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Pupils playing at Bethesda School, Stockport. North West Film Archive, Manchester Metropolitan University
This report is a starting point.

Archives are about identity. They define and record personal identity and chart the emerging and developing identity of communities. The sense of being included by, or excluded from, society is closely linked to this sense of personal or community identity. Archives have the potential, therefore, to play a part in the challenge of strengthening inclusivity.

It would, of course, be all too easy - and all too counter-productive - to overstate this potential. No parish register or medieval charter is going to change the life of a drug addict but what this report can, hopefully, do is to provide some indicators of how archives - our shared and common memory - can make their own contribution to that complex jigsaw of services and support which together are needed to encourage and facilitate social inclusivity.

Developing a realistic understanding of the potential, in central and local government, among the archive profession, research and funding bodies and training organisations will be crucial if archive services are going to be able to turn policy into reality and play their part. It will require real and long-term partnership not just between archive providers and the community they serve but, crucially, with other services at the front line of tackling the problems of disadvantage.

The survey reveals a number of all too easily predictable barriers that are preventing archives from making the most of what they have to offer. Lack of funds, capacity, low image and poor profile, skills gaps and a clear policy framework are the most obvious inhibitors.

But, on the other hand, it also uncovers some real green shoots of activity where individuals and communities are using archives in all manner of ways to enhance their everyday lives.

This report will have been successful if it places the spotlight on these issues. Over the coming months, the National Council on Archives will work to build partnerships and links with the other organisations identified in this report to try to ensure that that light remains bright and that, under its beam, we can develop real practical ways of moving the agenda forward. The recommendations are designed precisely to create a momentum that we must not lose.
The Potential Social Impact of Archives

- Archives can make a significant contribution to promoting social inclusion in ways that prevent disadvantage through helping to develop personal and community identity and empowerment (2);
- The administrative role of archives means that they can play a small, yet unique, part in tackling the four key government objectives for social inclusion. This is linked to the role archives have in the democratic process and exercise of citizens’ rights (3);

Major Issues in Meeting the Department of Culture, Media and Sport’s Best Practice Framework

- The ability of archives to contribute is often determined by the policy and remit of their governing body and the nature of their collections. This is not to say that privately funded archives have no part to play (4.1.1);
- 40% of archives’ governing bodies surveyed do not have a policy on social inclusion and 17% of the archives do not know whether such a policy exists (4.1.1);
- Many archives services are concentrating their efforts on improving access for minority or under-represented groups and are not yet focussing on the impact their organisation can have on those at risk of social exclusion (4.2.1);
- Archives are attempting to develop new audiences, as a step towards social inclusion, but are doing so without the non-user research which is a pre-requisite to meeting new audiences’ needs (4.2.1);
- The creation and sustainability of partnerships is the most important factor in tackling social inclusion successfully (4.1.1).

The Challenges Archives Face

- In the context of static resources and increased usage, archives need to keep their existing services to users under constant review to ensure that the greatest possible level of resources is available for tackling non-users (4.5.1);
- There is an urgent need to raise the profile and awareness of archives both to the public and amongst other kinds of service provider at local, regional and national level (4.4.3.ii);
- Raising of profile and awareness is a necessary pre-cursor to meeting the challenges outlined by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport’s (DCMS) best practice policy framework (4.4.3.ii);
- The archive profession is seeking not only additional resources (4.5.1) but also clear guidance, networks, training and support (4.5.2) to promote social inclusion more successfully and establish sustainable partnerships (4.5.4).
RECOMMENDATIONS

For DCMS and Culture and Recreation Division, Welsh Assembly
1. To consider how best to provide or influence challenge funding to stimulate activity in social inclusion work in archives;

For Resource
2. To commission and publish appropriate research on the long term impact of archives in promoting social inclusion, and use this for advocacy purposes at the national level;
3. To commission and publish research to assess the views of non-users of archive services;
4. To publish clear guidance on methods of implementing the DCMS policy framework and the means for evaluating success;
5. To embed archives in any cross-domain pilot work on neighbourhood renewal;
6. To provide additional capacity for the regional archive councils to enable them to act as a support network, helping archives to tackle social inclusion and encouraging partnership and co-operation with museums and libraries;

For the English Regional Archive Councils
7. To act as a support network providing advice, information, contacts and partnership brokering for archives in their region;
8. To monitor progress towards achieving social inclusion policy objectives under the action plans of the forthcoming regional archive strategies;

For the Public Record Office
9. To consider the addition of a social inclusion section in the rolling programme of Archival Mapping Projects;

For the Public Services Quality Group
10. To consider how best to assess the impact of social inclusion within performance indicators;
Public Services Quality Group Drafting Committee for the British Standard for Access to Archives

11. To consider incorporating the DCMS best practice social inclusion policy objectives within the forthcoming Standard;

For Training Bodies

12. To assess the key skills required by archivists in order to deliver socially inclusive services and to take necessary steps to ensure that training programmes meet those future needs of the profession;

For Funding Bodies

13. To gain an understanding of the particular contribution that archives can make towards promoting social inclusion and the constraints that limit their ability to do more;

For the Society of Archivists, National Council on Archives and Public Service Quality Group

14. To consider the establishment of a Social Inclusion Planning Network for Archives to ensure that archivists are aware of social inclusion policies and best practice, and to contribute towards the development of knowledge and debate;

For Archivists

15. Where appropriate, to consider how best to respond pro-actively to the challenges of the DCMS Best Practice Framework and, where relevant, to submit reports to management board/committees on the implications;

16. Where relevant, to consider practical steps to raise the profile of their archive with the public they serve, their governing body, local and regional partners.
What is this audit aiming to do?

The overall aim of this project is to provide a snapshot of the policies and practice within the archive sector that are contributing to tackling social inclusion, their extent, current impact and potential. This report attempts to demonstrate the effectiveness of work being undertaken now by archives services in promoting social inclusion and to encourage others to recognise, and help build on this. The report is aimed at policy makers, funding bodies and the archive profession and was commissioned by the National Council on Archives and the English Regional Archive Councils.

This report aims to fill a gap. Although archive practitioners have been involved in the development of the recent DCMS policy work on social inclusion, there has been no systematic gathering of evidence upon which to base the development of policy and practice in this area.

To address that gap this report will:

• identify the potential of archives in addressing issues of disadvantage for people at risk of social exclusion;
• In the context of the above, highlight what might be the unique contribution of archives;
• assess the extent to which the archive sector is meeting the social inclusion policy objectives set by the DCMS best practice framework;
• highlight the challenges that the archive sector faces in meeting the best practice framework;
• use practice examples to illustrate the above;
• provide key findings and make recommendations for future action by policy makers, funding bodies and the archive sector.

What’s been audited?

The report is based upon a survey of the designated Places of Deposit for Public Records in England and Wales. The survey sought both quantitative and qualitative information from those responsible for the care of archives in those institutions. The results, therefore, represent the views of the archive profession rather others with an interest in archives. The Places of Deposit are 235 repositories that are designated to keep Public Records, under certain terms and conditions that govern care and access, by the Keeper of Public Records. The survey was sent to the heads of the 194 organisations that are responsible for those 235 repositories. The Places of Deposits were chosen as a sampling base because they provide a cross section of the archive sector encompassing central government, local authority, museums, universities, specialist health and science organisations, military and business archives.
It should be emphasised that this sample extends beyond local and central government funded archives that are specifically targeted by DCMS. Some respondents requested confidentiality.

A summary of the methodology of the survey is given at Appendix A.

**What is social inclusion?**

Definitions of social inclusion and exclusion vary and, therefore, respondents were specifically asked what, if any, definition they, or their governing body, are using. Of the 46% working to a definition, almost without exception respondents are using the Government’s Social Exclusion Unit’s definition or slight variations of it. The Unit defines social exclusion as:

“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, poverty and family breakdown” and social inclusion as “measures to prevent and overcome social exclusion.”
The National Council on Archives has previously asserted the potential social value of archives for everyone:

“The exploration of family “roots” through archives can create a personal involvement with history…. which can both inform and be informed by further exploration of historical sites and avenues. For others..their immediate local environment can be given new value and significance when it is illuminated by an understanding through archives of how it came to be as it is. For many ethnic groups, archives have … been able to unveil a legacy of interaction with the community, sometimes good, sometimes bad… For others, basic social rights and entitlements to services prove wholly dependent on access to properly preserved, objective records.”

