North West Museums Service

COMMUNITY PROFILING: GUIDANCE NOTES

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1.   Introduction

1.1   Regeneris Consulting were commissioned by the North West Museum Service (NWMS) in May 2002 to undertake a *Community Profiling* project.   The NWMS wishes to work more strategically in directly targeting the needs of particular 'communities of interest'[1]. This Community Profiling project sought to establish a working catalogue of pertinent external agencies with whom NWMS (and it's 'members') could work with in targeting communities of interest.   The Community Profiling exercise also sought to provide a quantitative profile of various communities of interest, both across the North West region as a whole and in particular local areas.

1.2   NWMS identified four broad community interest groups that would be the focus of this study, as follows:

- Ethnic minority groups

- Those with poor skills and low educational attainment (including adults with basic/no skills; young people outside of formal education; and underperforming schools)

- Disabled groups

- Socially excluded (including exclusion in both urban and rural areas).

The task

1.3   To understand these interest groups more fully and their presence across the North West, two key tasks were undertaken:

- Firstly, data/intelligence for each of the target communities was compiled. This information provides a statistical founding to understand the extent of the four broad groups across the North West region

- Secondly, a mapping exercise was completed to identify and understand the stakeholders/partners working with the target community groups. The remit of these organisations was highlighted in preparation for any future dialogue and possible joint working with the NWMS.

1.4   The analysis was undertaken at both the regional level and at a local authority district level, where five 'demonstrator' districts were selected.   The demonstrator areas were selected from each of the five sub-regions within the North West, and represented a cross section of both urban and rural communities[2].

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[1]   These are communities that are not necessarily defined by spatial boundaries, but rather by various socio-economic characteristics (e.g. the disabled)

[2]   The five demonstrator Local Authorities were Salford; Knowsley; Macclesfield; South Lakeland; and Blackburn.

2. Purpose of *Profiling Guide*

2.1   The Profiling Guide aims to provide a transparent account of the processes undertaken in information collection. **It has been produced to enable NWMS members to replicate the analysis at a local level, although it will also be useful to NWMS (and other regional agencies) as a background document for the regional level analysis.**

2.2   Not all the community groups identified by NWMS for the purposes of this study will be directly appropriate for every area due to different strategic local priorities. The processes described within this Profiling Guide, however, should provide a valuable starting point in guiding the information collection process, irrespective of your target communities.

3. Preparing the data profiles

3.1 In order to describe and explain the data sources used, each of the four target communities will be taken in turn:

Black and Ethnic Minority Groups

3.2 The most reliable means of calculating the number of households of ethnic minority origin is by using the Census of Population. The most recent Census details (1991) can be accessed through a variety of sources. The information presented through **NOMIS** is particularly helpful. NOMIS is a free service provided by the Office for National Statistics and run by the University of Durham. Although this service is free, a user name and password is required to access the data. This 'logging on' procedure is simple, and can be completed by following the instructions cited on the front page of the NOMIS web site - http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/ . For further information on this data source[3], NOMIS can be contacted on: 0191 374 2468.

3.3 There are other means of accessing Census of Population data. For example, the Census Dissemination Unit (CDU) which forms part of the Manchester University MIMAS service (Manchester Information and Association Services). The CDU provides on-line data sets and documentations showing population statistics for the UK. Visit the CDU web site at - http://census.ac.uk/cdu/

3.4 Census of Population data is also commonly available through Local Authority intelligence units, or information centres. Information is typically presented in aggregate form and also in some cases, local authorities can provide graphical analysis of the data.

3.5 The most recent Census data in the public domain is currently the 1991 Census, as the 2001 is yet to be published (see text box below on latest developments). Clearly, the 1991 data is over ten years out of date, hiding any recent ethnic minority population flow/growth – as such it should be treated with caution. In the context of ethnic minority data, the Census statistics only the head of households and are not meant as a population estimate. Some ethnic minority groups are characterised by large family groups in one dwelling, therefore this information, although very useful, should not be taken as a direct measure of population.

Latest News on the 2001 Census…
Census day was on 29 April 2001 and information collected is still in process of compilation.
Basic population statistics were released in October 2002 and are available for national, regional and local analysis.
Detailed results including a breakdown of each topic-based question to local authority level in England and Wales are due to be issued on 13 February 2003. The Scotland and Northern Ireland results will also be published early in 2003.

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[3] NOMIS also offers a variety of non Census data, included the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) for employment analysis, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Unemployment Claimant Count data.

