



The Network Newsletter – Ebulletin 372, 22 March 2023

Events

Events have been added to the Courses & Events pages on The Network website – see: <http://www.seapn.org.uk/courses>.

The ‘hostile environment’

Compliant environment: overarching equality impact assessment

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/compliant-environment-overarching-equality-impact-assessment/compliant-environment-overarching-equality-impact-assessment-accessible?utm_source=Equally+Ours+Newsletter+2022&utm_campaign=59a0afa728-Newsletter+March+1+2023&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_93cf2d2bcb-59a0afa728-120687778

(Source: *Equally Ours Newsletter*, 9 Mar 2023)

The Home Office has published its Equality Impact Assessment of the “Compliant Environment” policies (aka the hostile environment).

As it should be, this is a lengthy and thorough investigation report. Summaries have appeared in the media, for example in *The Guardian* (9 Feb):

“The Home Office’s hostile environment policies appear to have had a disproportionately negative impact on people of colour, a government evaluation of the legislation has shown.

The long-awaited impact assessment of the package of hostile environment measures which were introduced when David Cameron was prime minister, and later rebranded as “compliant environment” policies, reveals for the first time the government’s own assessment of the legislation’s potential risks.

The report published on Thursday shows that Indian, Pakistani, Nigerian and Bangladeshi nationals were most likely to be affected according to the equality impact assessment. Albanian and Brazilian people, despite being among the top five nationalities most commonly found to be illegally present in the UK, were less frequently affected by the measures.” [Taken from: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/feb/09/uks-hostile-environment-policies-disproportionately-impact-people-of-colour>]

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

“Inclusion”

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/advice-and-guidance/running-your-organisation/inclusion/>

New guidance from The National Archives, including an intro to inclusive practice; resources (eg “Wellbeing and inclusive language”); research findings (“Mapping inclusive practice across English regions”); and case studies.

NB Fuller assessment to appear in *The Network Newsletter*.

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

“Rural poverty is getting worse – and welfare harder to access”

https://theconversation.com/rural-poverty-is-getting-worse-and-welfare-harder-to-access-201060?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20March%2014%202023%20-%202569025831&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20March%2014%202023%20-%202569025831+CID_3c2c9e8280de667f1f8750b9a7e1bbe4&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Rural%20poverty%20is%20getting%20worse%20and%20welfare%20harder%20to%20access

(Source: *The Conversation*, 14 Mar 2023)

“In Britain, people imagine poverty as mainly an urban phenomenon. We think of poverty as rundown housing estates or tower blocks, far from the idyllic countryside scenes of shows like *Escape to the Country*.

But this is only part of the picture. Poverty in rural areas is more widespread than people might think. Fifty per cent of rural households experienced poverty at some point between 1991-2008 (54% in towns and cities).”

Homelessness in the countryside: a hidden crisis

<https://englishruralha.sharepoint.com/sites/RuralHomelessnessResearch-Live/Shared%20Documents/General/Communications/Final%20Report%20-%20Collateral/Final%20Report/Homelessness%20in%20the%20Countryside.pdf>

“This research report, written by researchers from the University of Kent and the University of Southampton, was funded and commissioned by a number of organisations and Housing Associations working in rural areas who were increasingly concerned by what seemed to them to be a growing yet unacknowledged problem of rural homelessness.” [p6]

No place for old men: the rising number of older men in prisons in England and Wales

https://clinks.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/clinks_EL_no-place-for-old-men_FINAL.pdf

(Source: Clinks *Policy Briefing*, Mar 2023)

New in the Clinks “Evidence Library”:

“Older people are the fastest growing group in the prison population in England and Wales. The number of prisoners aged 60 or over has increased by 82% in the last decade and by 243% since 2002. 17% of the prison population are now over 50. The prison population is expected to grow by a quarter by 2026 and it is anticipated that the older prisoner population will grow at the same rate. Within the current prison population 44% of men over the age of 50 are imprisoned for sexual offences. 92% of those over the age of 80 were sent to prison for the first time aged 70 or over. The majority of the older population in prison are men.” [p4]

Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

“Women's History Month 2023: Male Allies”

https://padlet.com/h_dawson/women-s-history-month-2023-male-allies-afbs3borly656ifb

(Source: email from Heather Dawson, 21 Mar 2023)

New padlet created by Heather Dawson for ALISS (Association of Librarians and Information Professionals in the Social Sciences) to celebrate Women's History Month.

Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion – Other Agencies

“Two in five people in the UK think equality has gone so far, men are now being discriminated against”

https://www.thepinknews.com/2023/03/12/two-in-five-people-in-the-uk-think-equal-rights-for-women-is-anti-men/?utm_source=piano&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=mypinknews&pnespid=p7VIWHQfOL0Yi.mYpjitDJ2UuAqqDJxplrSkwuZuow1m1Ha9cXLZA3hszw5rM3t7cwu3nbsChw

(Source: *PinkNews*, 13 Mar 2023)

Brief summary of some recent research findings which show just how much work there is to do:

“The study, carried out to mark International Women's Day on 8 March, found that 38 per cent of respondents think enough positive progress has been made to improve women's rights – despite women all over the world still not having the same rights and opportunities as men.