To test that assertion, respondents were asked to identify ways in which they considered archives could contribute to the promotion of social inclusion. This produced a fairly strong consensus of themes that are identified below. Although the themes help to illustrate the ways in which archives can make a difference to people’s lives, of course these impacts are often interrelated within the context of traditional archival services.

### 2. Personal identity and development

The comprehensiveness of the records held by the archive sector means that they record the most basic facts about us, defining who we are as individuals. Many respondents emphasised the importance of information on births, marriages, deaths as keys to developing a sense of identity and self esteem. Archives enable us to gain identity and self-respect by connecting us with the past, allowing people to see themselves as having a place in a wider, and continuing, cultural context.

### 2.2 Community identity and development

Archives are produced in the normal course of the life of an organisation, association, group or community. The very process of their creation can be a stimulus to defining community identity and development. 30% of respondents highlighted this as the key contribution archives can make to tackling disadvantage.

Community engagement with archives can stimulate not just a sense of belonging and interest in history but can act as a catalyst to participation. This can empower communities to undertake their own self-generated projects building further interaction, skills and confidence.
2.3 Representing communities

The richness and wealth of the archival record can play an important role in developing, and underpinning, a wider understanding of different cultures and the contribution of those cultures to the past and present of our communities. In this way archives can promote tolerance and respect for other's cultures.

Impact upon the individual –
The Charles Parker Archive, Birmingham City Archives

Charles Parker (1919-1980) was a BCC Radio Producer in Birmingham from 1954 to 1972. He was a pioneer of oral history recordings and programmes who came to believe passionately in the importance of the testimony of working people. He made programmes with blind people, Irish labourers, workers in China in 1972, Asian teenagers and Vietnam War protesters and many others traditionally denied a voice on the air in historical records.

“.. and when I heard these programmes, they shocked me into realising that I, as an overall-wearing member of the working class, had a history and a culture and an identity far more valid than that which has been heaped upon me by the State education system. They made me realise that the job I did, that the life I led, that my very existence as a member of the human race, were things possessed of intrinsic value, and that same goes for every other member of the humanity. That is not something any school book taught me.” Feedback from user

Cambridgeshire ACRE Millennium Festival in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council Heritage Services (covering archives, museums, arts and archaeology).

Cambridgeshire ACRE aims to support the social and economic welfare of communities by helping people to help themselves. In response to identified local need, ACRE and the County Council provided support to enable local groups to develop their own interpretation and events to celebrate local monuments of their choice. Part of this involved helping local residents to access archive material about the monuments through the support of a paid researcher.

“The project involved large groups of very diverse people in active community work and generated a great deal of interest in the communities including a real feel good factor and the desire to carry on further work independently” Cambridgeshire County Council

“Everybody was really enjoying themselves. People came who wouldn't normally come to things and everybody was very eager to participate. We had a lovely time.” Resident of Great Staughton.

“[We can] educate the public in the history and development of individual social groups, to combat ignorance and racism.”
Manchester Archives and Local Studies

[203x482]2.3 Representing communities

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COSMOS Project - West Yorkshire Archive Service

With a grant of £30,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, West Yorkshire Archive Service created a travelling exhibition, which celebrated the peopling of West Yorkshire from the Huguenots in the sixteenth century to African-Caribbeans and South Asians after the Second World War.

The exhibition was launched at the Bradford Mela in July 2000. Although the exhibition drew upon existing archive material including extensive photographic, video and sound recordings to illustrate its themes, the project also successfully brought material owned and kept by individuals and family to a wider audience. Some of this material was donated to the archive service as a result.

“I remember I arrived on the 12th of February 1962, a very cold morning. Mist on the river. I went to bed around four o’clock that afternoon and I didn’t never get up until three o’clock the next day, because of tiredness, and the place looked so dark. …... It give you the feeling: What you letting yourself in for?”

Extract from Cosmos interview with Clement Cummings (66) from Guyana and Halifax.

In the West Yorkshire COSMOS marquee at Bradford Mela
West Yorkshire Archive Service
3. Uniqueness of the Archive Contribution

Archives provide us with the most direct and authoritative account of decisions made by those in authority on our behalf. The effective management of records by archive services allows us to access information about those decisions. That principle enables people to exercise their democratic rights, learn more and even find the answers to issues of crime and health. It is, therefore, possible to argue that the records management role of archives can play a part in tackling the four key indicators of exclusion as defined by Government. Many respondents commented that the administrative nature of archive services was the basis for this impact rather than their cultural role.

3.1 Democracy and citizenship
Many records are the products of central and local government, health authorities, schools and all kinds of public institutions. They tell us about the actions of organisations whose functions affect our daily lives. Data Protection legislation and the recently enacted Freedom of Information Act will reinforce the citizen’s right of access to the records of central and local government. This function and feature of the character of archives will bring future opportunities. In 2002, the Government is planning to introduce a “Study for Citizenship” programme into the National Curriculum covering “the origins and implications of the UK’s diverse society.”

3.2 Tackling crime
The comprehensive nature of the archival record can be a tool for righting the wrongs of institutional crime and providing justice for the individual. Archival collections, such as court records, can be used in educational programmes to develop an understanding of crime, punishment and the criminal justice system. This can play a small part in raising awareness of the consequences of crime amongst the young. A few archive services are also participating in rehabilitation programmes with potential or actual offenders.

3.3 Promoting healthier communities
Indirectly, records can play a small part in providing the evidence necessary to bring about improvements in the lives of people suffering from ill health. This often supports those who are fighting to prove ill health or injury as a result of workplace practices.

Some specialist archives, such as St Bartholomew’s Hospital Archives and Museum and Bethlem Royal Hospital Archives and Museum, are a small department of a hospital or once were. Their collections can be used to develop a better understanding of health problems and challenge perceptions about ill health in wider society.
Access to Adoption Records – London Metropolitan Archives

For many years people who were adopted or who spent time as children in local authority care have tried to find out about their childhood. London Metropolitan Archives holds some 160,000 case files for the London area dating from the 1930s to the 1960s and has developed a joint access service with its Social Services Department to help enquirers in their search. These files can be fundamental to a person's understanding of their early life but are often extremely sensitive and reflect the language and practice of earlier traditions of child care. The co-operative approach of archive and social service professionals has led to a mature and creative mediation of information and the development of policy in response to complex access and privacy issues, particularly where enquiries come from family members and not the case subject themselves. Responses can range from delight to anger and frustration:

"tears of joy, my mum and family were real to me."

"I was so upset after reading it all, as money seemed to be the sole reason for taking me in."

Stimulating musical composition among prisoners on remand – North West Film Archive.

In 1996, the North West Film Archive was approach by the Halle Orchestra education unit to help provide material to stimulate musical compositions amongst a group of people on remand at Risley Remand Centre, Manchester. The Archive selected a group of silent black and white films that were produced on video for use by the people on remand. Working with a small group of the Orchestra’s musicians, they composed a short piece in direct response to the film archive. The resultant track was edited onto the film. Feedback from those who took part showed that the project was a success in raising self-esteem through the creative process of making music for a film.
3.4 Promoting lifelong learning, educational attainment, employability

77% of the current users of archives are over 45 and 43% are of retirement age.\textsuperscript{xiii} It is, therefore, clear that archives play a significant role in promoting learning among the middle aged and the older people. Some professionals considered that this usage pattern reflected the time available in retirement to pursue genealogy.

A fundamental principle of archive services is the notion that a user should have direct access to the original record of their choice, from which to draw her or his independent conclusion. This process of “self directed learning” is important in enhancing skills, which is can led to better employability.

Archives services can support the objectives of formal education and the components of the National Curriculum, in particular through the exploitation of local historical evidence to bring alive the context for major social and economic events and trends.

\textbf{Ex Coal Miners Compensation Claims - Derbyshire Record Office}

Through acquisition of the records of the National Union of Mineworkers in Derbyshire, the Record Officer has been able to help trace the changing works patterns of former pitmen who are making compensation claims for ill health such as lung diseases and vibration. Tracing the records enable the men to prove they worked underground for at least 20 years.

“All the queries are from men in their 70s, 80s and 90s and we undertake searches on their behalf to make it easier for them. We get a great deal of satisfaction from being able to help.” Derbyshire Record Office

“It's fair to say that they [the staff of Derbyshire Record Office] have helped our ex-members to win hundreds of thousands of pounds.” General Secretary of the Derbyshire National Union of Mineworkers

\textsuperscript{xii} The fact that genealogy is one of the most popular forms of self motivated learning demonstrates the value that people place on understanding their own heritage.”

