Breaking the Barriers
Social Inclusion Projects in
United Kingdom Libraries

Barrett Reid Scholarship 2005 Report
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Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the support of the Library Board of Victoria, the State Library of Victoria and Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation. We take this opportunity to thank the entire enthusiastic and dedicated library staff we met on our trip through the United Kingdom.
Introduction

In 2005 we were awarded the Barrett Reid Scholarship by the Library Board of Victoria. The Libraries Building Communities Report published by the State Library of Victoria, demonstrated the role libraries can play in building and strengthening communities. We decided to visit the United Kingdom to look at social inclusion projects being undertaken by public libraries – to examine the projects libraries were involved in and consequent success or failure in terms of social inclusion.

We visited over twenty five English libraries that had developed different approaches to social inclusion. Commencing the study tour in London, we then travelled to Manchester and from there covered a circle around the east, south and west of the country discovering more about the nature of social inclusion.

The United Kingdom faces many challenges when it comes to building socially inclusive communities. These include:

- A rapidly increasing rate of immigration
- Densely populated cities juxta positioned with isolated rural communities
- Highly diverse cultures
- Areas of wealth and at the same time, areas of disadvantage

With such diversity how can libraries play a part in creating strong, socially inclusive communities?
Background

‘My vision is of a nation where no-one is seriously disadvantaged by where they live, where power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many and not the few.”


Social Inclusion is very much part of the Blair Government’s agenda. The United Kingdom government has established a Social Exclusion Taskforce charged with the role of working towards this vision. This is done by developing policy, stakeholder consultation and providing a voice for disadvantaged groups.

On June 13th 2006, the Social Exclusion Minister, Hilary Armstrong, announced the next steps for the Government’s drive to tackle deep-seated disadvantage, primarily the establishing of a Social Exclusion Taskforce.

The priority is “to reach the one million people at risk of persistent social exclusion, who have not yet benefited from opportunities the majority of people can now take for granted.

The new Social Exclusion Taskforce will concentrate on identifying the most at risk and focus on specific hard-to-reach groups including children in care, people with mental health problems and teenagers at risk of pregnancy.”

An Action Plan, expected this autumn, will set a direction for further social inclusion work by public libraries.

The Libraries for All: Social Inclusion in Public Libraries Report (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999) focused on the importance of the library role in building strong and socially inclusive communities. This report was the catalyst for change in many libraries in the United Kingdom.

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The government of the United Kingdom recognised the potential of libraries to play a strong role in strengthening communities and creating community cohesion.

“The Government wants libraries to be at the very heart of the communities they serve, allowing everyone, irrespective of their age or background, to have access to the widest possible range of information, knowledge and services” (DCMS, The Libraries for All: Social Inclusion in Public Libraries, 1999 p5)

These reports, together with the continuing emphasis on the role libraries play in community building, encouraged the authors to learn more and experience some of the projects being undertaken in the United Kingdom.

Role of Libraries

To “Promote equality of opportunity in a society in which knowledge, ideas and information are increasingly important in work and hobbies, as a source of individual identity and a focus for a sense of community.” (Leadbetter. 2003 p15)

The framework for the Future (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2003) also set the direction for further social inclusion work by public libraries.

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Social Exclusion or Social Inclusion?

**Definitions**
The definitions of social exclusion keep changing and the following traces the development of the term.

**What is Social Exclusion?**

“Social exclusion is a broader concept than poverty, encompassing not only low material means but the inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life and in some characterisations alienation and distance from mainstream society.” (Duffy, 1995)

**John Pateman from Lincolnshire Libraries states:**

“Social exclusion, inclusion and cohesion are not separate, but overlapping points of view that may best be viewed as an additive policy continuum. Each move across the continuum makes further links between the benefits gained by those who are excluded and the benefits gained by those who are not.” (Pateman, 2006)

In 2001, the Government had the following definition:

“Social exclusion is something that can happen to anyone. But some people are significantly more at risk than others. Research has found that people with certain backgrounds and experiences are disproportionately likely to suffer social exclusion. The key risk-factors include: low income, family conflict, being in care, school problems, being an ex-prisoner, being from an ethnic minority, living in a deprived neighbourhood in urban and rural areas, mental health problems, age and disability” (Social Exclusion Unit, Preventing Social Exclusion 2001 p11)

This definition of Social Exclusion is taken from the Social Exclusion Unit 2004, “Breaking the Cycle” “While social exclusion is often associated with highly marginalised groups facing extreme forms of multiple disadvantage, our approach is broader. We also understand an inclusion of how wider social inequality and intergenerational disadvantage can impact on the causes of social exclusion and the risk of becoming excluded. This is a deliberately pragmatic and flexible definition. One of the characteristics of social exclusion is that problems are linked and mutually reinforcing.”

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John Pateman from The Network says, that public libraries in the United Kingdom have been doing outreach work for many years. John prefers to use the term Social Exclusion as opposed to Social Inclusion.

A survey of poverty and social exclusion in Britain conducted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2002) distinguished four elements of social exclusion

- Impoverishment
- Labour market exclusion
- Service exclusion
- Exclusion from social relations

(from John Pateman’s paper)

Characteristics of excluded people include low skill levels, lack of motivation and low expectations. The primary factors influencing social exclusion are

- Geographic
- Educational
- Economic
- Cultural

**So how are public libraries helping to create socially inclusive communities?**

From our discussions with library staff and observations, we discovered that there is not really a national planned approach in libraries of the United Kingdom. The individual library service approach depends on-

- Library Authority focus
- Government standards for libraries
- Funding (funding, funding and more funding!)
- Clientele and demographics
- Partnerships
- Staff community connections
- Staff Ethnicity
- Transport Issues

Some library services chose to focus their social inclusion on a particular user group such as –

- ethnic minority groups
- the disabled
- low achievers
- young people

**Successful Social Inclusion**

Our investigations found that a number of components are usually present within libraries that have developed successful social inclusion projects which are –
The Projects

Cared for Children

In the United Kingdom all local authorities are required by Government to have a Children’s and Young People’s Department, which oversees children in residential and foster care. Many libraries are working in partnership with their Children’s departments to provide services for these children.

