library services? Is there a tension between the two?

Your answer:
What issues does/has your organisation faced in meeting these objectives?
Your answer:
Local interpretations of national policy
Are there any on-going or future plans relating to social inclusion policy in your organisation?
Your answer:
How does this relate to regional or national objectives?
Your answer:
In your opinion, does your PLA/organisation provide a sustainable, socially inclusive service?
Your answer:

Appendix 6 - CILIP Library + Information Gazette – profile of community librarian/social inclusion related vacancies January '06 – December '07

NB: not limited to English regions: all relevant UK posts included to provide 'snapshot' of recruitment specifications

Person specifications have been colour-coded according to the following categories:

Skills/knowledge/experience	Definitions
Library specific	Knowledge or experience explicitly/specifically linked to library work and the requisite skills
Social inclusion/community based	Such as prior experience of working in a community setting, or of working with socially excluded groups
Interpersonal	Such as communication skills, or behavioural skills linked to personality traits
Generic	Generic skills and attributes that could be associated with a wide range of posts, e.g. time management or organisational skills, creativity etc

Only the skills and attributes specified in the advertisement itself have been collected and profiled: application packs with more detailed person specifications were not consulted.

Results of the exercise are summarised as follows:

37 social inclusion-related or community-based vacancies were advertised in total
17 specify that a library qualification is required from candidates
197 skills/attributes were specified in total

Skills/knowledge/experience	Number
Library specific	**29**
Social inclusion/community based	**11**
Interpersonal	**58**
Generic	**99**

Gazette issue	Vacancy title	Authority	Salary	Chartered/qualified librarian required (Y/N)	Person specification (according to advert)
27/01/06	Community well-being: Bookstart Co-ordinator	Thurrock Council	£23,019-24,507 FT	N (not specified)	• Outstanding communicator • Warm, outgoing personality • Self-motivated • Organized • Adaptable • Ability to think creatively • Enthusiasm for books and libraries
27/01/06	Community Library Manager	City and County of Swansea	£15,675-17,469 FT	N (not specified)	• Enthusiastic • Innovative • Library OR customer-focused background (ideally)
10/02/06	Prison Library and Resources Manager	Cambridgeshire County Council	£17, 922-21,654 pro rata 25 hours p/w	Y	Further information only available in application pack
21/04/06	Community Library Manager	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	£20,895-24,708 FT	Y	• Experienced librarian • Enthusiastic • Committed • At least two years recent experience of providing direct services to the public • At least two years supervisory/management experience • Buildings management experience
05/05/06	Reader Development project Worker – Pentonville Prison	Islington	£23,994-25,395 pro rata 20 hours p/w	N (not specified)	• Good communication skills • Good organisational skills • 21+ • basic level IT skills

					• 'can do' approach to problem solving • enthusiasm for and wide knowledge of literature
05/05/06	Sure Start Librarian	Derbyshire County Council	£20,895-24,708 FT	Y	• ability to work flexibly • team-worker • excellent interpersonal skills • excellent IT skills • excellent organisational skills • creative thinking skills • experience of working with children and families in a library or community setting • enthusiasm for and knowledge of books, reading and libraries in relation to children's learning & development • ability to manage change
05/05/06	Librarian – Erlestoke Prison & community libraries	Wilthsire County Council	£20,895-22,293 FT	Y	• 3 years experience as chartered librarian • confident team leadership and supervisory skills • sound understanding of ICT
05/05/06	Community Librarian (Young People's Services)	Fife Council	£18,381-20,169 qualified, £20,808-23,034 chartered FT	Y	• Commitment to customer-focused library services • Demonstrable knowledge of young people's services and books • Experience of stock management • Budget control experience • Staff supervision experience • Highly motivated • Outgoing

					• Creative • Full current driving licence
05/05/06	Community Librarian	Flintshire County Council	£24,708-26,157 pro rata 18.5 hours p/w (job share)	Y	• Experience of managing direct delivery of public library services • Excellent interpersonal and communication skills • Ability to think and act innovatively and proactively
16/06/06	Prison Librarian	Suffolk County Council	£21,588-24,708 FT	Y	• Self-sufficient • Enterprising • Good judgement • Initiative and flexibility
30/06/06	Home Library Service Librarian	North Ayrshire Council	£18,381-20,169 FT	Y	• ECDL qualified • NOF ICT training outcomes 2-8 • Knowledge of reader development strategies • Communication skills • Experience of housebound provision and mobile library services • Enthusiastic team leader • Good motivational and supervisory skills • Organisational skills • Driving licence
28/07/06	Prison Librarian (HMP Everthorpe)	East Riding of Yorkshire Council	£22,293 pa PT 20 hrs (point 28)	N (not specified)	• Experienced librarian • Enthusiasm and commitment • Good communication & interpersonal skills • Self-motivated • Ability to manage change

					• Knowledge and understanding of working with diverse groups inc Ems • Interest in prison libraries • Experience and knowledge of ICT • Driving licence and own vehicle
25/08/06	Librarian: Social Inclusion	Nottingham City Council	£18,540-20,235 pa PT 18.5 hrs	Y ("working towards chartered status")	• Confidence in communicating with diverse groups
22/9/06	Community Librarian	Caerphilly County Borough Council	£16,137-22,293 scale 4/5/6	N not essential (non-chartered post-holders appointed on scale 4)	• Committed • Enthusiastic • Newly qualified OR with at least 5 years experience • Flexible patterns of working inc evenings and weekends
22/9/06	Prison librarian	Suffolk County Council	£21,588-24,708	Y	• Self-sufficient • Enterprising • Good judgement • Initiative • Flexible
03/11/06	Reading and Outreach Services Manager	Peterborough City Council	£29,859-32,487	N not specified	Not specified in advert, only role & responsibilities: person spec available in application pack
03/11/06	Community Information Officer, young people and schools	North Yorkshire County Council	£18,450-22,293	Y	• Enterprising • Committed • Enthusiastic • Self-motivated • Communication skills • Organisational skills • Experience in library OR education sector • Car user

