

Annual Report: April 2025-March 2026

Introduction

Welcome to our annual review for 2025-2026; this report covers the period from April 2025 to March 2026. Copies of the accounts are available on request.

Firstly, thank you for your continued support of The Network. Please see Appendix B for a reminder about ways of making the most of your subscription.

Our work

Key successes included:

- Producing newsletters for Nov 2024-Aug 2025¹
- Producing 16 Ebulletins for the period April 2025-March 2026
- Regularly adding events, resources and new features to the website²
- Participating in some 60 meetings, courses, workshops and conferences.

Further information about these – and other – areas of work are in the report that follows.

Working towards social justice and developing approaches to community engagement are still very much live issues – it is increasingly clear that libraries, museums, archives and cultural & heritage organisations have a key role to play in this (despite the economic position), and The Network is contributing to the spread of good practice and the raising of our sector profile.

Finally, my thanks to all those who shared good practice, made enquiries, and generally contributed to The Network – please continue doing so!

My particular thanks go to Juliet Pirez and Susanna Barnes for being the counter-signatories for The Network's bank account.

Personal note

My partner, Robert, was taken ill in Feb 2025 and died in Oct 2025 – this had a major impact on how much I was able to achieve during the year. Thank you to everyone for their understanding and support.

John Vincent
September 2026

¹ There had been a slight delay whilst I was writing the Sanctuary book, so the Newsletters are being published still, but a bit late.

² See: <https://seapn.org.uk/>.

Membership, contacts and enquiries

Organisational members at March 2026

There are 82 organisational members.

Here are the new joiners and leavers:

Joiners

None.

Leavers

None.

Individual members

At March 2026, The Network had 8 individual members.

Partners

The Network is continuing to work in partnership with a number of key organisations and individuals, including CILIP; City of Sanctuary; Libraries Connected; and Share the Vision.

Membership of JISCMAIL lists

The following lists are open to anybody:

List	2025-26	2024-25
Care-experienced children & YP [formerly LAC]	155	170
Learning Disability	180	188
LGBTQ	315	323
Libraries and Museums of Sanctuary	207	208
Network Ebulletin	474	517
Older people [people working with older people]	148	160
Travellers [people working with Travellers]	141	150

The following are primarily for Network members only:

List	2025-26	2024-25
Network Newsletter	231	257
The Network [for circulation of general information and enquiries]	160	180

The following is primarily for Network and Prison Libraries Group members:

List	2025-26	2024-25
Prisons	169	161

In addition, The Network manages the Reading Sight list (formerly Six Steps):

List	2025-26	2024-25
Reading Sight	324	313

Enquiries

These include enquiries made on the email lists The Network coordinates (eg Prisons):

April 2025-March 2026

34³

The Network website statistics

Here are our 'headline' web statistics:

- Some 9000 people visited the website in 2025-2026
- Perhaps slightly worryingly, the top three countries where people visited from were China, the UK and Singapore.

Making a difference

As noted above, The Network makes a difference, including:

- Drawing together, highlighting and disseminating innovation and good practice
- Being active in the sector on behalf of members: adding to and widening the debate about libraries, museums, archives, cultural heritage organisations and social justice issues
- Working with Network members and across the sector to help develop strategy
- Campaigning and lobbying on behalf of the sector
- Giving advice and information, and sharing good practice from other Network members
- Giving support to colleagues.

³ The range of enquiries was wide, including: ideas for protecting staff who encounter negative, anti-queer comments; how legal info is provided in prison libraries; ways of developing Universities Refugee Week in March; the role libraries play in tackling misinformation; request for potential locations for the "Quilt of Welcome" (a Sheffield project); staff perspectives on providing services to neurodiverse populations.