The term ‘children in public care’ (or alternatively ‘looked after children’) describes young people who are in the care of local authorities and who are looked after by foster carers or in children’s homes. They are subject to ‘care orders’ - meaning that the parent/s retain responsibility for their child, while the local authority has additional responsibilities as a corporate parent.

Children in public care have, as a group, poor experiences of schooling and low levels of educational attainment. For many, early failure of social and educational support and provision contribute to social exclusion later on in life.

There are about 60,000 children in the care of local authorities at any one time.

Both the proportions of boys and of younger children in care have been rising in recent years. Boys, children from some ethnic minority groups, disabled children and those from lower socio-economic groups are all over-represented. Most unaccompanied asylum seeker children under 16 are taken into care when they arrive in the UK. At risk is defined as a child who is in the care of a parent but is monitored.

People who have been in care have a much higher statistical chance of becoming:
- a teenage parent
- a prisoner
- a rough sleeper
- unemployed

As well as the cost to individuals, this has high social and economic costs. Improving education, employment and training of care leavers to the level of their peers could save an estimated £300 million over three years. The potential for savings from reduced crime and homelessness would make this saving much greater.

Rotherham and Information Services-Interactive Club S

Rotherham Library and Information Services, has developed an information technology project for young people and children. This project is known as the Interactive Club S and is open to all young people between seven and fourteen years of age. At the Interactive Clubs young people can improve their information technology, literacy and numeracy skills in a fun and pleasant environment. The club also aims to increase the confidence and the communication skills of the young people. In addition to the weekly sessions, the service runs summer activities. In a recent summer program participants created animated short films.

Rotherham has introduced a special library ticket for foster carers registered with Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. Official documentation is required to get a Carer Ticket and the borrowing amount and loan period is extended. This enables carers to introduce the children they care for to the library and encourages them to borrow library material to share in the home.

The Laptop Lending Library

The Laptop Lending Library is another program in partnership with the Get Real Team and the library. The Get Real Team are part of the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council’s, Children’s and Young People’s Services Unit. This team provides additional educational support to children and young people in public care. Children and young people who are not meeting their full education potential or who are at risk of being excluded from mainstream education are helped. Laptops can be borrowed for the use of young people in care.

Some components of the project are-
- writers workshops
- the creation of a website to display work, ideas and reviews.
- involving children in stock selection for the library
- the establishment of a virtual reading group
- the celebration of literacy festival

Project outcomes will be evaluated in 2008. The success of the project will be measured against a number of anticipated outcomes which include pre and post literacy and attitude to reading assessment, the number participating, and plans for sustainability.

Gloucestershire Libraries and Information

Share-a-Book

In 2005, Gloucestershire County Council Libraries and Information worked closely with Children’s Education Services in Gloucestershire to form a working group that included representatives from Primary and Secondary Education, Residential Homes and from the Carers themselves. The project aims to increase levels of literacy and access to books for ‘looked after’ children, (due to a policy change, ‘looked after’ children are now referred to as children in care. It will empower ‘looked after’ children to have an active role in their local libraries and in establishing book corners in their residential units. The project aims to reach ninety children in care, ranging in age from four to fourteen. Children in care are given exempt status from fines and other charges to encourage the children and Carers to promote library use. Gloucestershire do not charge children in care for any lost, damaged or overdue library material. The cost is borne by the Local Authority.

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Gloucestershire County Council Libraries and Information

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This specialist mobile library is aimed primarily at children under eight with a particular emphasis on under fives, including babies. Share-a-Book’s prime objective is to help children in areas of deprivation. By using Share-a-Book children’s literacy skills are enhanced before the child goes to school. The staff report that when they first visit a group, children have poor concentration and listening skills. Regular visits throughout the year enable children to develop these skills.

Share-a-Book is unique in the county and can be easily identified because of all the brightly coloured dinosaurs painted on the outside.

- On board the van, children are able to choose from a wide selection of books, including board books for babies, colourful picture books, including big books, and early reader books,
- Story tapes and dual language type books are also available for loan.
- There is a collection of material for older children as well including storybooks and some information books to help them with their hobbies. On board is a computer for children to access downloaded material and activities.

Maltby Community Library Rotherham

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Maltby Community Library Rotherham
1. **Gypsies and Travellers**

In the United Kingdom, the term ‘traveller’ is used to cover those identifiable groups who either are, or have been traditionally associated with a nomadic lifestyle, and it includes Gypsies, Bard tape, Travellers and Circus families. Gypsies and Traveller groups are by far the largest group among travelling communities in the United Kingdom and constitute a recognised minority ethnic group for the purposes of the 1976 Race Relations Act. Many Gypsies and Travellers have a nomadic way of life and it is an important part of their cultural heritage.

Essex County Libraries

Currently a library service to Gypsy/Travellers’ community is providing a wide range of resources and support for Traveller families, and a travel document for background information. It was established to support the work of the Travellers Education Service, and to bring Traveller families into the mainstream service. However, many Traveller families are not in contact with the library, and this lack of contact means that they are not aware of the services available to them.

A grant from the Children’s Fund allowed the libraries to provide a Traveller families’ service in the county. The library service has been designed to support the Travellers Education Service and to provide Traveller families with access to technology.

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2. **Homeless**

The term “Homelessness” is often considered to apply only to people “sleeping rough”. However, most statistics on homelessness relate to the statutorily homeless i.e. those households which meet specific criteria of priority need set out in legislation, and to whom a homelessness duty has been accepted by a local authority. Such households are rarely homeless in the literal sense of being without a roof over their heads, but are more likely to be threatened with the loss of, or are unable to continue with, their current accommodation.

Rough Sleepers are defined as people who sleep in the open air such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters or in barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or elsewhere.

The most visible and extreme form of homelessness is that of people sleeping on the streets. Sometimes used interchangeably with “rooflessness” or “street homelessness”, rough sleeping refers to people of this kind who are in reality night homeless and who is sleeping on the streets or elsewhere outside.