“Archives can be a stepping stone to further self-development.” Greater Manchester County Record Office.
At midnight on 3 May 1941, 105 people, many of them children were killed when a single bomb destroyed an air raid shelter in North Shields. It was the worst bombing incident in North East England in the entire war. The archive service drew together eye witness reports, survivor accounts, map, photographs and the works of award winning children's author Robert Westall, who grew up in wartime North Shields, to bring the events alive. The archive service worked with local librarians, teachers, children and a literacy support officer to make sure the project met the needs of its target audience. Resource packs and CD Roms were distributed to local schools and a complementary website produced which includes a database of victims.

“Seriously impressed by your website; will enhance my teaching no end”
Local schoolteacher.
This part of the report looks at the extent to which archives are currently meeting the framework of policy objectives set by DCMS and what the challenges are for archives in trying to do so. There are 11 policy objectives outlined in DCMS’s guidance, which are grouped in a deliberately sequential fashion as follows:

• over-arching objective;
• access;
• outreach/audience development;
• agents of social change;

and in this section, the survey responses are organised to illustrate those eleven objectives.

It is worth re-emphasising at this juncture that the audit of social inclusion work covered all sections of the archive sector including universities, museums and galleries, specialist collections and businesses and was not strictly limited to the government and local authority funded archives which were targeted by the DCMS’s *Centres of Social Change*.

### 4.1 Overarching objective

#### 4.1.1 Social Inclusion should be a policy priority

Understanding the context in which different kinds of archives operate is key to understanding why an individual service is making, or will be making, social inclusion a policy priority.

By their very nature most archives services are a small department within a larger organisation, be that a local authority, a university, a business, a hospital, a museum etc. One would therefore, expect that archives would be tackling social inclusion within the strategy and policy framework established by their governing authority and, in fact, 24% of respondents highlighted this as a key reason for activity.

However this is only the case for 26% [see figure 1] of those surveyed and, as might be assumed, the vast majority of these are local authorities. 40% of archive services operate within an organisation which has no strategy or policy in this area [see figure 1]. Many respondents in the local authority sector commented that without a clear corporate strategy for social inclusion it was difficult to secure funding or commitment to its own objectives in this area. Sometimes this is because social inclusion is simply not a policy priority for the governing body. 12 archives stated that this was the case for their institution. This is true for most business archives whose primary function is as an internal tool for the commercial organisation. It is also true for some specialist archives.

“*The social inclusion agenda is part of the government and county council’s policies, so it is essential that this service’s policies support those objectives in whatever way we can.*”

Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies
It is important that this distinction in purpose between archive services is recognised, but that is not to say that many non-publicly funded archive services do not want to promote social inclusion within a policy framework. No hard and fast rule applies.

17% of archive services were unaware of whether their governing body had social inclusion strategy [see figure 1]. Some respondents felt that this reflected the low status of the archive service within its parent organisation that could be compounded by a lack of involvement in corporate planning.

Although no university archive responded to the effect that its governing body had a policy for tackling social inclusion, the university sector do view it as a priority and was clear that its role lay in ensuring that the university’s policy for inclusivity in recruitment was supported by their activities.

Less clear was the relationship between the archives services in national museums and their governing bodies. A number of archivists in national museums were not aware of whether their Board had a policy on social inclusion and were equally unaware of the DCMS policy guidance, despite the fact that the national museums are directly sponsored by DCMS. Others were awaiting a corporate lead.

The DCMS’s Centres for Social Change has, nevertheless, made an impact in raising awareness of the issues involved. 72% were aware of the document and most of those professionals had read it (59%), although only 26% had acted upon its recommendations, the majority of whom were within the local authority sector.

It is also apparent that much progress towards providing more inclusive services is being made in the absence of a coherent strategy or policy framework. This kind of practice in isolation runs the risk of creating a vicious circle [see figure 2]. In this vicious circle, the parent authority does not properly support the efforts of practitioners. This lack of support can lead to unclear aims, lack of evaluation and a subsequent lack of demonstrable impact. This is in turn exacerbates the parent authority’s low expectation and lack of support and so the circle begins again.

“"The company sees my role as servicing their needs exclusively and as such does not wish to promote the service to any other sector beyond the minimum we have to for public records."" Girobank plc

“The Sandhurst Collection is intended to act as a teaching aid for Officer Cadets and is not generally open to the public.” Sandhurst Collection.

“We are interested in learning more and have a policy on social inclusion but we have not as yet identified means for the active promotion of social inclusion, given that our readership is relatively specialist.” Lambeth Palace Library.

“We have no corporate contacts” Anonymous County Record Office

“The College recruitment of students and staff is tackling this head on. We follow on by ensuring that service delivery does not disadvantage any group.” Kings College London

“this [social inclusion] is not yet being tackled at a strategic level by the museum.” National Museum Archivist

![Figure 1: Policies and strategy on social inclusion](image)
The survey showed that, in the majority of cases where social inclusion was identified as a policy priority (43%), archive services had responded by prioritising some of their services, although sometimes the relationship between the governing body’s definition of social inclusion and prioritisation was not easily comparable. More often than not this appeared to reflect the archive’s desire to attract non-users and break down its own traditional institutional barriers, rather than necessarily contribute to wider corporate priorities [see figure 3].

Figure 2: The vicious circle

Figure 3: Priority groups targetted by archive services

- Services or projects
- Prioritisation

- Women: [2%] [9%]
- Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals: [4%] [4%]
- Unemployed people: [5%] [5%]
- Children and young people: [24%] [22%]
- Older people: [15%] [18%]
- Disabled people: [25%] [27%]
- Ethnic minorities: [18%] [18%]
4.2 Access

4.2.1 Achieving the widest possible access to collections and knowledge, as the base to develop socially inclusive activities

Many archives services are concentrating their efforts on improving access for minority or under-represented groups and are not yet focussing on the impact their organisation can have on those at risk of social exclusion. The survey revealed that 59% of archivists felt providing equitable access was a guiding principle of their work and a further 29% that increasing the user base was key.

While most respondents saw the creation of equitable access in terms of actively removing barriers to access, some perceive this as a passive exercise in non-discriminating practice.

Many archives are finding more pro-active and innovative solutions to removing barriers to access, despite the fact that the use of their services is increasing (by 12% in 1999-2000) and the user base broadening. Archive services are tackling the personal and social barriers that can affect people’s abilities to use their services.

Many respondents were acutely conscious of the issue of charging and how this can act as a possible deterrent to those on low incomes. 17% of those surveyed indicated that the issue of affordability of services was taken into account in the setting of budgets. In the majority of cases this involved the use of concessionary charges for additional services, beyond free entry, such as photocopying and searches, for those on low incomes such as unemployed people, those in full-time education and OAPs.

Other respondents wanted to create more flexible opening hours tailored to the needs of potential users but were unable to put these aspirations into practice because of a lack of staffing. This was particularly acute amongst small services. Nevertheless, many archive services use special open days to attract those who cannot visit at other times.

77% of all archive visitors are aged 45 and older, with 43% of retirement age…[The average user] is more likely to live locally …and [is more likely to be] male and slightly greying.”

Ethnic minorities make up only 2% of the visitors to archive services."

‘Archives and provision for them is a mark of a civilized society, while a socially inclusive society is itself a goal of a civilized people. Access to archives for all informs all we do, and has done so long before social inclusion became a significant government policy.’ Borthwick Institute

“We regard it as our responsibility to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity to gain access to the service. The social inclusion agenda focuses on clear targets to work towards.” Lincolnshire Archives

“Our archives are open to everybody. Colour, race, or creed has no bearing on the way we operate. Anybody from anywhere who wishes to make use of our Regimental Archives may do so by whatever means they so wish.” Kings Own Scottish Borderers Regimental Archives

Enabling access for young people in care - Lincolnshire Archive Service

Users of the Library and Archive Services in Lincolnshire are required to apply for membership. This practice disadvantages a small number of young people in care since they do not have the support of parents to provide the necessary identification. With minimal staff time and effort the Library and Archive services joined forces with the Social Services Department to issue tailored forms for these young people.