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3.6   More recent information on ethnic minority populations is only typically available at a regional level. In the North West, an ethnic minority forecasting study was recently completed by Lancaster University on behalf of the North West Public Health Observatory. This research document was sponsored by the North West Regional Assembly, North West Development Agency, Government Office North West, Age Concern, and the NHS Executive North West. The report provides ethnic minority population projections based on assumptions that current trends will be continued. The report summary is available at: http://www.nwpho.org.uk/reports/Ageing%20Population-%20summary%20.pdf
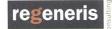
Skills and Learning

3.7   NWMS expressed an interest in three sub-groups within the broad skills and learning category:

Adults with low/no Skills

3.8   A government agency established to specifically tackle this issue at a national level is the *Basic Skills Agency* – visit their website at http://www.basic-skills.co.uk/. The Basic Skills Agency (covering England and Wales only) compiles statistics on levels of literacy and numeracy which can be accessed via the internet. This is a free information service which requires the user to register with the site in order to access information. Once registered, the site offers an easy to use search facility by place name and analysis can be broken down into levels of literacy and numeracy skills as required. The information presented is not readily transferable to Excel tables, but the pages do list data very clearly. The direct internet address for Basic Skills Agency statistics is: http://www.basic-skills.co.uk/datasite/. Information for 2001 is currently accessible providing an up-to date and fairly accurate picture of literacy and numeracy levels.

3.9   The sub-regional Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) are a rich source of specific sub-regional research and statistical data. All LSCs have a web-site, which can be accessed through the main national internet portal at: http://www.lsc.gov.uk/. LSCs will provide hard statistical data on themes such as levels of further education achievement, and levels of work based learning achievement alongside analytical strategic reports and papers detailing skills and learning issues – much of this analysis will be based on regular household and employer surveys. It should be noted that many LSCs are still in their infancy, and data availability at present is patchy.

3.10   The *Labour Force Survey* (LFS) is an extremely useful data source for labour market information. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a quarterly sample survey of households living at private addresses in Great Britain. Its purpose is to provide information on the UK labour market which can then be used to develop, manage, evaluate and report on labour market policies. The questionnaire design, sample selection, and interviewing are carried out by the Social Survey Division of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on behalf of the Socio-Economic Statistics and Analysis Group of the ONS.

3.11   ONS publishes full UK LFS results. However, the field work is carried out separately; by ONS for GB and by the Central Survey Unit of the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland on behalf of the Department of Economic Development.
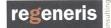
Young People

3.12   There is a rich statistical data source available through the Department for Education and Skills (DFES) statistics department - http://www.dfes.gov.uk/statistics/.   The front page of this statistics site lists topic areas or themes. By simply clicking on the desired theme, the site provides a number of options listing the various data options available by type of indicator/research, how it can be geographically broken down, and also the date of the information.

3.13   Information available through this web site includes:

- 'A' level results
- Vocational Qualifications
- Adult Education take up
- Post 16 learning
- Expenditure within schools
- Pupil/teacher ratios

Underperforming Schools

3.14   A range of information on school performance is available through the DFES web site (address given above). Helpful indicators include the proportion of children qualified to at least NVQ level 4; percentage of pupils gaining A-C grades in GCSEs; and information also on Key Stage 2 scores.

3.15   Information can be collected on schools performance by specific area by typing in a post code (of perhaps a community facility) and specifying the mile radius to be taken from that point. The school performance rates within that catchment area can be listed and compiled.

3.16   Slight complications arise, as information is inevitably compiled on a Local Education Authority (LEA) basis. Information in some cases can not be directly comparable to the other data sets used for the other target communities (which are based on Local Authority (LA) boundaries).

Disabled Groups

3.17   There are many measurements and indicators available to compile an understanding of the levels of disability within an area. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), publicise official information on disability claimant levels. There are various benefits available to individuals who are unable to work through illness or disability, and also for individuals in need of care due to severe illness or disability. The various forms and types of disability benefit can at times be confusing, caution should therefore be taken when analysing data.

3.18   To access data on the disabled community of target areas, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) provides a very useful on-line resource. The statistics web page is found at: http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/home.asp which presents an easy to follow search mechanism. By initially selecting a geographical area and then moving to the 'tabulate' option, and then selecting to search by 'domain'; various themes are presented which hold detailed statistics, as highlighted below:

- Crime
- Economic Deprivation
- Education
- Health
- Work
- Indices of Deprivation
- Population and Vital Statistics
- Other
- Cross Cutting Issues

3.19   By selecting the *Health* domain, options for selecting indicators for levels of disability are displayed. Information is collected on an annual basis, although there is a time-lag in publishing the data. The data used, therefore, is likely to be two or three years out of date. When utilising this information, it is worth considering that levels of disability claimants are not necessarily a true reflection on actual levels of disability. It is accepted that certain areas can develop a 'benefits culture' and this cultural reliance on the benefits system is stereotypically acute in the major urban areas of the UK. Utilising the number of disability claimants, therefore may not provide a comprehensive picture of disabilities within an area.