The actual homelessness figure in the United Kingdom is difficult to calculate, but experts believe that there are around three hundred and eighty thousand Gypsy/ Traveller families in the United Kingdom. (Criss, 2003

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The next stage with the Gypsy/ Traveller groups is to do outreach work with the community more widely than those on Essex County Council’s database, and to bring those communities currently under-represented in the main libraries into the mainstream service. In the Gypsy/Traveller groups we are working with, the libraries are being used by children’s storytimes and to train all libraries for computer training and provide traveller families with access to technology.

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Essex Libraries have established the BBC
Essex libraries are committed to removing barriers to the use of library services. In 2003 the service made a radical change to the membership policy, by removing the need for new members to provide documentary proof of name and address. The impetus for this change came from a complaint from the homeless community in Colchester about the barriers to joining Essex Libraries. This project seeks to build on work in Colchester with those who are homeless or vulnerably housed by actively taking library services to places where these people feel comfortable—hostels, night shelters etc. The first part of this project involved working with the Night Shelter and three drop-in centres. The second phase included more vulnerably housed people in temporary accommodation, teenage mothers and the women’s refuge. The next phase will expand to more vulnerably housed, including young people leaving care, and will refocus the project by actively promoting reading to the client group.

The Night Shelter houses a Quick Reads collection. All the books must be a good read, under two hundred pages long, have accessible print size and an adult story line. Book discussion groups for adults are held regularly at the Emergency Night Shelter, at the Matrix drop-in centre and at New Essex Housing (accommodation for young people leaving care)

The Family Reading group has been established in the Women’s Refuge. This group has been meeting fortnightly since June 2004 and is organised by an Essex Libraries staff member and supported by the refuge playworker.

A regular Baby and Toddler Time for vulnerable parents and babies commenced in September 2004 at one site, and is typical of a branch storytime.

The Quick Read model was used to engage readers, and is:

- a model of how to promote reading to adults who have never read for pleasure
- changes attitudes to reading, with evidence of many basic skills learners reading and enjoying literature.
- Consultation and partnership with learners

It is of specific relevance to the homeless community because:
- there are known basic skills needs amongst the community
- Quick Reads are mainstream titles with strong narrative drive
- Good starting point for reconnecting homeless readers with the pleasures of reading
- Library staff have developed skills in promoting reading to adults who are not confident readers.

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Nottingham City Council Libraries—Building Bridges; Making Connections
Nottingham City Council Libraries and Information Services have a two year project funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation called Building Bridges; Making Connections.

This project aims to:
• develop the library service to meet the needs of asylum seekers and refugees
• improve the quality of life of asylum seekers and refugees
• raise awareness of their position in the community

It is estimated that there are 2500 refugees and asylum seekers in the Nottingham area. In excess of sixty nationalities are represented and thirty languages spoken. Nine partnerships have been formed for the successful delivery of the project, and after guaranteed funding for two years, a Project Worker was appointed. All library staff have had training on providing services to asylum seekers and refugees. Library tours and service induction sessions have been very successful.

Nottingham City and Information Libraries provide:
• information technology taster sessions with interpreters
• English learning facilities
• English conversation sessions using volunteers
• provision of English guided reading material
• Library promotional leaflets in several languages
• Library promotional leaflets in

A report on “Building Bridges: Making Connections” was produced in September 2006. The report highlights a number of difficulties in gathering evidence to support the evaluation of the project. Refugee and asylum seeker communities are sometimes transient and this makes it difficult to assess the long term impact of projects. User data collection methods made it difficult to provide total numbers of service users in the asylum seeker category. At the end of the first year of the project, there was a major restructure of the library service, which impacted on a range of initiatives.

In spite of these issues, the report concludes that the project has placed Nottingham City Libraries on the map of local services that play a strong role in the social inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in the city. It also concluded that benefits to many refugees and asylum seekers have been great in the areas of improving English language and ICT skills. Staff have gained better understanding of refugee communities and are more confident in dealing with these communities. The service aims to mainstream this part of the service but are actively seeking further funding.

Welcome to your Library
Welcome to our Library is a project to increase opportunities for participation and active engagement by refugee communities in public library service planning and delivery. A pilot project was funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation in 2003. Work in the pilot included mapping refugee communities, identifying needs that could be met by public libraries, staff awareness training, developing local partnerships with refugee community organisations, purchasing new stock and providing events. The pilot was extended nationally in 2005 and the project is still being undertaken.

• There are some important outcomes of the project; participation by refugee communities in service planning and delivery
• new service developments (work placements for refugees) and securing further funding

Welcome to your Library is a very important social inclusion project with strong positive outcomes.

There is also a growing number of Guet and Migrant workers coming from Central Europe to work as manual labourers in parts of the United Kingdom. This has implications for libraries particularly in the area of provision of materials in other languages. Libraries often make initial contact with guest workers as they come to access the Internet.

Health and Wellbeing Issues
The Blair government’s strategy in the area of health has focused on supporting vulnerable people, meeting individual needs and giving people choice to meet these needs and emphasising prevention and early intervention. Targeted initiatives include tackling health inequalities.

Rotherham Library and Information Services—Books on Prescription
Professor Neil Frude devised and pioneered the Books on Prescription Scheme in Cardiff in response to personal experience of the pressures the health system faces. The Rotherham Books on Prescription Project is delivered in partnership with Rotherham PCT, Rotherham Library and Information Services and Whithop Wood Hospital. It was launched at six library sites in May 2005 and to date 50% of patients prescribed the books are using them. The project is for patients experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties. It allows highly recommended self help books to be prescribed by a Primary Care Mental Health Worker, Counsellor or GP. The scheme uses a list of forty-three books based on the Cardiff list. The professional will give the patient a prescription which can be exchanged for the appropriate book at a participating library. Book Prescriptions are dispensed from five GP surgeries across the district, and libraries were selected by their proximity to surgeries. It is also referred to as The Rotherham Primary Care Trust Book Loan Scheme. Library staff are trained to operate much like a pharmacist, professional, discreet and ethical.