This very simple measure has removed a potential barrier to access.
12.5% of current users of archives define themselves as having a disability. Of those people with a visual impairment, 24% thought that services were only fair or poor and of those people with mobility problems 21% rated services as fair or poor. The implication is that other people with disabilities are not using archive service because they do not meet their needs. There has been a recent emphasis on attempts to improve physical access for disabled people and many of the examples provided by respondents were designed to meet the needs of those with a visual impairment or mobility problems. Many of those examples were aiming to meet the statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Rural county based services, which often have only one physical location, are striving to provide more locally based access to their collections. While ICT can play a part by providing remote access, a number of respondents wanted to retain a personal relationship with users. As consequence, some have initiated partnerships with libraries to deliver a mini mobile archive service supported by a professional archivist. This is helping to combat rural isolation.

Hackney Archives Department Open Day

“[We have] an open day where all comers are welcome. In 2000 this was combined with a local history fair and a space for Hackney Museum to present plans for their new premises. Advertising locally, in the local newspaper, on the Council’s website, in First Stop shops, … produced a good response … filling the premises to bursting point at several points.”

Hackney Archives Department, London Borough of Hackney
Can I hear that in Colour – North West Film Archive

With a grant from North West Arts Board, the North West Film Archive worked with a specialist disability arts group to bring together a pilot group of 12 people with visual and/or hearing impairments to find out about their needs and preferences. As truly user-led real evidence was gathered about people’s attitudes, practical steps required, and the use of specialist professionals and technical interventions.

Let’s Get the Bigger Picture

To build on this understanding further, NWFA extended its research to wider audiences of people with disabilities to test and refine ways of accessing the collection. The evidence gathered provided real proof of the demand for future services. These services include a free library of videos for home use containing captions or audio descriptions, the provision of screenings at the Archive with live sign language interpretation as well as a website and on-line film catalogue specially adapted for visually impaired users.

“This draws back a curtain on a whole world of film which had been lost to me.” Pilot group member

Archive Surgeries – North Somerset Archive Service

In collaboration with North Somerset Unitary Authority, NSAS operates weekly archive advice surgeries in North Somerset libraries, making original and copy sources available. This has enabled the archive service to reach an extra 550 people who might otherwise be excluded by reason of their distance from the record office in Taunton.

“The service has been regarded as innovative and successful by users, staff and councillors. It has proved a valuable example of collaborative working.” North Somerset Archive Service

Archiving the widest possible access to archival collections is handicapped by the lack of research into why people do not use archives. The Public Service Quality Group’s Survey of Visitors to British Archives has radically improved the understanding of patterns of use of archives in recent years. All respondents who surveyed the needs of users used this survey or a local questionnaire. In contrast, only 18% of archive services surveyed the needs of non-users and only 9% surveyed specific groups they were targeting. There is, therefore, a danger of initiatives failing because of a lack of real understanding of need.

Some professionals appeared to regard access as the answer to social inclusion issue rather than a step along the way. Others saw dangers in making assumptions about improving accessibility.
4.2.2 Making use of ICT

25% of respondents believed the extension of Information and Communications Technology was the single most important way of delivering wider access to archives. It is viewed as a key tool for new audiences, given that 51.5% of users already have Internet access and 14.4% found out about the archive via the Internet. Some respondents called directly for the investment in the People’s Network to be extended from libraries to archives. Many local authority archive services were particularly keen to build further their relationships with local libraries so that, through ICT, they could use them as local access points. This was an especially important factor for large rural county archive services.

The survey revealed that roughly 63% of archives that responded provided open access PCs, Internet access or some kind of remote access to finding aids. Reassuringly, most of those facilities were provided free of charge, in line with DCMS’s desire for affordable access to ICT. There does, however, appear to be very little targeting of access to ICT services towards achieving specific objectives or to reach certain people [see figure 4].

The provision of ICT services is rapidly expanding as over 15% of respondents indicated that open PCs, internet access, e-mail access and remote access to finding aids would be freely available within a year.

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“OUR MAIN HOPE IS THAT REMOTE ACCESS WILL HELP TO DEMONSTRATE FURTHER THE USE OF ARCHIVES BY ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY.”
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

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**Figure 4: ICT Provision**

- **Remote access to finding aids**
  - Provided free of charge: 32
  - Targetted at special group: 3
  - Available to all: 29

- **Access to governing body’s information system**
  - Provided free of charge: 26
  - Targetted at special group: 25
  - Available to all: 23

- **E-mail access**
  - Provided free of charge: 26
  - Targetted at special group: 3
  - Available to all: 31

- **Internet access**
  - Provided free of charge: 31
  - Targetted at special group: 2
  - Available to all: 36

- **Open access PCs**
  - Provided free of charge: 35
  - Targetted at special group: 3
  - Available to all: 29
4.2.3 Catalogues and key documents should be available online via Internet

Archive services are making good progress towards providing access to both catalogues and digital images available over the web, as further steps are taken towards the National Archival Network. 18 respondents were awaiting the results of applications to The New Opportunities Fund Digitisation Programmes and each of the nine English regions has bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund under the Access to Archives initiative supported by the Public Record Office.

Access to Archives

The Access to Archives (A2A) programme aims to provide an archive network for England by March 2002, when 8 million catalogue entries will be accessible online via a single web access point. A2A is led by the Public Record Office, the Historical Manuscripts Commission, and the British Library. The South East of England is leading the way in this innovative programme and has recently secured £85,600 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to enhance access to the South East’s archival treasures via the Internet. By making archive catalogues available centrally and in a searchable format, both amateur and professional historians will be offered the opportunity to locate useful documents at the tap of a keyboard. The project, entitled From Landlord to Labourer, covers over 200 archive collections held in 15 local record offices throughout the South East, from Oxford to the Isle of Wight and from Southampton to Canterbury. 32,000 catalogue pages will be made accessible to all.
Whilst most professionals are aiming to provide access to online catalogues, many respondents highlighted again that catalogues cannot be mounted online where they do not exist. Eliminating the cataloguing backlog is a fundamental prerequisite to providing access to this material, whether online or by traditional means. 50% of archive offices have serious short-comings in cataloguing programmes, and only 8% have good coverage.xx. Over 50 million records are still held in card catalogues and only accessible to personal visitors. The cost of converting all the UK’s existing card catalogues is currently estimated at £80 million.xxi

Archivists were also alive to the potential problem of the ICT haves and have-nots, the need for support and training for new types of users, and the importance of recognising other communication channels.

4.3 Outreach/audience development

4.3.1 Outreach should be an integral part of the role of archives

33% of all respondents agreed that outreach was a key means by which archives could promote social inclusion and 76% were providing services to those who do not normally visit their buildings.

However, there is less evidence that outreach is targeted towards the promotion of social inclusion [see figure 5], since only 26% of respondents were regularly providing information about their holdings in areas or communities at risk of social exclusion. Less than 10% were providing events aimed at children and ethnic groups, despite the fact they are often a service priority [see figure 3]. Only 31% of outreach formed part of a specific programme with much more being done on an ad hoc basis (71%).

In contrast to the 76% of archives that offer outreach, fewer archives (39%) are able or chose to translate this into direct staff time to support the work of community groups. Nevertheless, 30% offer accommodation to groups on a regular basis which suggests that archives are, at least in part, being used as a neutral community space.

The main reason why archives do not offer outreach services is lack of resources rather than the fact it is not within their remit.

“Clearly the use of the internet is important as a place for listing one’s resources so that they can reach as wide an audience as possible, but other means of communication must be utilised as well since socially excluded groups rarely have internet access. One can provide information about oneself using as many outlets as possible, but in the end only those who are likely to be interested in archival information will seek it out.”

Wallace Collection

“[Archives can tackle social inclusion through] outreach activities that demonstrate the shared identity of different social groups in the history and development of our city.”

Manchester Archives and Local Studies.

“Ours is a largely passive service…. Having only six volunteer archivists usually working a day a week each we have no capacity for outreach services beyond the occasional talk. We find it difficult to maintain our existing service.”

Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment

Reminiscence Therapy - West Sussex Record Office

A partnership between West Sussex Record Office and West Sussex Social Services Department, initiated by the latter’s Arts Development Officer, has brought film archive footage into 10 day care centres. Each session, led by the Assistant County Archivist lasts about 75 minutes. They include a selection of local films, amateur and professional, illustrating the changing patterns of home, work and social life during the twentieth century. The films have proved an excellent way of evoking memories and social cohesion between the participants.