17/11/06	**Prison Library Development Managers HMP Sheppey Cluster**	**Kent County Council**	**£24,240-28,610**	**N not specified**	• **Commitment to high quality LIS** • **Excellent communication and interpersonal skills** • **Ability to empathise with client group** • **Reader development abilities** • **Customer-focused**
17/11/06	**Assistant Librarian HMP Holloway**	**LB of Islington**	**£21,552-23,337 pa pro rata 21 hours p/w**	**N not specified**	• **'people person'** • **Excellent communication skills** • **Organisational skills**
1/12/06	**Prison Librarian HMP Wandsworth**	**Wandsworth**	**£29,292-31,320 PO1 FT**	**Y (or *appropriate* alternative)**	• **Vision and enthusiasm** • **Knowledge of F4F** • **ICT skills** • **Communication skills** • **Experience of managing staff and budgets** • **RD knowledge and experience** • **Commitment to customer care** • **Commitment to equal opps** • **Time management skills** • **Flexibility** • **Prison library experience an advantage**
12/01/07	**Outreach Officer**	**Hackney**	**£23,994-25,395 pro rata job share 18 hrs**	**N not specified**	• **Outgoing personality**
26/01/07	**Librarian: Older People and Disability**	**Milton Keynes**	**£16,470-23,952 pro rata 12 month FTC 18.5 hrs p/w**	**Y salary career graded (qualified or chartered)**	• **Sound communication skills** • **Sound organisational skills** • **Interest in LIS needs of variety of customers** • **Awareness of issues facing public**

					• library service • Awareness of issues facing Adult Social Care
9/02/07	Community Librarian, Forres (Learndirect Scotland Centre)	Moray	£24,599-26,918 36.25 hrs p/w	N not specified	• Outgoing • Enthusiastic • Motivated
23/2/07	Librarian – Adult Learning and Social Inclusion	LB of Kensington and Chelsea	£23,300-25,300	N not specified	• Enthusiastic Person specification not provided in any great detail
23/2/07	Reading and Outreach Services Manager	Peterborough City Council	£29,895-32,487 FT	N not specified	Only available in application pack
9/3/07	Community Librarian – Adult Services and Reader Development	Luton Borough Council	£19,614-21,558 qualified: £22,293-24,708 chartered	Y	• Enthusiastic • Good customer care skills • Ability to relate to children, adults • Ability to relate to socially excluded people • Good team worker • Ability to motivate others • Ability to work independently • Ability to work to targets and deadlines • ECDL/ICT skills • Good enquiry skills • Experience of promoting library services to the community • Ability to work outside normal office hours
6/4/07	Librarian, HMP Styal, Wilmslow	Cheshire County Council	£13,153-15,283 21 hrs per week	N not specified	• Commitment to social inclusion • Awareness of basic skills materials

					• Enthusiasm • Commitment to helping users • Flexibility • Prison library experience desirable
4/5/07	Assistant Library Manager, HMP Liverpool	Liverpool City Council	£18,450-20,235	N not specified	• LMS cataloguing experience desirable • experience of working in challenging service delivery environment • excellent customer service skills • library qualification desirable • supervision & management skills commensurate with NVQ levels 3 to 4 • ability to work as part of a team • ability to work independently • good numeracy skills • good literacy skills • oral and written communication skills • ICT skills • Problem solving skills • flexibility
18/5/07	Librarian: Social Inclusion	Nottingham City Council	£18,450-20,235	Y	• enthusiastic • outgoing • positive • proactive
18/5/07	Prison librarian	Suffolk County Council	£21,588-24,708 (qualified)	N not essential	• well motivated • excellent communication

			19,614-20,895 (unqualified)		skills • commitment to social inclusion • self-sufficient • enterprising • good judgement • initiative • flexibility
29/6/07	Manager – Community Engagement	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	£26,187-28,221	N not specified	• enthusiasm • motivation • ability to work with people and communities • risk management • ability to work in partmerships • creativity
29/6/07	Principal Officer – Community services	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	£26,187-28,221	N not specified	• experienced manager • library service experience • experience of working with local communities • staff motivation skills • commitment to customer care
7/9/07	Prison Librarian (x2) HMP Dorchester and HM Portland YOI	Dorset County Council	£20,895-24,708	N not specified	• well-motivated • enthusiastic • proven management skills • commitment to social inclusion • enterprising • innovative • flexible
5/10/07	Community and Information Officer	East Riding of Yorkshire Council	£22,293	N not specified	• Communication and interpersonal skills

						• ICT skills • Minimum NQF level 3 education • Driving licence
5/10/07	Community Library Manager	Newport City Council	£18,450-20,235	Y		• Highly motivated • Dynamic • Enthusiastic • Proactive • Experience of community work • Experience of managing staff • Ability to cope with pressure • Ability to adapt to change • Experience of public library work 'ideal'
19/10/07	Prison Librarian	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	£18,450-20,235	N not specified		• Flexibility • Enthusiasm • Communication skills • Customer care skills
30/11/07	Team Librarian Social Inclusion	Nottingham City Council	£18,450-20,235	Y		• Enthusiastic • Outgoing • Positive • proactive

Appendix 7 – Workshop questions

Empathy and cultural representation

1. How would you define 'cultural representation' amongst library staff within the social inclusion context?

2. Will the cultural staff profile of public libraries be the same in 20 years time?

3. How does the 'low level resistance' to cultural change described in the report affect the social inclusion offer from public libraries?

4. In your experience, how empathic are public library staff?

5. Is intuitive[15] empathy more important than cognitive[16] empathy when working with disadvantaged groups?

[15] Described as 'genuine' in the research survey
[16] Described as 'simulated' in the research survey

The University Of Sheffield.

Social inclusion and community librarianship

1. Do public libraries fully understand what is meant by social exclusion?

2. Does the conceptual blurring of ‘inclusive’ political objectives have an impact on library service outcomes and effectiveness?

3. Is there a direct relationship between inclusive organisations and inclusive services?

4. Can the tick box culture of local government be overcome by public libraries?

5. Are policy directives helping or hindering the mainstream concept of community librarianship?

Arts & Humanities Research Council

The University Of Sheffield.

Skills, partnerships and professional identity

1. Those involved directly in the provision of social inclusion services scored higher on the Professional Empathy measure: is this why they are directly involved?