Gloucestershire County Council Libraries and Information Services—Partnership for Patients formerly known as Choose & Book
Gloucestershire County Council Libraries and Information Services has been chosen to trial this project, whereby people can choose a hospital and book a time for their operation via the Internet at a branch of the library service, following a visit to their doctor. Libraries have been chosen to partner in this project because of Internet availability and their willingness to offer the service. Partnership for Patients (formerly known as Choose & Book) will be piloted in Gloucestershire and several other Local Authorities, from February 2007. We will be interested to see if this is successful and will follow the progress of the project.

Disability Services
Bury Metro Library Services
Bury Metro Library Services have a Visual Impairment Service, for people who are blind or partially sighted. This service has a range of resources including computers, low vision aids, books on tape, and information in Braille and audio formats. People do not need to be library members to use the equipment.

There is also a Hearing Impairment Service based at Bury Library. This service offers books about all aspects of hearing problems and Deaf culture. There is an extensive collection of listening, alerting and telecommunications devices which are loaned free of charge. The Librarian in Charge is qualified in BSL—British Sign Language.

Gloucestershire Libraries and Information Services
Supernova was launched at the Gloucestershire Libraries and Information Services in July 2005, during the annual ‘Make a Noise in Libraries Week’. This new technology enables visually impaired library users in Gloucestershire to access a range of IT services, including the Internet and email. Supernova is a software package that has the following features: magnification, speech and Braille output in one program. Gloucestershire Libraries and Information Services in November 2006, also launched Supernova data pens, available on three month loans to borrowers. The pens activate the software programme on any PC once plugged into that computer’s USB port.

Rotherham Bookability
This is a special mobile library service which takes large print books, videos, music and audio cassettes to all sheltered accommodation units with resident wardens, nursing homes, residential homes and day care centres. Most of these centres are visited fortnightly and there is also a bulk exchange every three months. This service operates from the Rotherham District General Hospital Library, which is part of the Rotherham Service.

Bury Central Library
Prisoners

It is a statutory requirement that every prison in the United Kingdom has a library.

Gloucestershire County Council Libraries and Information Services-Stories from Within

The success of the library at HM Prison Gloucester largely revolves around the commitment of the librarian. She has a thorough knowledge of the requirements of her clientele. She has been in this position for the last fifteen years. The acclaimed project "Stories from Within" commenced in Gloucestershire County Council Libraries and Information Services. The prisoners can read a story onto tape with a short message for their children. This promoted linking families and a greater desire to be literate. The tape and a copy of the book read were then sent to the child, or a nominal book token, in the event that the book was out of print.

Nottingham City Library-Reading Chain

Nottingham City Library have established an audio book reading chain, using tapes or CDs. Each person lends to a story and writes comments about it. The audio books and comments are then passed on to the next person in the chain, until everyone has listened to all the books. Reviewers meet every six months to compare notes.

Building Design for Social Inclusion

In some areas libraries are achieving greater social inclusion by building new or refurbishing existing library buildings.

Idea Stores-London

The Idea Store in Tower Hamlets was developed as a response to the disturbing reality that only 15% of Tower Hamlets residents were regular library users and the need for life-long learning programs was great. Existing libraries were inadequate to meet local needs and were closed in order to put resources into the Idea Stores. There are four centres situated in London, which look more like department stores with a café and sometimes a crèche, learning labs and Sight and Sound centres. The look of a traditional library has gone and yet these Stores still offer library services and more:

- Homework clubs for 8-16 year olds
- Job Club for 16-60 year olds
- Silver Surfers Sessions
- Holiday activities
- Life-long learning programs

The Children’s Libraries in Idea Stores are designed to inspire. Visitor figures have trebled and issues have risen dramatically. The Stores are a buzz of activity!

Brighton and Hove City Library Service-Jubilee Library:

This purpose built library was opened in May 2005. The library was a Private Finance Initiative organised by Brighton and Hove Council. The Jubilee library has been designed and built with energy efficiency as an important consideration. The library’s glass south facing windows link the inside and the outside. At the entrance to the library, is a Book Lovers Store. The shop stocks a range of items, stationery, puzzles and posters, all based on a literary theme. Tickets for events held in the library are purchased here. This also creates an informal entry point as staff can direct people to the appropriate section of the library if they need assistance.

The Millennium Library-Norwich

This three-storied building is constructed largely of glass, enabling people to see what is happening inside. Funded by the National Lottery Fund, the complex also includes cafés, the BBC, a learning centre and a Norwich Origins Centre. The Express collection is located near the entrance to the library and offers a quick choice of the latest popular titles. The Express collection has longer opening hours than the rest of the library, and a self service checkout allows quick and easy use.

The Idea Store Whitechapel

The Idea Stores-London

The Idea Store in Tower Hamlets was developed as a response to the disturbing reality that only 15% of Tower Hamlets residents were regular library users and the need for life-long learning programs was great. Existing libraries were inadequate to meet local needs and were closed in order to put resources into the Idea Stores. There are four centres situated in London, which look more like department stores with a café and sometimes a crèche, learning labs and Sight and Sound centres. The look of a traditional library has gone and yet these Stores still offer library services and more:

- Homework clubs for 8-16 year olds
- Job Club for 16-60 year olds
- Silver Surfers Sessions
- Holiday activities
- Life-long learning programs

The Children’s Libraries in Idea Stores are designed to inspire. Visitor figures have trebled and issues have risen dramatically. The Stores are a buzz of activity!

Brighton and Hove City Library Service-Jubilee Library:

This purpose built library was opened in May 2005. The library was a Private Finance Initiative organised by Brighton and Hove Council. The Jubilee library has been designed and built with energy efficiency as an important consideration. The library’s glass south facing windows link the inside and the outside. At the entrance to the library, is a Book Lovers Store. The shop stocks a range of items, stationery, puzzles and posters, all based on a literary theme. Tickets for events held in the library are purchased here. This also creates an informal entry point as staff can direct people to the appropriate section of the library if they need assistance.

The Millennium Library-Norwich

This three-storied building is constructed largely of glass, enabling people to see what is happening inside. Funded by the National Lottery Fund, the complex also includes cafés, the BBC, a learning centre and a Norwich Origins Centre. The Express collection is located near the entrance to the library and offers a quick choice of the latest popular titles. The Express collection has longer opening hours than the rest of the library, and a self service checkout allows quick and easy use.