Even more concerningly, 2 in 5 people believe efforts to improve equality are actually discriminating against men [...]

The research also found that UK respondents are increasingly worried about championing the rights of women. Due to fears of reprisals, 29 per cent said they were afraid to publicly support equal rights for women, a figure that has risen from 14 per cent back in 2017.”

Migration issues – Other Agencies

“International law doesn’t protect people fleeing environmental disaster – here’s how it could”

https://theconversation.com/international-law-doesnt-protect-people-fleeing-environmental-disaster-heres-how-it-could-198847?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20March%2014%202023%20-%202569025831&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20March%2014%202023%20-%202569025831+CID_3c2c9e8280de667f1f8750b9a7e1bbe4&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=International%20law%20doesnt%20protect%20people%20fleeing%20environmental%20disaster%20%20heres%20how%20it%20could

(Source: *The Conversation*, 14 Mar 2023)

Important, topical article:

“Researchers have tried for decades to find a relevant legal status for people forced to flee their homes as a result of floods, droughts and storms – calamities which climate change promises to make more severe and commonplace – as well as appropriate laws which might ensure their protection. But climate migrants are sometimes forgotten among the various flows of people seeking asylum.

To protect climate migrants who were forced to leave their country, some legal scholars have proposed amending the definition of refugee in the Refugee Convention of 1951 to consider environmental degradation a form of persecution. This would expand eligibility for asylum as a refugee under international law beyond the existing grounds of persecution by religion, race, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions.

But the principle of non-refoulement, mentioned in the refugee convention, already prohibits a host country of returning asylum seekers to somewhere they would not be safe. This could be interpreted as guaranteeing access to an environment offering decent air and clean water according to the European Environment Agency.

Despite this provision, international law is failing to protect climate migrants, which means that the scope of the refugee convention, however broad, must be widened.”

City of Sanctuary UK: our impact 2022

<https://cdn.cityofsanctuary.org/uploads/2023/03/2022-IMPACT-REPORT.pdf>

Latest impact report.

“Since we started our work in 2005, we have been committed to making welcome widespread. Our vast network of local groups provide direct support and are building welcome within communities, whilst our work with mainstream organisations like schools, councils, libraries and more

ensure that wherever someone seeking sanctuary goes, they are met with understanding, compassion and empowering opportunities. Together our networks provide support, dignity and welcome.” [p2]

“Illegal immigration: cracking down on smuggling makes gangs more organised – and costs migrant lives”

https://theconversation.com/illegal-immigration-cracking-down-on-smuggling-makes-gangs-more-organised-and-costs-migrant-lives-201714?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20March%202023%20-%202576125899&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20March%202023%20-%202576125899+CID_c240182fdb895d3deea9134347e37fab&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Illegal%20immigration%20cracking%20down%20on%20smuggling%20makes%20gangs%20more%20organised%20and%20costs%20migrant%20lives

(Source: *The Conversation*, 21 Mar 2023)

Important brief look at why trying to stop people-smugglers may not have the desired results. The article concludes:

“Instead of crushing the smuggler’s business model, deterrence policies risk galvanising the smuggling economy, making refugees and migrants more prone to abuse and risk, but without affecting the root causes of their migration.

The way to counter the smuggling business model is to provide better options to those who want to migrate – the “safe and legal routes” that politicians are often encouraging migrants to use, but in reality for most, don’t actually exist.”

See us, believe us, stand with us: the experiences of lesbian and bisexual women seeking asylum in the UK

<https://www.refugeewomen.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Women-for-Refugee-Women-See-Us-Believe-Us-Stand-With-Us.pdf>

(Source: *MEMO [Minority Ethnic Matters Overview]*, 783, 20 Mar 2023)

New report from Rainbow Sisters:

“This is our first report specifically about the experiences of lesbian and bisexual (LB) women seeking protection in the UK. We wanted to do this research to show you what it is like to have to go through the asylum process from our perspectives. As researchers with experience of these issues ourselves, we have designed and carried out this research in a way that’s allowed our Sisters to feel at ease and give open, insightful answers.

Seeking asylum has never been easy for our Sisters. Through this research we’ve seen that our individual experiences of fear, intimidation and struggle are part of a wider pattern of hostility that LBT women and non-binary people seeking asylum are subjected to. Here in the UK, we

face the triple discrimination of racism, sexism and homophobia. The Home Office routinely disbelieves our stories and denies us protection.” [p7]

Incidentally:

“Rainbow Sisters is a trans-inclusive space and we now have three trans women in the group We know it is extremely difficult for trans women to find safety in the UK, facing different and often additional challenges in accessing a fair assessment of their protection claims.” [p5]

LGBTQ+ issues – Other Agencies

ILGA-Europe. 2023 Annual review of the human rights situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people in Europe and central Asia

<https://www.ilga-europe.org/files/uploads/2023/02/annual-review-2023.pdf>

(Source: *PinkNews*, 20 Feb 2023)

As *PinkNews* summarised it:

“An annual report on the state of queer rights across Europe has found that 2022 was the most violent year for LGBTI people across the region in the past decade – and the rise in hate speech is to blame.”