The work of The Network, 2025-2026 – Report by the Networker

I worked some 609.75 hours for The Network between April 2025 and March 2026. This is an outline of what that involved:

Activities	Hours 2025-26	% 2025- 26	Hours 2024-25	% 2024- 25
<i>Externally-funded work</i>				
Preparation, delivery and follow-up to training courses	78.50	12.9%	51.25	7.0%
Birmingham courses	-	-	5.75	0.8%
Peninsula of Sanctuary Libraries project	-	-	0.75	0.1%
Peninsula of Sanctuary Libraries project – drafting bid to ACE	1.25	0.2%	29.50	4.0%
<i>Externally-funded work</i>	79.75	13.1%	87.25	11.9%
Managing The Network: admin (membership; producing Annual Report, etc)	18.50	3.1%	14.25	2.0%
Managing The Network: managing JISCMAIL Lists	1.00	0.2%	3.75	0.5%
Managing The Network: accounts	22.75	3.7%	49.75	6.8%
Managing The Network: maintaining our website	2.75	0.5%	8.50	1.2%
Emails	140.50	23.0%	188.00	25.8%
Work on Newsletters & Ebulletins	184.25	30.2%	183.75	25.2%
Other writing	-	-	1.00	0.1%
Other activities (eg attending meetings)	12.00	2.0%	28.75	3.9%
STV Board meetings & other matters	11.75	1.9%	13.00	1.8%
Enquiries	7.25	1.2%	5.75	0.8%
Responding to reports etc	4.00	0.7%	5.75	0.8%
Work on 'New Arrivals' & Libraries of Sanctuary	40.25	6.6%	16.50	2.3%
Work with CILIP (eg on new strategy; CDEG Committee)	26.00	4.3%	47.75	6.6%
CILIP Benevolent Fund	35.00	5.7%	61.50	8.4%
Attending online talks, courses, conferences	8.00	1.3%	2.25	0.3%
Giving online presentations (unpaid)	4.25	0.7%	11.00	1.5%
LGBTQ+ work, eg LGBT History Month	11.75	2.0%	-	-
<i>Paid for from subscriptions, income from courses, etc</i>	530.00	87.1%	641.25	88.0%
TOTAL	609.75	c100%	728.5	c100%

Initiatives and Developments⁴

- John Vincent was invited to take part in a podcast, “Older Queer Voices”, talking about Section 28⁵ (Aug 2025)

⁴ John Vincent was commissioned by Facet Publishing to edit and write for a new series on libraries and social justice. The first title, *Libraries and Sanctuary: supporting refugees and other new arrivals* was published in Nov 2022. The second title, *Libraries and care-experienced children and young people: a practical guide* was published in July 2026. This is just for info, as the hours worked on writing the book are not included in the hours worked (above).

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5E3eaFZPgs>.

Attendance at conferences, seminars, formal and other meetings, visits, etc

- Attended “Trans-Inclusive Culture” webinar, organised by the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, University of Leicester (Mar 2026)
- Attended “Silence of Ageing” webinar [arts and older people] (Mar 2026)
- Attended Equally Ours “Together for Social Justice” webinar (Feb 2026)
- Attended Schools Out LGBTQ+ History Month preparation webinar (Jan 2026)
- Attended British Library Living Knowledge Network webinar, “Bringing libraries to the people: pop-ups and outreach” with Suffolk, Bristol and Croydon Libraries (Jan 2026)
- Attended GiveOut Webinar: “Sustaining LGBTQI Progress Through Solidarity in 2025” (Dec 2025)
- Attended Together With Refugees webinar (Nov 2025)
- Attended SWRLS AGM and Event, Exeter College (Nov 2025)
- Attended Prison and Public Libraries Community of Practice meetings online (Oct 2025; Jan 2026)
- Meeting with SWRLS and partners to discuss training (Oct 2025)
- Attended CILIP AGM online (Oct 2025)
- Online meeting with Roxane Coetzer (Ulverscroft) to discuss contacting prison libraries to organise a webinar (Oct 2025)
- Attended The National Archives webinar, “Queer places: Feelings, emotions and ways of rebuilding intangible heritage” (Sep 2025)
- Attended SWRLS Members’ Day, Exeter Community Centre (Jun 2025)
- Attended “the other side of hope” readings, Camberwell Library (Jun 2025)
- Attended CILIP LGBTQ+ Network webinar “How to be a good ally to trans*, non-binary and gender non-conforming people” (May 2025)
- Attended two online sessions at Critical Approaches to Libraries Conference 2025 (May 2025)
- Attended online talk: “Navigating the Culture Wars: Public engagement and archival values” organised by the ARA Archives for Learning and Education Section (Apr 2025)