The Idea Store Whitechapel

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The Children’s Libraries in Idea Stores are designed to inspire. Visitor figures have trebled and issues have risen dramatically. The Stores are a buzz of activity!
Co-location & Partnerships

Co-location of services and development of community partnerships also contribute to social inclusion and improved accessibility.

Council Information

Many libraries have Council Information Points where you can make (non-cash) payments and make general council enquiries. This enables residents to access council services while they visit the library. First Stop Information Points provided a range of Council information and the service points were staffed by Local Authority employees during office hours.

East Sussex County Council Library Service - Kites

Located within the Eastbourne Central Library is the Kites Family Information Service (Kids Information throughout East Sussex). This service provides information/advice for parents and carers on all child care facilities and family services for children up to fourteen throughout East Sussex. They are available through a help line six days per week in addition to a face to face service in the Eastbourne Central Library and a twenty-four hour help line. Situated close to the children’s section of the library, accessibility is made easier for parents.

Shropshire County Library Service - The Harlescott and Sundorne Joint Service - The Lantern

The Lantern opened to the public on June thirteenth 2006 as a Private Finance Initiative joint-use community building.

The services comprise:

- Reception and Shropshire Customer First Point (SCFP)
- Library
- Community Care Library Department and base for Community Care Mobile Library
- Community hall
- Two meeting rooms
- Interview room
- Café
- IT training suite
- Independent Living Partnership
- VISS - Sign Language Interpreting service
- DASH - Disability Arts in Shropshire
- Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company

The Lantern is located in a low socio-economic area which also has a large elderly population. As of November 2006, overall public perception was good. The building had high usage and according to the staff there is evidence of cross-use of services. Any problems seem to stem from building faults, non-arrival of furniture and operational issues. A very positive beginning.

First Stop Kensington Library

The Lantern Shropshire
Some of Bury’s Outreach Libraries are:
- Brandishesome Community Library
- Castle Sport and Leisure Library
- South Cross Street Library

Topping Fold Library

The library is a large council area in East Bury that for many years had a poor reputation and was classed as a disadvantaged area. The first library opened in a converted butcher’s shop in 2000 following an offer from the Housing department, and was immediately popular. Expansion into the other shops saw the creation of the Topping Fold Partnership. Funding from the Single Regeneration Budget was secured and the partnership became a reality. Today there is a small modern library, a community centre and a community garden, and a dedicated Community Development worker. The Social Inclusion Unit has now based its office in the complex and library staff work from this location.

South Cross Street Library

South Cross Street is in the centre of the largest population of Asian people, mainly Pakistani Muslims. The library service became involved with the group when they requested assistance with implementing a small collection of books for their members. After discussions with the group it was obvious that this was a great opportunity to establish a dual language library in the Asian community. The library took an opportunity to occupy a terrace house which was owned by Council. The library is very popular with the Asian community particularly children and women.

The librarian responsible for the Social Inclusion Unit at Bury is Elizabeth Illins. This is a case of the staff member being a driving force behind the service. Elizabeth is an amazing person totally committed to the work she does and prepared to go to great lengths to serve her local community albeit a very difficult community. Social inclusion work being carried out at Bury is an excellent example of working locally. Numbers being served are only small but outcomes have been very positive for this small community.

Topping Fold is an example of a very successful social inclusion project. Evaluation is not always easy – numbers are often small but impacts are great. Positive comments from residents of the Topping Fold Estate are important in measuring success. The fact that a local shopkeeper, plagued by vandalism decided to remain in business is testament to the positive outcomes of the project.

East Sussex County Council Library Service

In 1995 the Council needed to close the Seaside Library as the cost of renovations was prohibitive. Regulars at the Marine hotel organised a petition to save their library, and the onus was put on the community to do something for itself. The petition was unsuccessful and the Marine’s manager agreed to lend books from the pub. Council workers set up the shelves and stacked them. Borrowers would sign a book out and return it when finished. Fines were not collected and the system was based on trust. The money saved was invested in new stock. Similar arrangements were made to lend books at a church, a video shop and nursing homes. This was an early experiment in co-location that didn’t succeed. Anecdotal material from current staff suggests that the community didn’t really support the service in these locations.

Certainly, any co-location or partnership needs to be with organisations that are easily accessible to a wide range of people. Community members need to feel totally comfortable accessing their library in any co-location project.

Not all attempts at co-location with other services have been successful and some require a great deal of effort on the part of the partners to keep the project going.

Gloucestershire County Council Libraries - Longlevens Joint Use Library

The new library opened on 6th March 2006 – the first library in the county to be co-located with a school. The library is attached to Longlevens Junior School and is the first dual use library in the county, for both the public and the pupils of the school. The library houses £90,000 of new books, a collection of DVDs, CDs, play station games, magazines and newspapers. A large area of space is dedicated to 12 UK On line PGS with broadband connections to enable customers to surf the Internet for free. Use had dramatically increased with the development of the new building. The building is well-designed, well-appointed and very well-equipped. With two groups using a joint space the challenges are many. Solutions were not developed prior to opening so both parties need to work on these issues for the space to work successfully.

Other Influences on Social Inclusion in United Kingdom Libraries

These organisations and individuals are strong forces in social inclusion in the United Kingdom. organisations have provided large amounts of very necessary funding while people like John Vincent have become important advocates of social inclusion.

Children’s Fund

The Children’s Fund was launched in November 2000 as part of the government’s commitment to reduce disadvantage among children and young people. The programme aims to identify at an early stage children and young people at risk of social exclusion, and ensure they receive the help and support they need to achieve their potential.

The Children’s Fund provides a responsive approach to developing services that address the difficulties faced by some children and their families. It encourages children’s organisations, community and faith groups to work in partnership with local statutory agencies, children, young people and their families, to deliver high quality preventative services to meet the needs of communities.

The Children’s Fund has three underlying principles:
- Prevention
- Partnership
- Participation

Prevention

To address the gap in preventative services for children and young people at risk of social exclusion, by providing increased and better coordinated preventative services for 5-13 year-olds and their families.

