Explanatory Statement

The purpose of my feature article ‘The ties that bind us’ is to examine the relationship between identity and the groups to which we belong. It explores the way in which the groups that we belong to shape our identity and the consequences for individuals who are unable to develop a strong sense of belonging. It is aimed at readers who work in community services and charity organisations, particularly those who work with people who are living on the fringes of society and are alone and isolated.

I have drawn upon a selection of poems from Dawe’s collection *Sometimes Gladness* to support my discussion. I make a direct reference to the man in ‘The Flashing of Badges’ in examining the way in which the human need to belong can lead to individuals going to considerable lengths to make connections with others. An outsider who has been rejected by society, his need to belong is so strong that he pretends to be someone else when he meets strangers on the streets. I have also drawn upon ‘Drifters’ to illustrate the way in which not having a strong sense of belonging can result in a fragile sense of identity.

Writing in expository style and with the purpose to inform, my article employs the third person and adopts a relatively distant tone from my subject. However, I have adopted a more concerned tone in the paragraphs which explore the consequences of not belonging for individuals. I have chosen to begin my article with the question ‘Who am I?’ to engage my readers and encourage them to reflect on how identity is formed.

In an attempt to capture effectively the idea that our relationships with others are an intrinsic part of what makes us human, I have quoted English poet John Donne: “No man is an island”. I have also used evidence, in the form of a twelfth century study, to support my point about the human need to belong.