2. How, if at all, can training be used to develop empathy skills amongst public library staff?

3. How can public libraries draw upon the experience, knowledge and skills of other social service sectors?

4. Can public libraries deliver socially inclusive services and maintain their own professional identity?

5. What are we really looking for in a community librarian: should the emphasis be on ‘community’ or ‘librarian’?

Arts & Humanities Research Council

Appendix 8 - Workshop themed session handouts

Empathy and cultural representation: *challenging the stereotype?*

The following images appear if we Google 'librarian'. Does the research challenge or uphold the stereotype?

Drive-by shushing.

The film **The Librarian from the Black Lagoon** is based on the book of the same name, written by Mike Thaler and illustrated by Jared Lee.
http://www.librarianfilm.com/

The University Of Sheffield.

Empathy and cultural representation

A colleague was given a selection of 100 images of librarians taken at random from Google Images that represent how librarians are portrayed. She was asked to describe the librarians represented in terms of their gender, ethnicity, and age, and to also give a brief description of the person.

Of the 100 images of librarians:

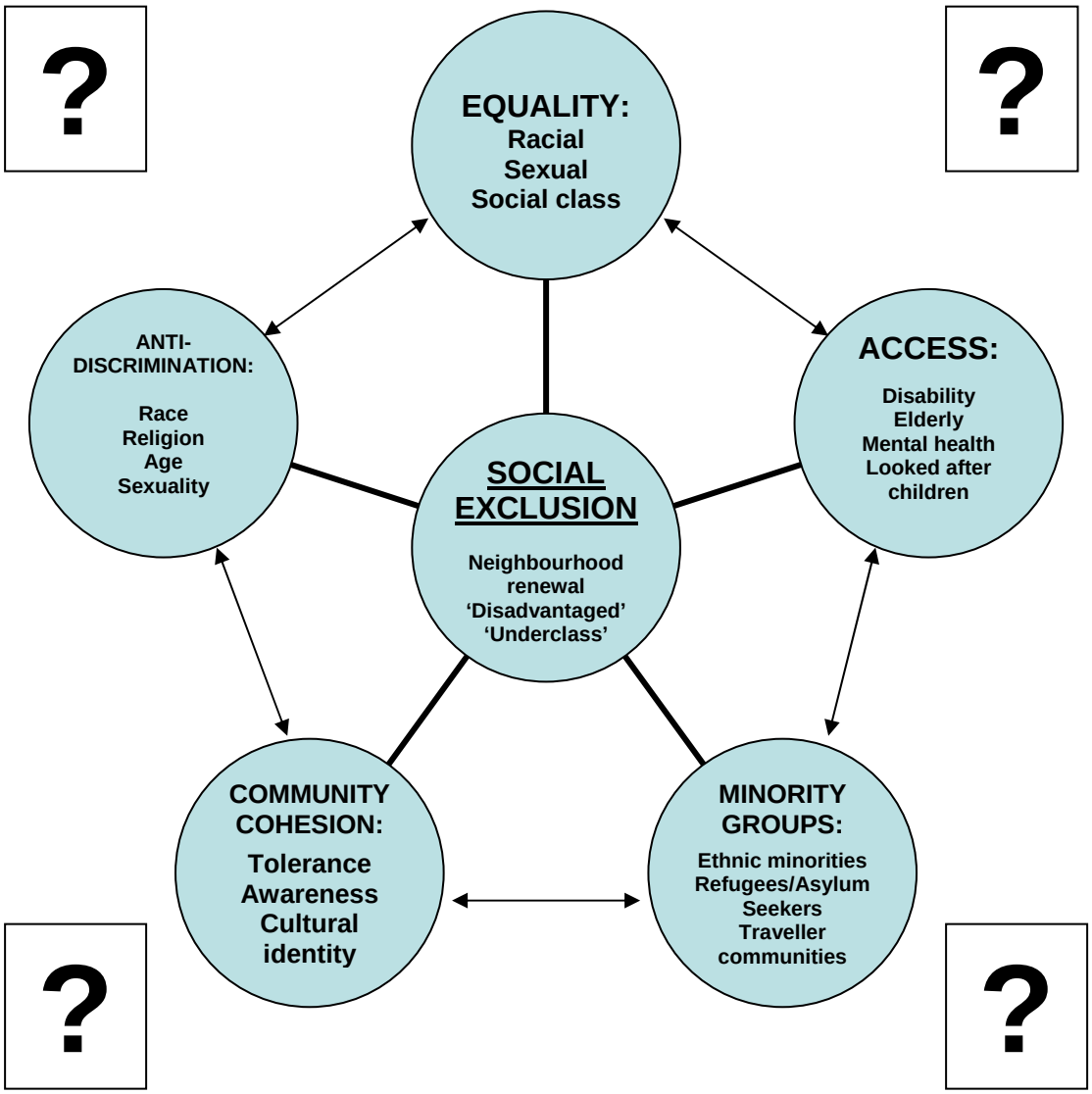
22 were Male
78 were Female
88 were White
7 were Black
5 were Asian (3 Chinese origin; 2 Indian Origin)
44 were described as Young
50 were described as Middle-aged
6 were described as Elderly
43 were described with negative stereotypes e.g. words such as old fashioned, intimidating, aggressive, boring
57 were described with positive stereotypes e.g. approachable, happy, intelligent, sexy

Table: CILIP membership by ethnicity, disability and grade (number)

Ethnicity	FCLIP		MCLIP		Affiliated		Associate		Total
	N	% of row	N	% of row	N	% of row	N	% of row	N
White	324	2.3%	9,554	66.9%	490	3.4%	3,920	27.4%	14,288
Indian	1	0.9%	42	39.3%	4	3.7%	60	56.1%	107
Pakistani	1	5.9%	8	47.1%	3	17.6%	5	29.4%	17
Bangladeshi	0	0.0%	1	11.1%	0	0.0%	8	88.9%	9
Chinese	2	1.7%	48	41.7%	1	0.9%	64	55.7%	115
Black-Caribbean	3	5.7%	13	24.5%	7	13.2%	30	56.6%	53
Black-African	7	8.6%	20	24.7%	0	0.0%	54	66.7%	81
Black-other	1	4.0%	9	36.0%	1	4.0%	14	56.0%	25
Other	8	4.0%	76	37.8%	6	3.0%	111	55.2%	201
Unknown	610	12.4%	2,341	47.8%	450	9.2%	1,500	30.6%	4,901
Total	957	4.8%	12,112	61.2%	962	4.9%	5,766	29.1%	19,797
Number of members considered to be disabled	16	8.4%	117	61.3%	4	2.1%	54	28.3%	191
Source: CILIP membership database, August 2006									