A grant from South East Arts Board will allow the partners to extend the programme to all day care centres in the area and to residential and nursing homes.
4.3.2 Identifying, consulting and involving the socially excluded

Those respondents who were trying to promote social inclusion felt that knowing who is socially excluded and how to reach them was rarely well defined. 24% described lack of clear information as a factor that limited their ability to make progress. It is worth noting here that only 41% of archives’ governing bodies had identified particular areas or neighbourhoods for priority action. Many respondents indicated the difficulties, or even validity of, targeting those at risk of social exclusion, in the absence of any direction corporately. Local authorities were felt by some specialist archives to be at an advantage in this respect simply because of their clear geographical remit.

Some respondents within the local authority sector, recognised the importance of using professional conduits and the need to allow those professionals to advise on the process of engaging with those at risk of social inclusion.

Some respondents articulated a worry about being patronising and facile in dealing with those at risk of social exclusion. Quite understandably, many professionals want to retain the principle of providing a service tailored to the individual.

The responses suggested that few archivists were aware of the Government’s Social Exclusion Unit’s theories on who the socially excluded are. This concentrates on the notion of deprived neighbourhoods where residents suffer higher mortality rates, have low levels of educational attainment and suffer from high employment and crime rates.

“[Archives can best promote social inclusion] through the empowerment of other agencies i.e. through providing them with training and access opportunities.”
Cornwall Record Office

“For social inclusion to be meaningful it must be based on the forming of actual relationships – putting people into boxes, and also the ticking of boxes, are inhibiting practices.”
North West Film Archive

“A lack of real knowledge of excluded groups and a reluctance to “descend” on people uninvited [hinders our ability to tackle social inclusion]. I would be keen to ensure that we don’t organise events that tell people their history in a “top down” fashion.” Isle of Wight County Record Office
4.3.3 A local learning place and champion of the independent learner

Archives score very well on independent learning and 22% of respondents cited this as the most important way archives can tackle social exclusion, linked with ICT developments. Some respondents recognised that the traditional use of archives requires a set of skills which some may not have.

Archive services are trying to deal with this skills issue in several ways. Firstly, by providing structured training opportunities for those who may not have the skills to learn from archival material by traditional methods. 10% of respondents are providing training programmes or work placement opportunities that are designed to enhance skills and help people enter or return to employment.

Volunteering was also championed as a way of promoting archives as a local learning place, where skills could be fostered in a social environment and major tasks accomplished.

The survey revealed an understandable tension amongst professionals between the importance of retaining the self-directing nature of traditional archival investigation and the need for better interpretative skills. 9% of respondents felt this was a skill archivists needed to develop further.

More archive services are creating interpreted and mediated information to help people to access archival material in a meaningful way that meets their needs. This is particularly true for formal education where archive services are developing packages that match the requirements of the National Curriculum, often using archive material to provide local reference to wider political, social or economic trends. The extent of this work is often hampered by the lack of specialist education staff within the archive sector. Only 23% of local authority archive services have dedicated education staff.xxii

“There is a very strong element of “self direction” in much of the learning that takes place in archives, which can foster self confidence, which together with improved skills should help people re-enter the job markets successfully. It’s never going to be a major spur of economic regeneration but does have a part to play in a wider set of programmes.”
Lancashire Record Office

“Through the attraction of local and family history material we can encourage people to learn ICT skills and return to a learning path.” Gloucestershire Record Office

“However, by its nature using archives requires an existing basic skills level, which many who are socially excluded have not yet attained.”
Lancashire Record Office

“Skilled voluntary labour produces excellent results and, nurtured properly, can be used to tackle very large, long term projects. The regular weekly project session provides social contact, purpose and status for this group of predominantly older people.”
Borthwick Institute

Student Placements - East Riding of Yorkshire Archives Service

The East Riding of Yorkshire Archives Service has offered placements to students regularly since 1990. The students are usually 15 years old and spend a week in the office taking on responsibility for observing all rules of good practice like any other member of staff. Each student is offered a good variety of work and is encouraged to use original records as well as microfilm, fiche and printed material. Some basic computer work is offered and some simpler listing of a small collection. Enquiries from the public that involve problem solving and use of records are also given to the students. On the whole, the week is an enjoyable experience, the student often learning new skills and gaining in confidence. It is important that the students are treated as part of a team in an adult working environment. There is always an assessment to complete at the end of the week and this is an opportunity to discuss in detail how well the student has coped.
4.3.4 Where appropriate, archive collections and exhibitions should reflect the cultural and social diversity of actual and potential audiences

Much good work is beginning on the collection and cataloguing of material relevant to previously underrepresented groups. 12% of respondents cited the importance of collecting from all communities within their remit or area of influence and 10% were actively engaged in projects to address this. A few professionals articulated the connection between accessible services and the potential for more deposits that reflect the entire community.

The Social Exclusion Unit suggests that people from ethnic communities are more likely to live in deprived areas and they suffer disproportionately from social exclusion and archives are currently applying effort to address the representation of different ethnic communities in their collections. (We do need to apply a caveat here since demographics means that the emphasis upon this work varies between regions and, within regions, between urban and rural areas).

Many respondents were alive to the sensitivities of collecting amongst underrepresented groups and in particular to the problem of how this might be viewed.
There are examples where archives have undertaken projects in order, at least in part, to collect new material but where this has failed, despite the fact that other aims were met successfully. This has led a minority of respondents to believe that the role of the local authority archive service is actually to help the development of specialist archive services for different cultural groups at least in the short to medium term. An example of this is the partnership between the Black Cultural Archive and Middlesex University to create the National Museum and Archives of Black History and Culture. With funding of £344,000, the project will collect, document, preserve and disseminate knowledge, encouraging people of all cultures to learn about the history and culture of black British people.

A significant proportion of the work in this area is concerned with the identification of sources that have remained “hidden” in existing archival collections as a result of historical cataloguing methods, rather than seeking new deposits. This is an issue of indexing priorities. The Black and Asian Studies Association found that many archive repositories already hold material relating to Black people, which are not listed or indexed as such and consequently they remain inaccessible.xxiv

In this respect, its is possible to argue that the comprehensiveness of the archival record at least allows us to discover the contribution of underrepresented cultural groups, in a way that is less easy for museum collections where pervading tastes and prejudices have had more of an impact:

“Because of the wide range of archival material which exists this can be done even with minority groups which are not otherwise well represented. The work of the Friends of Devon’s Archives in tracing references to Black and Asian residents over the past 400 years is an illustration.” Devon Record Office

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CASBAH - The Institute of Commonwealth Studies
http://www.sas.ac.uk/commonwealthstudies/archives/casbah.html

The project, funded by the Research Libraries Support Programme, aims to provide a web accessible database identifying relevant material to facilitate research into the history of Black and Asian people in Britain. Based at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, the project will cover relevant holdings across all sectors and is collaborating with a large range of partners from higher education, public, and voluntary organisations. Collection strengths and weaknesses will be assessed as a basis for co-ordinated collection development. A training, awareness and outreach programme will support the establishment of the subject gateway. The project is already having a knock on effect as some archive services such as Northamptonshire and the London Borough of Sutton start to extend the work of CASBAH at a local level.
More overt use of exhibitions would suggest that archivists will need to gain the interpretative skills of museums colleagues or work with them and through them in a more systematic fashion:

"Archives can help …by making more of an effort in interpretation – like museums already do. At the moment it is often up to the user to make sure that s/he understands what they want to look at, and how to read it etc – which leads archives to concentrate on white, middle class, university educated people." Powys County Record Office

We need to respect the fact that some archive services do not have a remit to ensure that their collection mirrors the social and cultural diversity of their potential audiences, in particular those archives which lie outside the local authority sector. Many of these archives exist solely to document the record of their governing institution.

This is not to say that archives with a specialist-collecting sphere are not making a contribution:

"We have our own agenda. All the material in our …collections relates to one of the most “socially excluded” categories of people throughout history – the mentally ill. We are committed to the aim of using this material to educate the public on mental health issues and to help to towards de-stigmatising mental health." Bethlem Royal Hospital Archives and Museum

4.4 Agents of social change

4.4.1 Forming partnerships

The creation and sustainability of successful partnerships were considered essential whether within or without their own organisation by 62% of respondents. Respondents look for partnerships as a means of learning from others, developing expertise without duplicating skills unnecessarily and as a means to create capacity;

"Closer working with other departments in the County Council who have similar aims like museums and libraries. Resources, expertise, contacts, information etc could be pooled ….. Other service providers are faring better at the moment but it shouldn’t be a competition. We should all be working together to tackle social inclusion." Oxfordshire Record Office

"It might be possible to look at how such projects could be developed at a regional or sub regional level and by cross-domain working between museums, archives and libraries." Hackney Archives Department

"Often it will be best for archives to work in partnership or to support projects led by others, be they community groups other local/regional agencies. Small services with very limited resources cannot easily develop or initiate projects which will make a real difference on their own." Dorset Record Office

"Lack of time often prevents small repositories from forming fruitful relationships." Anonymous specialist archive
Figure 6 illustrates the wide range of partnerships which archives are already involved in to pursue social inclusion objectives. The pattern of partnerships provides good news for Resource’s agenda since the high percentages of partnerships are between archive services and other archives (60%), museums (70%) libraries (66%) and education providers (58%).