Social Exclusion

3.20   The most suitable data source here is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) provided by the Office for National statistics (ONS). IMD can be used at district and at ward level. At district level, the data covers concepts such as 'employment deprivation' and 'income deprivation', as well as the composite index. Districts are ranked from 1 (most deprived) to 354 (least deprived). Wards are ranked from 1 (most deprived) to 8414 (least deprived).

3.21   This data source is actually constructed by the *Index Team* at Oxford University, and can be accessed through the ONS web site. The statistics web page is found at: http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/home.asp - users will need to follow the search mechanism as described above. By selecting the 'Indices of Deprivation' domain, options for the IMD at a district and a ward level are displayed.

3.22   There are few statistical databases set up specifically to measure rural exclusion. There is, however, a database formulated by the Oxford-Countryside Agency ('Oxford-CA') which developed a classification model for rural wards. The classification was developed by the Social Disadvantage Research Centre (SDRC), at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Oxford University in 2000. The categorisation involved indicators such as employment in agriculture and primary production, population density, and levels of economically active population. It is therefore possible to estimate how many wards within a local authority area are indicated as displaying 'rural dimensions'. This data source is available through the Countryside Agency. Further information and a copy of this database (presented in Excel) can be obtained via email from tony.pike@countryside.gov.uk.

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4. Identifying Key Stakeholders

4.1 Each locality will be quite different in terms of the breadth of support agencies focusing on certain 'communities of interest'. There are, however, a number of logical steps that partners should take in establishing precisely what groups do exist and the nature of their activities. The three primary information sources, and most helpful initial contact points, are as follows:

- Local Authorities

- National, Regional, and Sub-regional umbrella organisations

- Council for Voluntary Service (CVS)

4.2 Further details of these main information sources are found below:

LOCAL AUTHORITY

Contacting the relevant **Local Authority** is important in establishing a first point of contact with the target communities. The degree of help available varied greatly between councils, and a lengthy process of being passed from department to department can be expected.

The relevant department to deal with the query varied from council to council. Commonly, social services, community services, or a regeneration division were able to help process the information request. The information from the Local Authorities mainly took the form of lists of contact names (rarely did this include email addresses or web sites).

From contacting the names suggested through the Local Authority, details often emerge quickly about the level of support activity situated in the area.

UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS

It was possible to identify further groups by contacting **national umbrella organisations** identified through an initial internet search. The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR), for example, were able to supply regional and some local contacts for organisations supporting the disabled community.

Regional umbrella organisations were contacted directly, such as the various regional Government Offices. Some regional Government Offices provide listings of community organisations operating within their region.

Contacting umbrella organisations can often raise issues of data protection. For example, it was found that the Racial Equality Councils have a firm policy to not disclose any details of the ethnic minority support groups working within their area.

> **COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE (CVS)**
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> All areas have an operational *Council for Voluntary Service (CVS)* which traditionally acts as an umbrella organisation to all local community and voluntary groups. CVS traditionally provides training courses and pooled resource support for the local community groups. Even though great differences are seen in operational management and remit, the CVS is a very important port of call when compiling a list of local key stakeholders.
>
> Some CVS organisations compile a listings directory of all community and voluntary groups and organisations operational within the area. These listings sometimes only contain a list of the CVS members, others aim to be more comprehensive in detailing all community groups. Due to data protection issues, these directories are not always available in the public domain.
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> In cases where a directory is available (as in the case for Knowsley and for Blackburn), a small administration charge may apply (£6.96 for Knowsley directory). The directories produced by the CVS's across your region will vary in quality and detail.

4.3 To compile a full list of key stakeholders, keeping a clear contact trail is important. Through perseverance, the key stakeholders can be identified.

4.4 A number of generic issues arose whilst establishing the stakeholders operating the five 'demonstrator areas':

- Some areas had no or very few support organisations for a themed target group, whereas other areas were seen to have a great plethora of agencies with similar remits and support capacity. For example, in the South Lakeland area, no ethnic minority support groups are in existence – clearly a reflection of the very low percentage of ethnic minority households in South Lakeland.

- Difficulty arose in the categorisation of the 'social inclusion' themed target group. Although social inclusion is high on the political agenda, it is a very broad concept embracing a number of distinct communities. There were rarely single groups (outside perhaps the Local Authority) that dealt with holistic social exclusion/inclusion issues across an area.

- The overall quantity of support groups operating in the rural areas (of South Lakeland and less so Macclesfield) can be contrasted to the longer listings of support groups featured in the more urban areas (such as Knowsley). This can be attributed to a denser population, and perhaps also the volume of public funding and investment in regeneration and inclusion schemes in the more urban deprived areas (which themselves tend to spawn a whole range of interest groups).

- In the compilation of the listings for the key local stakeholders it became clear that, unlike the regional stakeholders, information was not readily available on the strategic remit of the group (as articulated in a strategy document or business plan) and also few support groups had an internet site. The omission of strategic documentation and the lack of a web site is an expected characteristic of the smaller community group.