Arts & Humanities Research Council

The following diagram is an attempt to visually represent the conceptual blurring in the area of social exclusion, as perceived in the responses of research participants:



Skills, partnerships and professional identity: *Sector skills analysis*

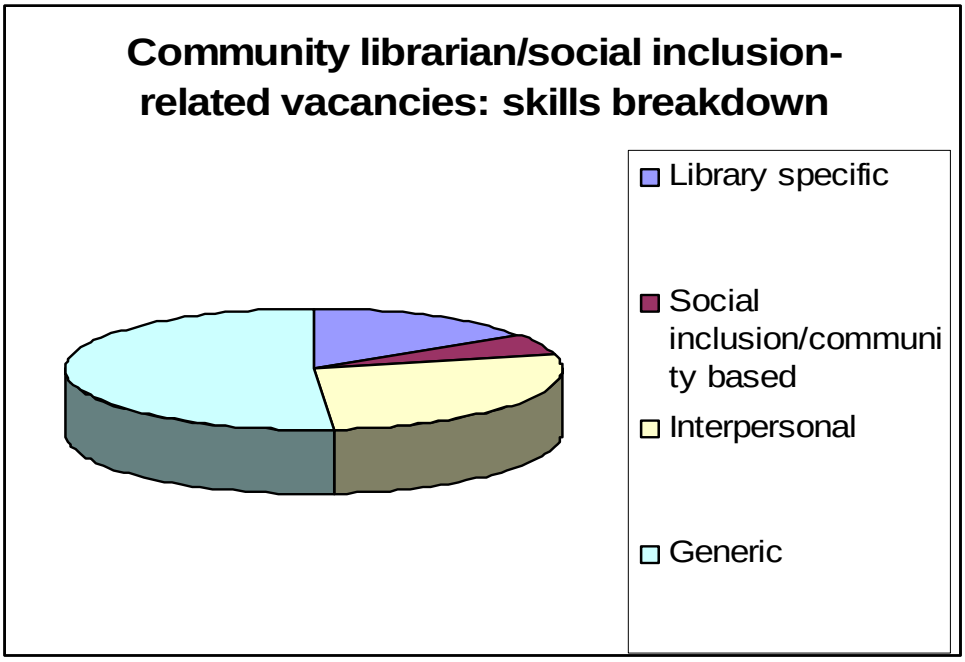
Throughout the project we have been analysing community librarian and social inclusion-related vacancies as advertised in the CILIP Library and Information Gazette. The skills and personal qualities specified in vacancy adverts have been coded according to the following key categories:

Skills/knowledge/experience	Definitions
Library specific	Knowledge or experience explicitly/specifically linked to library work and the requisite skills
Social inclusion/community based	Such as prior experience of working in a community setting, or of working with socially excluded groups
Interpersonal	Such as communication skills, or behavioural skills linked to personality traits
Generic	Generic skills and attributes that could be associated with a wide range of posts, e.g. time management or organizational skills, creativity etc

So far, 35 vacancies have been advertised, specifying a total of 189 skills and personal qualities, which can be broken down as such:

Library specific	**29**
Social inclusion/community based	**11**
Interpersonal	**52**
Generic	**97**

The majority of skills specified can be classed as 'generic'. These include ICT skills, staff management experience/supervisory skills, organization skills and creativity. Experience of working with community groups/in a community setting was one of the least specified criteria. Library specific skills included knowledge of reader development strategies, public/prison library experience and in one case familiarity with *Framework for the Future.* Despite the emphasis on generic skills, **16 (46%) of the 35 vacancies require applicants with a recognized library qualification.**


Community librarian/social inclusion-related vacancies: skills breakdown
Library specific
Social inclusion/community based
Interpersonal
Generic

Appendix 9 – Workshop participant summary

The right 'man' for the job? The role of empathy in community librarianship

Wednesday 17th October 2007
Department of Information Studies
University of Sheffield

Research Workshop Summary

Please find attached a summary of the recent workshop held to discuss the AHRC-funded research project exploring public library staff attitudes towards the social inclusion agenda. The summary includes key points raised by participants during each discussion as follows:

- Participant feedback - responses to the preliminary report
- Empathy and Cultural Representation – themed discussion groups
- Social Inclusion and Community Librarianship - themed discussion groups
- Skills, Partnerships and Professional Identity - themed discussion groups

This data will be analyzed by the project team and included in the research report and subsequent dissemination. All participants are assured complete anonymity, and all data will be used confidentially for research purposes only.

We would welcome any additional feedback, or further issues you would like to raise, both in response to the report you have read and the workshop sessions. Please feel free to contact us at anytime between now and the research contract end in February 2008:

Kerry Wilson
k.m.wilson@sheffield.ac.uk
0114 222 6345

Briony Birdi
b.birdi@sheffield.ac.uk
0114 222 2653

For more information on our research group, the Centre for the Public Library and Information in Society, please visit:

http://www.shef.ac.uk/is/research/centres/cplis

Participant feedback: responses to the preliminary report

Were research findings surprising or entirely expected?

The demographic profile of survey respondents (i.e. predominantly female, White-British, middle aged and middle class) was not necessarily surprising to participants, but still “shocking” to see in print. We agreed that the sample was typical/representative on the whole.

Participants had heard similar ‘resistant’ comments amongst staff before (negative attitudes towards inclusive agenda), so these matched expectations and experience.

What are the implications for public library management?

The apparent lack of information and effective communication within public library authorities was also recognizable to participants.

The belief amongst some research respondents that front-line staff do NOT ‘need to know’ about social inclusion policy was a concern for participants, who believe that greater openness and transparency is needed in library services.

It was felt that some Heads of Services are deluded in thinking that existing communication methods are appropriate and effective.

There is also believed to be a lack of true service awareness amongst senior managers, particularly about the experiences of front-line staff in engaging with library users and providing the face-to-face service.

The support from managers for front-line staff was regarded as limited – front-line staff are often underestimated and under-valued.