CILIP Benevolent Fund

John Vincent became Chair in Jan 2022.

- Online Board meetings with other Trustees (Jul 2025, Feb 2026)
- Online meetings for admin etc (Aug 2025)

CILIP Community, Equality & Diversity Group

- Attended and contributed to CDEG webinar⁶ with ECHO Mobile Library⁷ (Mar 2026)
- Attended Committee meetings online (Apr, Jul, Sep 2025; Jan 2026)

⁶ See: https://seapn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ECHO-Mobile-Library-Webinar-20260320_160324-Meeting-Recording.mp4.

⁷ See: <https://echolibrary.org/about/>.

- Attended meeting with Oliver Jenkins (CDEG Chair) and Joanne Card (CILIP) re: producing newsletters (Apr 2025)

Share The Vision Board

John Vincent is a Board Member.

- Attended meetings online (May, Dec 2025; Feb 2026) and in person (Sep 2025)
- Attended/contributed to webinars (Sep 2025)

Libraries of Sanctuary [LoS]/City of Sanctuary [CoS]

- Attended online CoS UK Strategy launch (Feb 2026)
- Attended LoS London Meet-up, Deptford (Jul 2025)
- Attended online LoS Network meetings (Jun, Aug 2025; Mar 2026)
- Online meeting with Sian Summers-Rees (City of Sanctuary) to help review and feedback on some key elements of the CoS organisational strategy (Jun 2025)

Online meeting with Heather Shepherd (GLL) to discuss their LoS application (Sep 2025)

Also commented on 7 LoS applications (May 2025)

Peninsula of Sanctuary – work on bid to ACE for follow-up

- Meeting with ACE and SWRLS (Apr 2025)

Sadly, the bid to ACE was rejected.

Support for students, researchers, etc

- Online meeting (and follow-up) with Isabelle Roehrig for her dissertation research on TSOs and prison libraries in the UK, specifically around their partnerships (Jun 2025)
- Interviewed by Noreen Hopewell-Kelly (Cardiff University) for research into responses to financial insecurity (Jun 2025)
- Interviewed by Ros Fraser (Scottish Refugee Council) to gather info for their project, *To Gather*⁸ (Apr 2025 and follow-up Aug 2025)

Formal responses made by the Network

- Drafted response for CDEG to CILIP's request for views on the C4DISC publication, *Guidance for Professional Membership Communities* (Jun 2025)
- Commented on draft publication, *To Gather*, for Scottish Refugee Council (May 2025)

⁸ "To Gather is a multilingual and cross-generational project, which celebrates libraries and safe gathering spaces for people seeking sanctuary in Scotland." [Taken from email from Ros Fraser]

Other responses, etc

- Commented on 2 book proposals for Facet Publishing

Publications – The Network’s own

- *The Network Newsletter*, issues 285-294
- *The Network Ebulletin*, numbers 416-432.

Publications – articles, blogs, books, reports etc

- John Vincent occasionally updates the Basecamp site for SWRLS to share info and details of events across Devon and Cornwall libraries relating to the former Peninsula of Sanctuary project.

Courses and other events (April 2025-March 2026)

1. Our own open courses

- None.