Partnership

To take responsibility at local level for the delivery of the Children’s Fund plan, involving partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors, community and faith groups, and ensuring that the views of children and young people are represented.

Participation

The voices of children and young people are at the heart of the Children’s Fund, with children and young people being involved in the design, operation and evaluation of the programme.

The Children’s Fund operates in every local authority area in the United Kingdom.
The CILIP/LIS Libraries Change Lives Award was established in 1992 by the Community Services Group of the Library Association, now the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). It has been an annual award for work in libraries that has brought a significant benefit and enriched the lives of the communities and individuals that they serve. In 1998, the Libraries Change Lives Award was merged with the Good Practice in Libraries in any innovative library and information related project that:

- Brings people together
- Involves communities
- Encourages learning
- Encourages reading
- Involves communities
- Brings people together

The award continues to provide the benefits of enhanced experience and expertise for library staff and to raise the profile of public libraries within their authorities and communities. Most importantly, the projects have provided library users with a better service.

John Vincent
John Vincent has worked in the public sector (primarily in public libraries) since the 1980s. He worked for Herefordshire and Lambeth library services, and most recently, for Enfield as a part-time Homework Centre Co-ordinator. He has also worked as the Programme Director for the Arts Council Conference, “Reading for Life” in 1998 and has been a freelance trainer and researcher. Since 1999, John has been the Networker for the “The Network: tackling social exclusion in libraries, museums, archives and galleries”, running training courses and conferences, producing a monthly newsletter, and working on specific projects (such as the Paul Hamlyn Foundation funded project to support library staff working with looked-after children; and Phase 2 of “Welcome to Your Library”). John contributes regularly to Public Library Journal and to CILIP Update, and also leads workshops and gives talks at a number of events. John also works on specific projects and is a highly admired advocate for all his work in the social exclusion area.

The Network
The Network is a network of organisations, including local authorities, libraries, museums, archives and galleries, committed to tackling social exclusion. The Network was set up by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Wolfson Foundation. The purpose of the scheme was to enhance the services of English public libraries to their users. £13 million funding was provided for 138 public library based projects. The scheme was a competitive grant scheme open to all English public library authorities, regional library systems or (for the first two years) organisations involved in the development of reading. There was an invitation to bid once a year sent out by the DCMS. MLA then administered the selection process, monitored progress and organised training. Other changes made to the Fund, after the experience of the first year, were extending the opportunity to participate beyond town centre libraries to smaller service points, and allowing authorities to bid to the Fund in consortia as well as individually. As well as this material investment, the DCMS/Wolfson Fund continues to provide the benefits of enhanced experience and expertise for library staff and to raise the profile of public libraries within their authorities and communities. Most importantly, the projects have provided library users with a better service.

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation
The Paul Hamlyn Foundation is one of the largest independent grant making foundations in the UK. Grants are made to organisations which aim to maximize opportunities for individuals to experience a full quality of life, both now and in the future. In particular the fund is concerned with children and young people, and other disadvantaged groups. Projects and work which others may find hard to fund are supported and the Foundation also takes initiatives themselves, when new thinking is required.
Private Finance Initiative
The Private Finance Initiative enables government to provide public sector growth and development using private sector capital. PFI was based on the Prime Minister’s principles of public sector reform and there has to be a commitment to efficiency, equity and accountability. It also creates partnerships between private enterprise and the Government. PFI is only used where it can deliver clear value for money without sacrificing the terms and conditions of staff. The private sector puts its own capital at risk to deliver levels of service to the public over a long term. PFI can deliver a number of benefits: high quality public services and public assets that are delivered on time and on budget, on-going building maintenance and facility management. As with any partnership there are often hurdles and problems to overcome. Each stakeholder has a vested interest in their area and this can cause conflict. Patience and allocation of areas and duties should be ascertained in the first meetings to avoid many of the problems that can occur.

The Reading Agency
The Reading Agency was formed in 2002 by merging three smaller agencies - LaunchPad, The Reading Partnership and Well Worth Reading - all of whom worked with libraries to promote reading.
TRA was founded on the principle that reading has infinite potential for making life richer and that libraries are the most democratic medium for bringing reading to people. They work to improve work to improve the reading experience by inspiring, challenging and supporting libraries.

The mission of the Reading Agency is to inspire a reading nation by working in new ways with readers, writers, libraries and their partners.

The aims are:
- To reach more people with more reading
- To help develop an ambitious vision and national policy for libraries’ work with readers
- To help libraries and their partners develop and sustain vibrant reading services
- To research, promote and publicise the power of libraries’ contribution to reading and writing

The Reading Agency run national programmes in libraries: including the Summer Reading Challenge, Chatterbooks reading groups and the Vital Link. Partnerships are formed linking libraries to broadcasters, the book trade, the youth service, and others. The Reading Agency conducts research, policy and promotion by exploring and promoting the benefits of libraries and reading. Lasty practical resources are produced: training toolkits and promotional materials.

Are libraries contributing to Social Inclusion in the United Kingdom?

This article from The Network Newsletter: tackling social exclusion in libraries, museums, archives and galleries. Number 58, June 2006 (pp1-2), sums up the success of the work being done and the recognition the work is receiving.

“Libraries are Key to Renewal Says Minister” “The Government has announced that public libraries are to be considered in future policy initiatives to combat social exclusion and promote neighbourhood renewal.

The Minister asked the All-Party Group to make policy recommendations for the forthcoming Local Government White Paper, which is expected to be published in the autumn. The White Paper will set out Government’s priorities for local government reform, sustainable communities, and neighbourhood renewal. The DCGL will also be working with the All-Party Group to commission a research study into the role libraries play delivering wider policy goals on literacy, training, regeneration and social cohesion” (article originally published in Managing Information News, 14 June 2006).

Libraries in the United Kingdom are playing a key role in creating socially inclusive communities with an array of programmes and services to encourage greater participation.