Some of the related training being delivered within authorities was judged to be superficial and meaningless, and it was felt that the tick-box attitude was being applied here again. More targeted and specialized training is required.

There is an obvious recruitment versus training issue: should authorities now be seeking to recruit people with the right skills/attributes, or rely on training/development when in post? Diversity awareness for example can be assessed at recruitment level.

What are the implications for social inclusion?

Issues surrounding defining the [socially] excluded were discussed: one or two participants thought that disability in particular was under-referenced in the report.

It was felt that, in order to improve levels of engagement amongst staff, inclusion and diversity issues should be 'sold' as a positive business development approach in terms of thinking about library users of the future, and increased footfall/issues.

As it stands social inclusion is too often perceived as an obligation rather than a good idea or positive agenda.

The prejudices voiced in the report were discussed as common and reflective of public opinion, or at least that of "middle England". Library authorities have the imperative to challenge views.

The relationship between living and working in the same community was discussed, and the fact that higher levels of community awareness might encourage advanced empathic skills and engagement.

Similarly the relationship between moral values (belief in the ethical values of public service) and community pride was discussed, linked to a person's motivation in working for the public library service and its affect upon attitudes to the social inclusion agenda.

Does the research have any positive messages?

The research in itself, and the fact that issues raised will be aired in the public domain, was seen as a positive thing.

There was discussion surrounding some positive dimensions to the homogenous workforce, including the liberal political ideals of the baby-boom generation (e.g. first generation feminists)

What is the value of the research?

One participant who conducted/was involved with research in this area in 2000[17] noted that nothing appears to have changed!

[17] 'Open to All? The public library and social exclusion' available from http://www.seapn.org.uk/documents/OpentoAllvol1.pdf

Another group member observed that some of the terminology used may be outdated ('community librarian' no longer used in one particular authority for example).

It was felt that the project raises fundamental issues and questions about staff values, and why people choose to work in the public library service.

The research also presents leadership challenges for the sector – engagement with policy objectives is dependant upon strong leadership.

Empathy and Cultural Representation – group discussion

Q1 How would you define 'cultural representation' amongst library staff within the social inclusion context?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
It's easier with urban than rural local authorities to represent the demographic in one's staffing profile. A hugely complex issue, becoming more so – as new immigrants coming in with more languages, more issues, so how do you reflect that in a library service? To focus on staff is 'missing the point': the BME community should be reflected in the personnel, but there is the underlying ethos that whatever your cultural background, you should be able to empathise with anyone. Important to include disability (often considered in terms of mobility, but should also include mental health issues, etc.). Important difference to acknowledge, i.e. between the age of the people behind the counter and the age of the people serving the community.	Developing a staff group that represents the entire community is very difficult. Are we asking for the impossible here? Any professional group will have its own culture. Group felt that empathy is something you can teach.	'Cultural representation' a narrow term – disability/sexuality etc. shouldn't be described as 'cultural' issues. Identify groups and engage with them – but how do you identify e.g. LGBT users? You can't quantify – yet figures are what the SMT wants. Why should people declare disability, sexuality, ethnic origin? So how can you be expected to have numbers (i.e. to please SMT etc.)? It's almost an impossible question – what does it mean? Recruitment panels – 'club fisted' approach by a white establishment (to have a 'representative BME person', when often entirely inappropriate).
Q2 Will the cultural staff profile of public libraries be the same in 20 years time?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
The demographic of the country is changing – so this is unavoidable. However, in 10 years' time – maybe not. 29% of births in Sheffield (today) from BME communities – surely will be reflected in future employment trends?	Pessimistic – 10 years ago was feeling very positive, but the situation hasn't really changed. [Another speaker]The profile is slowly changing – we're seeing younger people coming through and moving up the ranks. Important question that we should ask instead –	Hopefully it will change. We do have to take some action ourselves…without it being positive discrimination [general agreement that positive discrimination 'doesn't work']. Careers fairs – important to raise the profile of

Research is a catalyst for change – this piece of work and others like it.	'will the experience of the socially excluded person be better in 20 years?' i.e. irrespective of the staff. Attitudes may not be dependent on staff profile. Section 11 funding affected the situation.	libraries within society.
Q3 How does the 'low level resistance' to cultural change described in the report affect the social inclusion offer from public libraries?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
[Discussing 'low level resistance'] 'I am constantly being told that I am being negative about new things coming in…I like to think that I'm realistic, not negative…we're constantly reinventing the wheel'. A resistance to change is there because of frequent restructures over the past 10-15 years. 'As you get older, you do find it difficult to change'. Some staff feel that IT is 'taking us away from our real work'. Not all staff feel that they have the required skills. Group agreed 'low-level resistance is there'. Training is essential – if good feedback, staff begin to buy into agenda (so issues/initiatives no longer challenged). Vital to address ignorance and remove prejudice.	Low-level resistance – group definitely recognized this. 'We [managers] can't police it on the ground'. 'The invisible customers' – humans naturally associate with, and better serve, people they know/recognise [discussed idea of 'invisible user' as part of Reader Development movement].	A service is only as good as the person delivering it on the day. 'You only have one chance to make a first impression'. Resistance to change in general, rather than resistance to 'the socially excluded'. Some discussion of 'worthy'/'non-worthy' users of the library service – particular problem felt to be in dealing effectively/sensitively with homeless people Some staff act as a 'judge' in terms of 'who should come in' to the library. Group also talked of the 'invisible users' – people we're less at ease dealing with We need to focus on performance management – we can't dictate how people think, but we can focus on how they behave. Front-line staff have a strong customer care ethos – so will usually swallow personal feelings. Methodological issue - Is there a danger, in attitudinal research, that you don't always find how people 'really think' (they 'toe the party line')?