2. Other organisations’ open courses/Lectures

- Online talk; “Libraries’ work with care-experienced children & young people”, CDEG’s contribution to the CILIP Members’ Fest (Mar 2026)
- Online talk: “Decolonising the Discipline: Forced migration, refuge and inclusion in schools, universities and libraries”, for the Institute of English Studies, University English and the English Association (Mar 2026)
- Online talk: “Libraries and care-experienced young people”⁹, for Critical Approaches to Libraries Conference 2025 [CALC2025] (May 2025)
- Online talk, “Embedding inclusion in all aspects of our work”, for CILIP East Midlands Network (Apr 2025)
- Online: “Working with new arrivals” for M25 Consortium: The role of libraries in supporting refugees and asylum seekers (Apr 2025)

3. In-house courses and talks

- Online courses, “Working with new arrivals and becoming a Library of Sanctuary”, for Cardiff, 2 x half-day courses (Mar 2026)
- Online course, “Working with new arrivals and becoming a Library of Sanctuary”, for Bristol (Mar 2026)
- “An introduction to equality and diversity – a course for Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre”, Swindon (Feb 2026)
- Talk about LGBTQ+ History Month at HMP Exeter (Feb 2026)
- Online course, “Libraries and social justice – what next?” for Glasgow Libraries Learning Programme: EDI Leadership and Inclusive Practice Development (Sep 2025)

⁹ See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdl-pWS6NsQ&t=37s>.

- Online course, “Working with new arrivals and becoming a Library of Sanctuary”, for GLL (via CILIP) (Sep 2025)
- “Working with new arrivals and becoming a Library of Sanctuary”, for Richmond Library Service, 4 x half-day courses (May 2025)
- Online seminar, “Public and School Libraries”, for University of Sheffield (Apr 2025)

Appendix A: Meetings with key contacts

These included:

Becka & Giulio (ECHO Mobile Library); Sally Adcock (GLL); Joanne Card (CILIP); Roxane Coetzer (Ulverscroft); Olivia Davies (Cardiff Libraries); Marta de Abreu (CILIP); Chris Dilloway (Chartered Institute of Information Security); Maria Grant (CILIP Benevolent Fund); Laurentine Insonere Amaliza (CILIP); Oliver Jenkins (CILIP CDEG); Lisa Kerley; Michelle Lau (Facet Publishing); Ally McConnell (Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre); Andrea Macrae (Oxford Brookes University); Preeti Pathak (Cardiff Libraries); Olly Pike (Pop’n’Olly); Nick Seaver (Chartered Institute of Information Security); Frances Tout (Bristol Libraries); Shelley Trower (SWRLS); Adrian Warner (Askews)

Appendix B: Making the most of your subscription

Member organisations and individuals use The Network to:

- Ensure that their services are well placed to meet national, regional and local objectives
- Draw on and share expertise and good practice
- Work with other Network members to benchmark services
- Keep up-to-date effectively with new developments across the social justice field, without having to read every new document themselves as the information has already been distilled for them
- Ensure that colleagues across their service are also able to keep up-to-date via targeted emails to their desk-tops
- Ensure value for money by being able to book places on Network courses and receive in-house training at reduced cost.

When a library (or museum or archive) service from a local authority joins The Network, this automatically confers membership on the **whole local authority**.

The benefits are that:

- Council departments can share knowledge about issues that matter to them, and your service is placed at the centre of this authority-wide information-sharing
- It’s a cost-effective way of stretching limited resources (and, in addition, other Council departments could contribute towards the cost of the subscription)
- Related organisations within the local authority area, such as independent and District Council museums, archive collections, schools, and others, can also share this targeted information in an extremely effective way.

Some public library services forward the Newsletter and Ebulletin (as well as other emails from our elists) to targeted contacts across the Council (thereby ensuring that the library

service is contributing to corporate targets and agendas), and have also subscribed key local authority staff to some of the email lists. Information is also forwarded to contacts in the community.

They also regularly share updates on service developments with other Network contacts and ask for advice and suggestions on service plans.