Evaluation
Libraries in the United Kingdom take a very local approach to social inclusion. However it has been recognised that social inclusion work is an important role of the public library. Public libraries are ideally situated to facilitate real community building, strengthening and engagement. Libraries are trusted organisations and staff are liked and respected within communities. Often the public library is the first point of contact for people new to an area. Libraries in the United Kingdom libraries are reaching out into their communities to determine the local needs. They are partnering with local authorities, schools, community institutions and other organisations to provide services and projects that will strengthen their communities.

On-going funding is a problem. Many projects have once-only funding so sustainability of some services and projects is a major issue. Funding often comes from philanthropic organisations so valuable staff time goes into preparing funding submissions. Many projects and programs are very successful but often at a small and very local level. However, this would appear to be the very nature of social inclusion work. Evaluation is difficult due to the nature of the programs and the small numbers involved in some instances. The value of many programs cannot be measured by numbers alone.

A key factor in the success of social inclusion projects is the staff. The enthusiasm and dedication needed goes over the boundaries of a position description. In some cases staff are key factors. This also begs the question, what happens if staff move? Projects may take on a new perspective but aims and objectives need to be clear. Having policies and strategies becomes essential in this situation.
The major barriers are listed in “Libraries for All” and can be grouped under the four headings:

- Institutional (eg charges, rules)
- Personal and social (eg lack of confidence to ask for what you need; lack of basic skills)
- Perceptions and awareness (eg ‘the library’s not for us’; ‘you have to pay to join’)
- Environmental (eg location; physical access and within the building)

Many libraries are successfully dismantling these barriers... yet, at the same time, many library workers are in the throes of creating new barriers, for example: “it’s not our proper job” - do you recognise this comment? People in libraries seem to say it frequently now - it’s as though they don’t see the immense changes that are going on around us, and the exciting new directions that libraries are going in, but want to cling to some outdated notion of what libraries are for. Libraries are constantly changing, and we need to take hold of these opportunities and shape them.

“They’re not our proper users” - one of the exciting by-products of having ICT developed via the People’s Network is that libraries are suddenly being used by a whole new lot of people, refugees, e-mailing home for example; yet library staff talk about them as not being ‘proper’ users. What are we for? We need to look urgently at the role and purpose of public libraries to ensure that we are encompassing these new users.

“This is nothing to do with us - it’s a Government-driven, political agenda” - this is what some library workers seem to have argued about ever development there’s ever been! In this case, it is certainly true that work to tackle social exclusion is a core part of the Government agenda, but we would argue that it should also have been a core part of public libraries’ agenda for years too - indeed, for some library services, of course, it has been. What is different now is that the Government is not just providing access to funding, it is also attaching ‘strings’, ensuring that money is not just frittered away on ‘pet projects’, but is targeted towards the socially excluded. This may also, of course, have a political undertone to it.

Social exclusion continues to be an issue for Australian communities. Although our population is smaller than the United Kingdom and we are a considerable distance from Europe, we still have sections of the community that are socially excluded from the mainstream. The numbers may be fewer than in the United Kingdom but the problems still exist. For example the growing number of refugees settling in Australia will present challenges for libraries.

“...this work is relevant to the development of services to caravan park residents. As a result of this study tour, Eastern Regional Libraries (ERL) has done some research into the caravan parks of the Shire of Yarra Ranges and the people who live in them. ERL has submitted an application to the Libraries Building Communities Community Development Grants (2007) Project to develop a pilot project that will take the library to the caravan parks. The results of this project, should it be successful could well be used in many other library services who have a number of caravan parks within their communities.
Staff Training
We would like to have the opportunity to bring out to Australia some of the leaders in the development of social exclusion work in the United Kingdom. The focus on community involvement for our public libraries means that staff need new skills in dealing with a wide range of people, some of whom may feel unable to access traditional library services. We would like to see these skills become more widespread amongst library staff. As John Vincent has indicated, sometimes it is also a case of changing attitudes towards some of our excluded community members. John Vincent and John Pateman are leaders in the field in the United Kingdom but there are also some very dedicated people working directly in the field, such as Elizabeth Binns who has recently been awarded an MBE for her work with the Bury community. To hear from these people can generate enthusiasm and ideas of how librarians can work with their own communities. We also feel that these people may be of interest to the community development sector.

Expresso Collection
The success of several Quick Choice browsing collections in United Kingdom libraries was the impetus for the establishment of the Expresso collection at the Ringwood branch of Eastern Regional Libraries. The collection is a high interest selection, quick and easy to access. To date it has been very successful generating more loans and anecdotal response has been very positive. ERL plans to extend the collection to other branches.

Health and Wellbeing
We will prepare a proposal for Eastern Regional Libraries management team suggesting that ERL meet with relevant staff from the three member councils, local medical providers and hospitals to consider the practicalities and benefits of implementing a similar programme to Books on Prescription.

Co location opportunities
ERL is currently involved in exploring several co-location possibilities for their branch libraries. This study tour has provided some background information for this work. Included is a new proposal to work with a local primary school to develop a co-located school library with a public library service. One member Council is also looking at community hub models. Council service points could operate from branch libraries. This is something for future consideration by ERL and its member councils.

Services to Refugees
An increasing number of refugee groups are settling in the outer east. ERL have formed a partnership with the Migrant Information Centre and this has enabled us to monitor the number of newcomers to our area. Programmes such as the Chinese Read and Chat group are being established. Participation in the programme Outer Eastern Voices is helping ERL to develop links with young people from CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) groups in the region. Having seen successful programmes in the United Kingdom for refugees and asylum seekers ERL would like to develop stronger links with organizations such as AMES (Adult Migrant Education Service) and local cultural groups. These links will help create relevant programmes and provide appropriate materials; and importantly create staff awareness of the refugee cultures.

The mural project at Ringwood Library
ERL has received a Maroondah City Council Cultural Development Grant to work with young people from local schools including young people from CALD backgrounds on a mosaic art project. A series of mosaic murals reflecting the diverse cultural backgrounds of the young people will be designed, made and displayed in the courtyard adjoining Ringwood Library. This project will provide strong links with both young people and their cultural groups.