Some respondents highlighted the difficulties of establishing partnerships with potential conduits, as part of a wider programme, because of the low profile or poor image of the archive service within the organisation. Some felt that there was often an internal profile-raising exercise to be undertaken before others could be persuaded of the value of an archival contribution (see 4.4.3.9).

4.4.2 Developing projects which aim to improve the lives of the socially excluded

Although many archive services are concentrating on improving the accessibility of their services and widening their user base, others are forming partnerships in a wider framework and starting to make a contribution to projects which specifically aimed at those who are identified as at risk from social exclusion. In these instances, it is local authority archives services that are delivering one element of a broad programme of community regeneration which is based on tackling disadvantage in one area or neighbourhood.

4.4.3 Considering how archives can further develop their role and act as agents of social change

4.4.3.i Attitude of the Profession

It is possible to argue that the commitment and attitude of the profession will determine whether the potential for archives to encourage social inclusion will be fulfilled. Without professional engagement the necessary consideration of the issues will not occur.
The survey revealed that there were marked differences in the attitudes of archivists to the promotion of social inclusion, and that there was a correlation between attitude and the type of archive. **Figure 7** reveals that staff in all forms of local authority archives services and universities are much more likely to consider social inclusion to be a priority. This suggests that professionals are reflecting the objectives of their organisations, although this was not universally true.

**Abbeylands Project - Surrey History Centre**

Abbeylands School is situated in an area of social deprivation and has been suffering from a period of uncertainty with falling school numbers. It is to be re-launched. Attendance level and the self-esteem of pupils has been affected.

Surrey History Centre, in partnership with Brooklands Museum and the County Council’s Education Services, has devised a project that will involve pupils researching the wartime history of the local area. On one level the aim of the project is to improve the historical knowledge and ICT skills of the pupils. The real drive, however, is to raise the profile of the school and the self confidence and pride of the pupils through appearances on local radio, in newspapers and in the community venues.
In response to the question “Is the social inclusion agenda important to your service?” archivists replied;

“Essential.” Derbyshire Record Office

“It should be. Our own service could be accused of being socially exclusive (problems of physical access, perception of elitism, known limited user profile, relatively high copying charges..) some aspects of which can be addressed more easily than others.” East Sussex Record Office

“I see the County Record Office as having an ancillary role in promoting social inclusion, in the sense that it is unrealistic to expect a resource that is primarily of largely administrative and recreational value to make a major impact on social inclusion.” Warwickshire County Record Office

“Social inclusion is not an issue for our service. We are not a community archive.” Anonymous specialist archive

36% of respondents felt that they were they were faring less well than other part of their organisation in tackling social inclusion, although many were very positive in outlook:

“[we have been doing] poorly but under new management this will be a high priority” Cornwall Record Office

“We are making considerable progress in identifying what needs to be done”. Manchester Archives and Local Studies.

4.4.3.ii Image and Awareness of Archives

Knowledge of the existence and potential of archives as well as healthy perceptions about their use and relevance are pre-requisites to improving accessibility and furthering socially inclusive services. Many respondents described how issues of poor image and low awareness affected their ability to start dealing with many of the challenges described in 4.5 below.

The issue is not just confined to developing relationships with potential users directly, but extends to other service providers, governing bodies, funders and potential partners. This remains perhaps the biggest stumbling block to progress.

Many respondents felt that the key to solving the low profile of archives in the public consciousness, was to start by contributing more pro-actively where archives are used by the mass media. Many respondents referred to the growing number of TV and Radio programmes such as Meet the Ancestors and House Detectives which attract audiences of up to 5 million.

“[we need] an improved public image which is less traditional and more up beat.” Glamorgan Record Office

“[we need] a change in the public perception of archives as the preserve of academics, eccentrics and elitists.” Anonymous County Record Office

“[We need more] awareness within the employing authority by officers, especially senior officers of the “usability” of archives. There is a lack of involvement in corporate consultation and planning.” Derbyshire Record Office

“It is hard enough to get the profile of the museum and archives raised within my profession let alone getting people who have little interest in military engineering.” REME Museum of Technology

“Our importance is perhaps best conveyed through books and TV programmes that are aimed at popular audiences. Archives should assist wherever they can with such projects.” Lambeth Palace Library
4.5 Challenges

4.5.1 Sustainability and long term resources

Use of archives is growing rapidly, whereas the use of libraries is declining and use of museums is at best static. Most archive services are very small and do not have the resources to manage traditional services well as well as coping with increased demand. Unsurprisingly there is clear evidence that smaller services are finding it more difficult to respond. 65% of respondents cited resources as the single most important factor in hindering work on social inclusion.

Lack of resources is preventing archives from making simple and effective change:

“The greatest practical barrier to widening access to our collections for the local community is opening hours; we cannot afford to provide evening opening, and at weekends can manage only three hours on Saturday.”

Durham University Library, Archive and Special Collections

Social inclusion work is very expensive and resource intensive for results, which might make a radical impact on very few people. The average cost of the examples of projects provided was £20,000 per annum. It is probably fair to say that few would ever tackle social inclusion if the issue were solely about efficiency rather than effectiveness.

It is clear that lack of resources is also preventing the kind of risk taking that is required to create socially inclusive services:

“We need the flexibility to experiment with projects and the capacity to accept and learn from failure without being penalised.”

Gloucestershire Record Office

Nonetheless, some local authority services see responding to the social inclusion agenda as essential to ensuring their survival as publicly funded bodies in the long term:

“It [the social inclusion agenda] is part of a way of life. I don't think that record offices can survive without it whether their reactions are positive or negative, or rather active or reactive.”

Northamptonshire Record Office

Many respondents were concerned about having sufficient resources to respond to the potential demands of new audiences seeking different services:

“Some colleagues may be tempted by the lure of grants for social inclusion projects but as no extra funding appears to be available to cope with the extra demands in existing services which any promotional activity will create, they are likely to find their resources even more stretched in the long run.”

North Yorkshire Record Office

Whilst this may be true, the satisfaction rates amongst existing users of archives are consistently very high. It is, therefore, possible to argue that resources might be more effectively spent on creating further new users from underrepresented groups rather than in maintaining or enhancing excellent approval ratings.

There was some limited evidence that policies and strategies to tackle social exclusion are being followed through into budgetary processes. 16% of respondents indicated that they did take account of social inclusion in their
Of those, the majority explained that they meant prioritising access initiatives within an overall budgetary figure rather than in the creation of clearly identifiable, and protected budget heads for social inclusion work.

Despite the misgivings which many respondents had about building longer-term resources, there was clear evidence that archivists are successfully adapting to a climate of challenge funds and grant programmes. 49% of respondents indicated that they had applied for external funding for a project that promoted social inclusion. The majority of these were either successful or awaiting a decision (56 applications). The predominant targets for funding were the Heritage Lottery Fund (27 applications) and the New Opportunities Fund (19 applications).

Many respondents were keen to point out that successful grant-funded projects could help to enhance the profile of the archives both externally and internally and that this could play a role in protecting existing resources and help to obtain new ones.

4.5.2 Organisational and cultural change

It can be argued that if any organisation is serious in responding to the needs of those at risk of social inclusion it needs to be prepared to question its own structures and services.

Although there is considerable enthusiasm and commitment on behalf of the archival profession to create changes by promoting more accessible services and providing more outreach, few respondents articulated any intention to radically re-think the way they operate in the following terms:

“it’s [social inclusion] got to be incorporated into the office philosophy”
Greater Manchester County Record Office

Others recognised the importance of being able to be flexible to deliver results;

“It is very difficult to be specific [about how archives can best contribute to social inclusion]. There is no one solution or example and if over-prescriptive can be self-defeating. Social inclusion is best demonstrated in a multifaceted way”
Derbyshire Record Office

Ensuring that there is clear responsibility for promoting social inclusion is important in creating organisational change. Although 43% of respondents indicated that their governing body had a policy for promoting social inclusion, only 11% of respondents indicated that they had a member of staff with specific responsibility for delivering socially inclusive practice.