Q4 In your experience, how empathic are public library staff?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
Those staff who have been trained are good, there's a direct link between training received and empathy. Most people in libraries have gone to work there because they want to do the job and enjoy it. 'We're in there because we want to do it, and we want to get better at it.'	Home delivery service (outreach) – staff very empathic, fantastic skills. Not all staff will be the same. General feeling that there are some 'sections of society' that most people are able to deal with, others less so: comes down to those groups we 'have more experience of dealing with'. When talking about social inclusion, there are such a wide range of services and tasks involved. Recently work with e.g. looked after children – heightened awareness, staff with greater empathy there. Group asked the question 'how selective are we in choosing training for our staff?' Tension exists – focusing on mass audience/diversity – as a manager, do you go for the easy numbers (mass audience), or try the harder to reach (diversity)? 'the culture of numbers is working against you'. Would it be appropriate to have a member of the NF working on your staff?	Empathic? – they try to be. Libraries attract people with a vocation – they try to be nice to people, in general. Sometimes, people are trying hard to help, but a lack of training means that they get it wrong.
Q5 Is intuitive empathy more important than cognitive empathy when working with disadvantaged groups?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
'We are what we are'. 'Intuitive empathy takes you away from serving a broader purpose'.	Genuine empathy is better, but if you can train someone to do the task – 'that's what we're looking for'.	If you're not naturally disposed to it (being empathic), your behaviour can come across as a little stilted.

Danger of intuitive empathy – we shouldn't bring the issue back to focus on ourselves, should say 'I want to help you' (i.e. irrespective of my own issues and experiences)…'I can tell you I'm sorry, but I can't be expected to understand'. [With asylum seekers/refugees, for example] 'You don't need to speak the language, but you do need an understanding, for example, of the political situation in their country'.	Someone who is sensitive to the issues. Someone who can 'put on the mask of competence'. At the end of the day, all issues are to be dealt with (above all) by frontline staff – but it's the librarian who must communicate the need to his/her staff, say why it's important. 'We need to communicate'. 'It's about having "concerned detachment" – we can't pretend to know fully what someone is going through'. Analogy – doctor's 'bedside manner' (and systematic training to develop this).	Yet it's better than not doing anything – 'we can't send our library staff to war zones!' What effect would reading about other people's experiences have? – suggestion to use literature (fiction) to help to develop empathy, 'to put yourself in another's shoes' Cognitive empathy can often be fine – we can't ask for more of our staff. 'Professional detachment' – 'a genuinely empathic person would act naturally, quite simply'.

Social Inclusion and Community Librarianship – group discussion

Q1 Do public libraries fully understand what is meant by social exclusion?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
Professional documents are using the term 'social exclusion' in a much broader sense to reflect all aspects of inclusion "I think it is a good idea to not just focus on socio-economic deprivation" There is different understanding of the concept at different levels – staff working in management and/or strategic roles need to be more aware of legal compliance There are a number of different definitions and phrases in use – depends what's 'fashionable' It is important to generate more understanding amongst frontline staff and people who deliver the service Understanding is linked to a sense of moral obligation and belief in equality of access	Heads of Service probably do [library service at highest level] Public libraries can't stand alone from local authorities: if the authority is focused then there will be greater understanding communicated to relevant services (e.g. Closing the Gap in Sheffield). All has to be linked to council agenda and relevant targets [policy cohesion] Understanding amongst library staff will differ according to PLA approach, training and communication methods Public libraries can't be divorced from wider [national] political agenda Staff will be familiar with the term but not the details surrounding/informing it – effective training is essential	Social exclusion considered to be an "outdated" term – now predominantly talking about community cohesion. Inclusion objectives are frequently "repackaged" Community cohesion was described as a "subset" of social exclusion MPs [Milliband] beginning to talk about links between different parts of social exclusion Libraries need to understand and define what part(s) of the inclusion agenda they can support or do anything about
Q2 Does the conceptual blurring of 'inclusive' political objectives have an impact on library service outcomes and effectiveness?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
Having a positive impact in 'opening up' the inclusion agenda and not just focusing on one facet of exclusion But this creates problems in choosing the correct term	Short-termism linked to blurred political objectives has a negative impact. Libraries are suffering from "pilot-it is" (i.e. starting things and not finishing them) Models of inclusive policy seem to change too	The research agenda [social policy] is governed by where and when money is pitched – certainly in Thatcher years – which has an impact on public service responses and effectiveness There is a huge influence in terms of needing to

It is considered acceptable to discriminate against the white working classes, linked to media representation of 'chav culture' Socio-economic disadvantage is 'unfashionable' – the more obvious equality issues (race; LGBT) are more attractive and considered easier to address It depends on self image: "if you feel excluded then you are", but service providers may not readily identify you as so Socio-economic disadvantage is not visible or tangible There are 'economies of scale' to consider: smaller BME groups for example are less likely to be factored in to budgets Have to consider that people do not fit neatly in to pigeon holes Would argue that nobody actually knows what is meant by social exclusion The very existence of public libraries is arguably inclusive: but processes and practices inadvertently exclude people There is an expectation for PLAs to perform: this creates a tension that leads to quick-fix solutions and catering for majority tastes. The amount of resources needed to engage with all excluded groups is unavailable: therefore need to prioritise Quality impact assessments are useful in this context, and in involve some community profiling/involvement Political objectives give a framework to work from: it's good to articulate what we're doing in a	frequently (e.g. from 'diversity' to 'cohesion'), and related government speak becomes too confusing (e.g. exclusion model to citizenship model). Are we talking about the same things? Danger that we are pandering to fears in communities, which makes it difficult to engage people, and ultimately affects outcomes. Is it about prevention or inclusion [community cohesion policies]? Changing agendas move ahead too quickly 'Community cohesion' perceived as the latest buzz-word for one authority: becomes an excuse for forgetting what came before, or what wasn't completed/achieved. Too cosmetic Authorities suffering from 'terminology overload' – can lose sight of true meaning and objective. Some objectives cause conflict with equal opportunities (e.g. specific opening times/additional hours for Muslim women). Is there equality in this? Requires guerrilla tactics at political level to overcome There are capacity issues concerning what can realistically be achieved: frontline staff know that we're not really performing and become cynical Outcomes [tangible] considered to be more important than activities: needs to change to prove value in this area	conform to buzz words and targets: affects how we evaluate impact and outcomes. In reality a positive impact on five people is a valuable social inclusion output, but may not be seen that way by "the suits". We need to evaluate experience in this context. Political objectives do have a positive impact: neighbourhood renewal funding [deprivation index fund] projects have had successful outcomes leading to mainstream services Political objectives = "double-edged sword" Stigma attached to some objectives/funding streams: neighbourhood renewal funding encourages negativity from staff in more affluent postcodes Blurring can be interpreted as 'broadening agenda' – making libraries more inclusive for everybody Need to conform to Golden Thread: if council adopting/leaning towards one political agenda, has to run through all services Need to define what culture is, and the cultural value of public libraries [linked to regeneration]