Homeless
Data provided from the Australian Youth Facts and Stats (2001) indicated that there were four thousand six hundred and sixty three young people in Victoria, aged twelve to eighteen years, classed as homeless on Census night in 2001. The authors recommend that an investigation into current service provision to the homeless is undertaken on a state wide basis. This should involve local government youth services departments and organizations dealing with young people. From this background a strategy should be developed for library services to the homeless.

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Conclusion

We would like to close this report with a quote from Mental Health-the role for libraries, Rotherham Health Libraries. The quote reflects our thoughts on how libraries contribute to building strong and socially inclusive communities.

“How Libraries can help ....using community services and joining in with community activities can....

- Help improve confidence and self esteem
- Provide opportunities to meet new people overcoming isolation
- Help with integration into the local community
- Help with the development of new skills"

Libraries are in a strong position to work closely with a wide range of groups in their local areas to create connected and inclusive communities.

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Lorraine Seeger and Bernadine Nolen

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<tr>
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<td>Topping Fold Community Centre and Library Topping Fold Road Bury BL9 0DG Tel: 0161 253 6361 Email:<a href="mailto:Topping.Library@burymet.gov.uk">Topping.Library@burymet.gov.uk</a></td>
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<td>Fowler Avenue</td>
<td>Tel: 01752 306923</td>
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<td>Email: <a href="mailto:beatson.library@plymouth.gov.uk">beatson.library@plymouth.gov.uk</a></td>
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<td>Nottingham City Library and Information Services</td>
<td>Beatson Library</td>
<td>North Yorkshire</td>
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<td>Fowler Avenue</td>
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<td>Tel: 0115 925 5168/5164</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@nottinghamcity.gov.uk">enquiries@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</a></td>
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<td>Nottinghamshire Libraries, Archives &amp; Information</td>
<td>Cultural Awareness Officer</td>
<td>Maltings Community Library</td>
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<td>Marian Newton</td>
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<td>Manager, Library and Information Service</td>
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<td>Graham Maltby</td>
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<td>Principal Librarian Health Care Services</td>
<td>Tel: 01709 812150</td>
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<td>Plymouth Libraries and Information Services</td>
<td>Project Officer (Social Inclusion) Business</td>
<td>Plymouth Central Library Services</td>
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<td>Senior Librarian, Equar Access &amp; Community</td>
<td>Drake Circus</td>
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<td>The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea</td>
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<td>Philadelphia Walk</td>
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<td>Tel: 020 7361 3010</td>
<td>LONDON W1J</td>
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<td>Email: <a href="mailto:libraries@kensingtonandchelsea.gov.uk">libraries@kensingtonandchelsea.gov.uk</a></td>
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<td>Shropshire County Library Services</td>
<td>Cheryl Davis Kevin George Senior Librarian</td>
<td>Shrewsbury Library</td>
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<td>Email: <a href="mailto:shrewsbury.library@shropshire-co.gov.uk">shrewsbury.library@shropshire-co.gov.uk</a></td>
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Libraries Visited

Brighton and Hove is a densely populated city situated on the south coast of England on the edge of the rural South Downs and less than an hour from London. Brighton and Hove is diverse in nature being the ninety forth most deprived area in the United Kingdom. There are pockets of severe deprivation in the east, while the west and north are relatively affluent.

Bury
Bury Metropolitan Borough consists of six towns, Bury, Ramsbottom, Tottington, Radcliffe, Whitefield and Prestwich. Formed in April 1974 as a result of Local Government re-organisation it was one of the ten original districts that formed the County of Greater Manchester. Geographically, Bury is an attractive blend of town and country ranging from Pennine moorland in the north to the suburbs of north Manchester in the south.

East Sussex
is located on the south coast of England, including Brighton and Hove (although these towns are administered by a separate unitary council), Eastbourne and Hastings are the largest cities. A quarter of the population is elderly and this is above the nation average as of 2001. Deprivation is concentrated in the coastal towns.

Essex
Located 31 miles northeast of London, the borough of Chelmsford is lively and thriving. It has an area of 130 square miles and includes the large town of Chelmsford, the county town of Essex, plus open countryside, and attractive villages. The borough has a population of just over 157,000 and is the focus for government, business, retail, leisure and culture in Essex. It will continue to be a major centre of development, with an estimated population of 169,400 by 2022. Black and ethnic minority groups comprise around 3% of the population. Chelmsford is the largest provider of employment opportunities in Essex; approximately 76,000 jobs exist within the borough, with an unemployment rate of 1.2% (December 2004).

Gloucestershire
is in the south of England, and Cheltenham and Gloucester are the two main urban areas. This area is relatively affluent and is the fourteenth most rural English county.

Norwich
The largest provincial city in England three centuries ago, is still considered to be the capital of East Anglia and remains attractive and prosperous.

Nottingham City
is close to the centre of England at the heart of the East Midlands. It is approximately 120 miles from London and 50 miles north of Birmingham. Nottingham is the undisputed capital of the East Midlands. It is the 9th largest travel-to-work area in England with a population of 740,000 and 3 million people within an hour’s drive.

Nottinghamshire County Council is the eleventh largest authority in the United Kingdom. It comprises three main broad areas, former Coalfield, rural and Greater Nottingham. The county has a slightly older population profile than the United Kingdom as a whole, based on 2001 figures. There are marked disparities within the county, as it has some of the most affluent areas in the country as well as some of the most deprived.

Plymouth is a city of 243,795 inhabitants (2001 census) in the south west of England, or alternatively the Westcountry and is situated within the county of Devon. It is located at the mouths of the rivers Plym and Tamar and at the head of one of the world’s largest and most spectacular natural harbours.

Shropshire is one of England’s most rural and sparsely populated counties. The population of the non-metropolitan county of Shropshire is 289,100. The county town is Shrewsbury, although the new town of Telford is the largest town.

Tower Hamlets
The borough itself was formed in 1965 out of the former area of the metropolitan boroughs of Bethnal Green, Poplar and Stepney which formed the classic East End. According to the 2001 census the borough has a population of 196,106. It has a high percentage of Bangladeshi, Africans and Caribbean residents. It also has the highest percentage of Muslims in Britain and people.