There was a plea for clear practical guidance which could act as a “tool kit “ for archive services that are looking to create organisational change but are fearful of wasting precious resources on re-inventing the wheel.

Similarly, there was a call for networks of local and regional contacts to provide information, support, and the exchange of ideas and to act in partnership brokering:

“[we need] a networking system to enable the service to identify both potential partners for projects tackling social exclusion and the representatives of local groups.” Anonymous Local Authority
The calls for support networks were strongest amongst the smallest services. However, 16% of respondents considered more training and support for staff to be a precursor of making real changes. This highlights the importance of examining the skills required to engage in tackling social inclusion and integrating these within the training programmes of archivists and in continuing professional development. Beyond skills training, some respondents articulated the need for the archive profession to be more reflective of the diverse communities they seek to serve. Although no figures for the social make-up of the archive profession exists, there is some evidence to suggest that diversity is a real and long-term problem which will inhibit the profession’s development.

4.5.3 Responding to the new ICT environment

Although the expansion of ICT services to users is happening very rapidly (63% of respondents offer either internet, open access PC or e-mail services and a further 15% will do so by April 2001), within archive offices there remains a worryingly high level of poor ICT infrastructure which can only really be tackled by significant investment not just in infrastructure but training and sustainability.

Despite the enthusiasm with which archives have responded to programmes such as the New Opportunities Fund Digitisation Programme, Access to Archives and the Higher Education Archive Hub, these are but small elements of the aspirations outlined for the National Archival Network. Just as the People’s Network team of Resource is achieving this for libraries, there remains a key role to be played by a strong central co-ordinating body in bringing the archival network to fruition, in a complementary fashion that will allow for seamless access to resources for existing and new users.

4.5.4 Community Ownership and Partnership

Beyond the issue of successfully identifying and targeting those at risk of social exclusion outlined earlier at 4.3.2, 25% of respondents were most concerned about short-term projects raising expectations that could not be successfully sustained in the longer term. The importance of providing long term support to enable communities to take a lead was strongly emphasised by those who have the experience of project work as being the most important ingredient:

“Archives must recognise that developing relationships with, and nurturing relationships are major undertakings and it may be a long time before conditions are right for genuine consultation.” North West Film Archive

“[w]e have learnt] the importance of devoting time, contact and personal interaction and the extent of some of the gulfs we need to bridge.” West Yorkshire Archive Service

5% of respondents indicated that community groups have started to progress things they felt were important to them independently, following initial community history projects by the archive service.
4.5.5 Integrating archives into a wider framework

The Government’s strategy for tackling social inclusion is laid out in the Social Exclusion Unit’s *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* and concentrates on dealing with deprived neighbourhoods. It advocates a multifaceted approach to dealing with social inclusion which requires a radical re-think, primarily by local authorities, about how their services can be delivered in a way which is tailored to need rather than the convenience of traditional structures.

Neighbourhood Renewal was not mentioned specifically by any respondent, although a number of local authority services indicated that they were involved in long term community regeneration projects. Local authority archive services will need to profile-raise, be clear about what they can offer to other service providers, develop relationships and be prepared to give up control.

Local authority respondents recognised the part that Best Value could play in providing a more integrated framework and the basis for assessing the impact of archives work in this field;

“Our recently completed Best Value Improvement Plan includes action to draw up a cross domain social inclusion strategy with library and heritage services and to set up mechanisms for annual review and revision.”

Herefordshire Record Office

“[We need] to develop performance indicators for social inclusion linked to Best Value.” Cambridgeshire County Council

We have previously discussed how the low status of archive services within their governing authority can lead to exclusion from wider corporate planning initiatives and the extent to which raising awareness is critical to involving archives in wider frameworks whether local, regional or national.
4.5.6 Demonstrating benefits

Archives need to demonstrate to key policy makers and funding bodies the impact that their work can make in this area. Many respondents recognised the importance of being able to provide real evidence of the impact of traditional services:

“we need to be able to track the real value of what we do now, so we can start to gain the credibility we need to start more adventurous work.”
Anonymous Local Authority

Evaluation is easy to overlook, but is crucial in providing the kind of evidence of success that can change attitudes amongst governing authorities and potential partners. Those who have embarked upon projects almost universally commented that the process of consultation and partnership had resulted in a raised profile for their service.

However, the survey revealed that, of the 35 projects submitted, in fact only 5 were formally evaluated. It was also clear that some archivists remain unconvinced of the value of evaluation, despite evidence that it can be relatively simple to collect and assess results that will prove the value of work undertaken.

**Memory Recall Project - Worcestershire Record Office**

In collaboration with social services, Worcestershire Record Office provided archival loan boxes to organisations and individuals caring for older people to stimulate memories through conversation and interaction. After 3 months, all organisations were contacted to fill in a simple questionnaire generated by the Record Office, which evaluated the usefulness of the materials and requested suggestions for improvements that were subsequently carried out. The evaluation cost only the price of paper and postage but made a real improvement to the service offered.

Worcestershire County Council
5. Summary of Key Findings

Based on the analysis of the survey data from those caring for archives, the most significant conclusions which can be drawn are;

**The potential social impact of archives**

- Archives can make a significant contribution to promoting social inclusion in ways that prevent disadvantage by the development of personal and community identity and empowerment (2);
- The administrative role of archives means that they can play a small yet unique part in tackling the four key government objectives for social inclusion. This is linked to the role archives have in the democratic process and exercise of citizen’s rights (3);

**Major Issues in Meeting the DCMS Best Practice Framework**

- The ability of archives to contribute is often determined by the policy and remit of their governing body and the nature of their collections. This is not to say that privately funded archives have no part to play. Only 26% of the governing bodies of the archives services surveyed have a policy for promoting social inclusion and the vast majority of these are local authorities (4.1.1);
- 40% of archives’ governing bodies surveyed do not have a policy on social inclusion and 17% of the archives do not know whether such a policy exists (4.1.1);
- 43% of archive services are tackling social inclusion as a priority, although the relationship between this activity and the strategy and/or policy of their governing body is not always clear (4.1.1);
- Many archives services are concentrating their efforts on improving access for minority or under-represented groups and are not yet focussing on the impact their organisation can have on those at risk of social exclusion (4.2.1). 59% of those surveyed felt that providing equitable access was guiding principle of their work, 33% considered outreach to be a key means of achieving this and 80% are providing outreach services (4.3.1);
- 29% of respondents considered increasing their user base to be key (4.2.1). Archives are attempting to develop new audiences, as a step towards social inclusion, but are doing so without the non-user research which is a prerequisite to meeting new audience’s needs;
- Extending ICT was viewed as the single most important vehicle for broadening access by 25% of respondents (4.2.1);
- 27% of respondents are regularly providing information about their services in areas where people are at risk of social exclusion (4.3.1);
- In qualitative responses, there was evidence that respondents were generally confused about the differences between improving access and social inclusion.
The majority of examples of practice appeared to be focusing on minority or underrepresented user groups rather than on the impact that archives can make, as an element of a wider partnership programme, on those at risk of social inclusion;

- The creation of successful and sustainable partnerships was considered the most important factor in tackling social inclusion by 62% of respondents (4.4.1)

The Challenges Archives Face

- In the context of static resources and increased usage, archives need to keep their existing services to users under constant review to ensure that the greatest possible level of resources is available for tackling the issue of non-users (4.5.1). 65% of respondents cited lack of resources as the most important factor in hindering work;

- There is an urgent need to raise the profile and awareness of archives both to the public and amongst other kinds of service provider at local, regional and national level (4.4.3).

- Raising of profile and awareness is a necessary precursor to meeting the challenges outlined by the DCMS best practice policy framework.