transferable way There needs to be a balance between performance measures and true inclusion, there is often vast resources in place for little [measurable] return Quick fixes are reinforced by funding streams that are non-sustainable Short-termism is damaging: should be more of an imperative to make projects sustainable		
Q3 Is there a direct relationship between inclusive organisations and inclusive services?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
Group agreed there is a direct relationship Corporate jargon is damaging the inclusive relationship between policy and practice [and relevant staff groups] It is officially the manager's role to interpret policy and related information, but there also needs to be upwards movement and communication (e.g. working groups across organisational structures; 'lateral groups' in Leicestershire discussed as an example). This would have more of an impact Staff empowerment considered to a good thing in increasing engagement and productivity Group felt that some of the more negative [anti-inclusion] comments made in report are associated with lack of confidence and security	Yes there is – we are wasting resources if frontline staff do not fully understand what social inclusion is about Some service models [non-inclusive] can provide inclusive services: e.g. retail companies are not inclusive of sales assistants in decision making processes but are inclusive of customers' needs Public libraries considered to be more inclusive than they used to be: more training and awareness. There is a greater emphasis on customer care and managers are beginning to realise the contribution of frontline staff as the "shop window" of the organisation There is a direct relationship in best practice examples	American Library Association quote: "without an internal click within the organisation, there won't be an external click". Libraries need to be inclusive to perform Staff need to feel ownership of the service in order to feel pride in what they do Discussion on worthy/non-worthy users: libraries need to re-establish their own identity instead of providing services that are not library activities. Help to avoid bewilderment and cynicism amongst staff Use of internet in libraries [People's Network] considered an 'unworthy' activity by some library staff Libraries must make "value judgements" based on own professional identity and experience

Q4 Can the tick box culture of local government be overcome by public libraries?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
Not necessarily – tick-box culture governed by local authorities and libraries are answerable to them May change with local government white paper and move from performance measurement [best value] to best area indicators Discussion on CPA [Comprehensive Performance Assessment]: 'to truly engage with this will take decades'. Considered 'not possible' due to lack of long-termism in policy making. Needs complete cultural change throughout local authorities Will be interesting to see how public libraries cope with joint funding streams such as the Lottery funding programme [merging of two operational cultures]. Strong leadership needed to affect cultural change on this scale	Only with guerrilla frontline librarianship – relies on the PEOPLE providing the service The main challenge facing libraries is to ensure that the [necessary] ticked boxes meet and conform to genuine social inclusion objectives, in line with local area agreements There is a need to clearly define and articulate libraries' roles [what can be realistically provided] in supporting other agencies: needs to conform to other providers' objectives and influence the centre.	Tick box culture beginning to change: focus on outcomes rather than input/output. Greater requirement to prove value of services rather than just tick a box All a matter of time in terms of what can be proven: will public libraries be given enough time? Politicians are not interested in longitudinal studies: more interested in instant results and photo opportunities Short-termism is something that has to be accepted as part of local government culture
Q5 Are policy directives helping or hindering the mainstream concept of community librarianship?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
Policy directives are helping the concept and practice of community librarianship by 'shaping progress' Local authorities have been almost divorced from public libraries: now reclaiming them ("because we tick boxes!") as can compliment services of other departments All dependent on having elected members who are supportive of public libraries	Better to define community librarianship with a small (rather than capital) 'c'. The concept is not considered to be out of date by all, it's what public libraries do every day. Conceptually public libraries as a whole are out of date [the term]: public libraries ARE community libraries [as opposed to specialised library services]	Community engagement [lottery funding] – raising extremely difficult issues as compromising professional skills and standards. Some community groups for example have own agenda but are receiving entitlement Community librarianship an outdated concept – use of the term considered to be damaging – new job titles being used to represent political agenda (e.g. development Worker)

	It depends on how far the profession is up to the challenge of defending community librarianship, e.g. Tim Coates' work in Hounslow whereby opening hours are being extended but outreach work is being reduced; the retail versus community model Community librarianship becoming more challenging in itself: public libraries not recruiting people to the 'nice little part-time job anymore' There are too many targets facing community librarians, who don't know what their role is anymore. Communities no longer treated as a whole as they are so diverse, especially in inner cities. The People's Network [internet access] has proved to be a huge community resource: valued by immigrants and young people. Example of how modern community librarianship works. Authorities are reacting too quickly to policy objectives without really considering what communities want. View of the value of community librarianship can be coloured by cultural differences [i.e. resistance to CL]	Difficult to define any mainstream concepts in public libraries: 149 PLAs all with own agenda and objectives Professional bodies [CILIP; MLA] not informing government of the profession's agenda: directives all coming one way Librarians should be talking about professional values and agenda themselves, but this is often misconstrued as a 'self-preservation' tool Libraries still suffering from poor publicity, marketing and media representation. The Love Libraries campaign described as "an uphill struggle" in trying to promote positive community roles for libraries. There are no positive stories to compensate for negative items about library closures etc. Inclusion may be high on the agenda, but it is only ever the articulate, educated middle classes who defend the public library service by campaigning against closures etc Constantly receiving complaints from middle class users about expenditure on 'non-library' services when, for example, the book collection is not considered to be satisfactory. Libraries need to decide who they are catering for and what kind of service they are providing.