- The survey revealed differences in the attitude of the archive profession (4.4.3.i), which showed that those in local authorities, museums and galleries and universities were keenest to promote social inclusion. The attitude appeared mostly, but not always, to reflect the remit of the archives governing body;

- 25% of respondents were most concerned about the ability to create and sustain the wide ranging partnerships with both communities and other service providers (4.5.4);

- 24% of respondents described lack of clear information about how to identify and involve the socially excluded as a problem (4.3.2). Respondents are seeking clear guidance and networks of local and regional contacts to overcome this (4.5.2);

- Training and support was considered the most important precursor to creating organisational change by 16% of respondents (4.5.2);

- There is a need to establish clear responsibility for promoting social inclusion within archives services. Only 11% of respondents indicated they had a member of staff with specific responsibility for delivering socially inclusive practice (4.5.2);

- 12% of respondents cited the importance of collecting from all communities within their remit and 10% were engaged in projects to address this (4.3.4);

- 10% of respondents felt that the archive profession would benefit from gaining further skills in the interpretation of archive material (4.3.3)

- 5% of respondents had successfully enabled community groups to progress activities that they felt were important to them, as a result of community history projects initiated by the archive service (4.5.4)

- There is a lack of formal evaluation that may be inhibiting archives' ability to show the impact of the services and projects they are progressing (4.5.6).
6. Recommendations

For DCMS and Culture and Recreation Division, Welsh Assembly
1. To consider how best to provide or influence challenge funding for social inclusion work in archives to stimulate activity;

2. To commission and publish appropriate research on the long term impact of archives in promoting social inclusion, and to use this for advocacy purposes at the national level;

3. To commission and publish research to assess the views of non-users;

4. To publish clear guidance on how archives can implement the DCMS framework and the methods for evaluating success;

5. Embed archives in any pilot work undertaken on cross-domain basis on neighbourhood renewal;

6. Provide additional capacity for the regional archive councils to enable them to act as a support network for helping archives tackle social inclusion and to encourage partnership and co-operation with museums and libraries;

For Resource
2. To commission and publish appropriate research on the long term impact of archives in promoting social inclusion, and to use this for advocacy purposes at the national level;

3. To commission and publish research to assess the views of non-users;

4. To publish clear guidance on how archives can implement the DCMS framework and the methods for evaluating success;

5. Embed archives in any pilot work undertaken on cross-domain basis on neighbourhood renewal;

6. Provide additional capacity for the regional archive councils to enable them to act as a support network for helping archives tackle social inclusion and to encourage partnership and co-operation with museums and libraries;

For Regional Archive Councils
7. To act as a support network providing advice, information, contact and partnership brokering for archives in their region;

8. To monitor progress towards achieving social inclusion policy objectives under the action plans of the forthcoming regional archive strategies;

For the Public Record Office
9. To consider the addition of a social inclusion section in the rolling programme of Archival Mapping Projects;

For the Public Services Quality Group
10. In the context of its work on performance indicators, to consider how best to assess the impact of social inclusion within performance indicators;

For Training Bodies (Information Service National Training Organisation, Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation, Archive Schools and Society of Archivists)
11. To consider incorporating the DCMS best practice social inclusion policy objectives within the forthcoming Standard;

12. To assess the key skills required by archivists in order to deliver socially inclusive services and to take necessary steps to ensure that training programmes meet those future needs of the profession;

For Funding Bodies
13. To gain an understanding of the particular contribution that archives can make towards promoting social inclusion and the constraints that limit their ability to do more.

For Society of Archivists, National Council on Archives and Public Service Quality Group
14. To consider the establishment of a Social Inclusion Planning Network for Archives to ensure that archivists are aware of social inclusion policies and best practice, and to contribute towards the development of knowledge and debate.

For Archivists
15. Where appropriate, to consider how best to respond pro-actively to the challenges of the DCMS Best Practice Framework and, where relevant, to submit reports to management board/committees on the implications;

16. Where relevant, to consider practical steps to raise the profile of their archive with the public they serve, their governing body, local and regional partners.
i The National Council on Archives was set up in 1998 to provide a voice of consensus in the archive sector. For further information please see http://nca.archives.org.uk/.

ii As set out in DCMS, Libraries, Museums, Galleries and Archives for All; Co-operating across the sectors, January 2001.

iii Resource; The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries was set up by DCMS in April 2000 to provide policy for museums, archives and libraries.

iv The English Regional Archive Councils were established by the National Council on Archives in 1999 at the request of DCMS to provide a regional voice for archives.

v The Public Record Office is the national archive of England, Wales and the United Kingdom. It brings together and preserves the records of central government and the courts of law, and makes them available to all who wish to consult them. For further information please see http://www.pro.gov.uk/.

vi The Public Service Quality Group was established in 1996 as an informal network for archivists interested in best practice and quality issues. For further information please see http://www.pro.gov.uk/archives/psqg/about.htm.


viii For further information on the work of the Social Exclusion Unit see http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu/index.htm.


x as reflected in documents such as Arts and Sports; Policy Action Team 10; A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit, DCMS, 1999.


xiii Public Services Quality Group Commentary, Survey of Visitors to British Archives, October 1999, p.2.

xiv From Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, Museums and Social Inclusion, A Report to the Group for Large Local Authority Museums, July 2000

xv Public Service Quality Group Commentary, Survey of Visitors to British Archives, October 1999, p.2.

xvi Ibid, p.2.

xvii Ibid, p.2.

xviii Ibid, p.2

xix Public Service’s Quality Group Commentary, Survey of Visitors to British Archives, October 1999.

xx Archival Mapping Project Board, Forthcoming second Archival Mapping Project for local authority services in England and Archival Mapping Project Board, Forthcoming second Archival Mapping Project for local authority services in Wales.


xxii Archival Mapping Project Board, Forthcoming second Archival Mapping Project for local authority services in England and Archival Mapping Project Board, forthcoming second Archival Mapping Project for local authority services in Wales.


xxiv Sherwood, M. Questionnaire on archival holdings related to Black people in the UK. Institute of Commonwealth Studies.

xxv 95-99% satisfaction rates for advice services, 96.3% agreed that archives were welcoming and 72% achieved or exceeded the outcomes they wanted from their visit. Public Service Quality Group, National Survey of Visitors to British Archives, October 1999, p.2. 57% of local authority services state that they are involved in some kind of local network, Archival Mapping Project Board, forthcoming second Archival Mapping Project for local authority services in England and Archival Mapping Project Board, forthcoming second Archival Mapping Project for local authority services in Wales.

xxvi There has been no successful ethnic minority British candidate through the University College London post-graduate training course in eight years.

xxvii 24% of respondents considered their ICT provision to be very poor and a further 38% poor, Archival Mapping Project Board, forthcoming second Archival Mapping Project for local authority services in England, and Archival Mapping Project Board, forthcoming second Archival Mapping Project for local authority services in Wales.

Appendix

Summary of Research Methodology

A survey questionnaire was developed to ask a range of questions that were of a quantitative and qualitative nature. The quantitative survey questions drew heavily on those employed for the *Open to All: The Public Library and Social Exclusion* report commissioned by the Library and Information Commission in 1999 and published by Resource in 2000. Similarly, formulation of the qualitative questions benefited from the approach taken in *Museums and Social Inclusion* report commissioned by the Group for Larger Local Authority Museums and published in June 2000. The reason for this was to allow for a degree of comparison between this audit and recent work in the library and museums sectors. The survey was pilot tested by the 9 Chairs of the English Regional Archive Councils and adjusted in light of their comments.

The sample used to conduct the survey was the Places of Deposit for England and Wales. This is a list of 235 repositories that are designated to keep Public Records, under certain terms and conditions that govern care and access, by the Keeper of Public Records. The survey was sent to the heads of the 194 organisations that are responsible for those 235 repositories. Although this sample provides a cross section of archive holding bodies, there is no statistical analysis of all archives by type in England and Wales with which is can be compared.

Respondents were asked whether they would like their results to remain confidential. 35% requested confidentiality.

The response rate was 57%, of which 52% (101 of 194) returned completed questionnaires.

By region, the percentages of returns were; London 20%, South East 13%, South West 10%, West Midlands 13%, East Midlands 6%, Yorkshire and the Humber 7%, the North West 9%, North East 5%. The figure for Wales was 10%. By type of archive holding bodies the percentage of returns were; local authority (county) 39%, local authority (district, town, borough) 13%, Local authority (metropolitan district) 7%, museums, galleries and special libraries 13%, hospitals, health and science 9%, universities 6%, businesses 4% and military organisations 9%.

In analysing the qualitative information received, broad categories of response were developed from the opinions of respondents from which statistical data was derived.

The accuracy of data entry used to compile the statistics was independently checked by a random sample of 150 question responses. The accuracy of data was 98.6%.
Acknowledgements

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