Skills, Partnerships and Professional Identity – group discussion

Q1 Those involved directly in the provision of social inclusion services scored higher on the Professional Empathy measure: is this why they are directly involved?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
The professional mindset is communicated through University. Something has drawn people into the job – it isn't well paid "Nice little job" attitude is less so now – though we have PT staff (6 hours 10 hours) who have this attitude. Graduate training schemes give people a different focus. Differences perhaps between prof staff and para-prof staff	Not a given that everyone coming into librarianship has that empathic nature. Some join for other reasons. Those who apply for specific community posts probably have their own agenda. You acquire different knowledge and skills as you move around. But you need that initial ethos before you acquire them. Not everyone enters with the same commitment. There are people for whom it is a "job" – just a "nice little job". Some disagreement – frontline staff can have real dedication. Other reasons to do the job – e.g. convenience. Libraries tend to get people who want a vocation.	Its important to support the people you bring in (staff) to avoid conflict. Strong leadership to share knowledge is important. The ethos to support the community development. Support from training and chartership. Leaders are letting the service down. Definitely people go for these jobs because they feel it is important. You can learn professional empathy. Some people do move sideways into it because they want a job. Some staff don't share the local inclusion agenda. There is a need to support people who perhaps have to change jobs.
Q2 How, if at all, can training be used to develop empathy skills amongst public library staff?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
Yes CAB training, dealing with awkward customers. It should be more than customer care – too superficial. There are links with culture. Attitudes, opinions, organisational values.	Depends why they don't feel empathy. Information – if the issue is the lack of understanding, lack of knowledge – then training can help. There are issues about training. The council has a cycle of diversity and disability training, but they	Can help with training: Day courses – Afro Caribbean, Bengali etc It helped to have staff understand those communities. There is always a danger of stereotyping communities when doing

Arts & Humanities Research Council

Training needs to be in the library you work in. Drug users – difficult people – how do you empathise with people like that? Training – where does the money come from to deliver this training! Can learn from other sectors – social workers etc Some issues, librarians are not equipped to deal with. Policy issues, training issues – both important. Can teach empathy. Training needs vary from time to time, from area to area.	don't teach you to deliver accessible services. Have generic training then build on it with specific (library) focused training. Managers and library staff need different issues addressing. Training to managers is not being cascaded. Managers need training to impact on policy. There is a communication issue. There need to be a close link between practice and research. Good research is not disseminated effectively into library practice. Money – there are pressures. If money is an issue then have the specific training not the generic.	this training. Religion is important, understanding what people believe is important. Knowing about somebody else's culture is half of the battle of understanding. If you don't understand you can't empathise. Resources are needed to support ongoing information needs – budget and time are issues with training. If you have a representative workforce it should bring more shared understanding. What is undervalued in the UK is the feeling that we accept people around us. Acceptance is very English – we must support this in everyone. Yet other cultural values influence the ability to accept. In the training, people are encouraged to speak out and they say things without fear of understanding.
Q3 How can public libraries draw upon the experience, knowledge and skills of other social service sectors?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
There are lots of different types of problems: embarrassment issues – the person who smells, the person you cant understand, deaf awareness, hearing disability. Inclusion can cause exclusion. How do you cope with groups who do not want to come in any more? There can be tensions between traditional users and new users.	Partnership with other bodies is really important. Employ other from outside with the skills. Lib Dev Workers – when we recruit, library skills are desirable but not essential. Libraries have a lot to learn from other agencies, but they have a lot to learn from libraries. It needs to be a multi-party approach.	Already working with other sectors e.g. throughout the local authority. If you have any sense you won't try it on your own. You can learn from them. We bought into Framework in a big way. It has a strength - it says these are the things we are about.

Frontline staff feel those tensions. Have certain days for certain users – time zoning, physical zoning; physical only works in larger libraries. Working with community groups is huge. Working with community groups – engage champions within that community. User expectations of a profession. Ethnicity doesn't make a difference when you want information say in a university library, but in a community ethnicity can make a difference.		How do we engage with those we are serving and work with others who do – there is less blurring now.
Q4 Can public libraries deliver socially inclusive services and maintain their own professional identity?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
Professional identity is so important. You can go along with customer demands and cease to be a professional. You can educate. Or you can intimidate. Libraries are beginning to provide services that are no longer library services. Librarianship should be a professional responsibility. You can get numbers in, but is it a library!? Corporate/globalisation is taking away our key strengths. Because of negative experiences elsewhere we are becoming more council like – we have lost our neutrality and become more corporate and authoritative. We have to fight for our existence – tick boxes – budget pressure. Everyone is going to have a business plan. Must shout louder about our professional identity. Not al "lights and jingles" – must focus on our key skills; trust, accuracy of information – its not necessarily glamorous. Its not about "20 new computers" Schools are giving the message – the internet is	70s 80s – lost own identity – out there doing social things in the community – not n the library. Had to work that way – still do, but need to strike a balance. Librarians lost sight of their values. And consider the economic context. Politically libraries need a recession to bring people back. There is a move from qualification based job descriptions to competencies. 'To say I am a librarian gives a negative image. I say I am from the library.' 'Do you need a library qualification? – Paraprofessionals do an amazing amount of stuff. I did similar job as a paraprofessional as I do now as a professional. However, the qualification has raised my awareness of the wider issues, it gives you a wider view.' The professional qualification should give you opportunity, understanding and confidence. The profession needs a range of skills going into it.	Our USP wasn't so important in the 70s and 80s. We are clearer now about what we are trying to deliver. We know what our job is. I feel the opposite. My main role is going out into the community, very little of what I would call traditional library work is what I do. I have to open the library up for other things. I am a teacher; I am a child minder, not a librarian. Enquiry desk, disabled person, old person, so many hats I have to wear. All things to all men at all times, you can't do your best. Then reputation of the whole service goes down – depressing. I have no time to be in my library. I don't spend time with my stock, which is someone else's responsibility. I can't promote things because I don't know

everything. We need to work more with schools, working with people re: reading, emerging readers.	Librarians do a lot for very little recompense. Librarians are not being rewarded for what they do. The artificial division between paraprofessional and professional is outdated.	what's there.
Q5 What are we really looking for in a community librarian: should the emphasis be on 'community' or 'librarian'?		
Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**
First impression is very important. Some times we are intimidating. There can be a language problem for some users.		We do need community librarian with a small c- but we need to identify what it is that local authorities want. The public library is the community library service. We should be saying I am a community library. You should not be working in public libraries if you do not want to work with the public. Need both community skills and library skills, both should be valued.

Appendix 10 - Case study interview questions

1 How were library staff recruited to [how did they become involved with] the project/service?
2 Did library staff require any specialist/specified knowledge, skills or experience?
3 Have library staff involved in the project received any additional/specialised training [relevant to the project/service]?
4 Did library staff experience any problems, difficulties or issues arising from the project/service?
5 What has been the impact on library staff • **Professionally** • **Personally**
6 Would relevant library staff like to be involved with similar projects/services of this nature in the future?
7 Have there been any learning outcomes for library service/project managers?