

The Network Newsletter – Ebulletin 411, 28 January 2025

Events

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

Black Lives Matter/Anti-racism

“I research race in politics – Kemi Badenoch’s views on inequality should worry Black Britons”

https://theconversation.com/i-research-race-in-politics-kemi-badenochs-views-on-inequality-should-worry-black-britons-244242?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20December%205%202024%20-%203188532523&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20December%205%202024%20-%203188532523+CID_cfc6e123293bae301b472c39a2c25a8b&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=l%20research%20race%20in%20politics%20%20Kemi%20Badenochs%20views%20on%20inequality%20should%20worry%20Black%20Britons

(Source: *The Conversation*, 6 Dec 2024)

Interesting article:

“Kemi Badenoch has become the first Black leader of a UK-wide political party. But her ascent is unlikely to translate into meaningful gains for Black Britons.”

Funding & Opportunities

“Discounted Quick Reads on Sale Now”

<https://readingagency.org.uk/discounted-quick-reads-on-sale-now/>

(Source: LinkedIn)

“The Reading Agency is delighted to announce the launch of the 2025 Quick Reads titles, now available for sale to organisations at discounted prices [...]

Charities, social enterprises, prisons, food banks, hospital libraries, workplaces and other community-based organisations can pre-order the Quick Read books with a **30% discount** at the [Quick Reads shop](#). The offer is available until **10am on Friday 31 January, 2025.** [emphases theirs]

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

“Deep poverty and digital exclusion in the UK”

<https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/discover/digital-inclusion-insights/digital-inclusion-insights-2025/deep-poverty-and-digital-inclusion-uk>

(Source: LinkedIn)

Important new post from Good Things Foundation, which looks at the links between deep poverty and digital exclusion in the UK and how to start tackling them.

Worlds apart: skills and learning inequalities in the UK

https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/worlds-apart/?mptk=7cd7baaa8889c1037b2d7bf3737b8ca293c78ca9b7fa466e8693280e0d372c55b8248fa835a22f748108af16387b2f86_67551b07b55af310bff9f169bc8c8535

(Source: Learning and Work Institute *Newsletter*, Jan 2025)

Important new report:

“The skills mix varies greatly across the country. 74% of 25–64-year-olds have an A level or equivalent qualification or above in London, compared to just 59% in the West Midlands. In the West Midlands, almost one in three people don’t have at least a GCSE or equivalent qualification and one in ten have no qualifications at all, double the proportions in West of England. These inequalities contribute to inequalities between areas, holding back growth and opportunity.” [p6]

The report argues that:

“We need to set a path for a higher ambition for learning and skills, and make sure people in every part of the country can benefit from this.” [p25]

Diversity in books and other materials for children & young people **“Picture books that encourage resilience”**

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/r/picture-books-that-encourage-resilience/>

(Source: LinkedIn)

Important new resources list from BookTrust:

“Children will always face challenges in their lives, and sometimes it is useful to read about characters who have also been through difficult times, but who've found ways to cope. We've chosen these picture books for young readers because they explore a variety of common childhood experiences, such as moving house, making a mistake and overcoming fears.”

Health & Wellbeing issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

“The importance of public libraries for older adults: Supporting wellbeing later in life”

https://www.cilips.org.uk/public-libraries-older-adults?utm_campaign=1571332_January%202025&utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20Chartered%20Institute%20of%20Library%20and%20%20Information%20Professionals&dm_i=6WFS,XOG4,9VBO9,49I3A,1

(Source: *CILIP Scotland Newsletter*, Jan 2025)

New blogpost which highlights the essential role of public libraries.

“Museum of Homelessness pilots emergency shelter during severe cold weather”

<https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/01/museum-of-homelessness-pilots-emergency-shelter-during-severe-cold-weather/#msdyntrtid= nE1Pmx0pEPIyipEyVdyaA96cpiVqUJQWugjLwyzIWE>

(Source: Museums Association email updates, 17 Jan 2025)

“London’s Museum of Homelessness piloted an emergency homeless shelter scheme during this month’s freezing weather conditions.

The museum crew worked with the community to carry out the winter shelter scheme as part of the local authority's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (Swep).

In a statement on its website, the museum said the pilot was ‘the first time, to our knowledge, that a museum has transformed into an emergency shelter’.”

Autism issues – Other Agencies

“Why do false claims that vaccines cause autism refuse to die? Here are nine reasons”

https://theconversation.com/why-do-false-claims-that-vaccines-cause-autism-refuse-to-die-here-are-nine-reasons-246360?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=TC%20Europe%20Newsletter%2016124&utm_content=TC%20Europe%20Newsletter%2016124+CID_b6ed0787a03a324697bb7ba400d338b6&utm_source=campaign_monitor_europe&utm_term=Why%20do%20false%20claims%20that%20vaccines%20cause%20autism%20refuse%20to%20die%20Here%20are%20nine%20reasons

(Source: *The Conversation*, 16 Jan 2025)

Timely summary of the reasons why these claims keep re-emerging.

Migration issues – Other Agencies

“Clearing the UK’s asylum backlog has led to rising refugee homelessness”

https://theconversation.com/clearing-the-uks-asylum-backlog-has-led-to-rising-refugee-homelessness-245426?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%206%202025%20-%203217832827&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%206%202025%20-%203217832827+CID_5761b5e6a0738135fc4c830579cf1e40&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Clearing%20the%20UKs%20asylum%20backlog%20has%20led%20to%20rising%20refugee%20homelessness

(Source: *The Conversation*, 7 Jan 2025)

“While public attention remains on how people get to the UK, less discussed is what happens to them once they arrive and are later granted refugee status. The reality is that many are becoming homeless [...]”

Newly recognised refugees need support to navigate housing and welfare systems, access translation and interpreting services, and secure employment or education opportunities.

The current system sets refugees up to fail, undermining the government's aims of integration and social cohesion. Without urgent reform — such as permanently extending the move-on period, increasing the availability of social housing and providing adequate funding to local councils — the crisis will only deepen.”

“Life and death on the Bibby Stockholm: ‘No one wanted to go inside – but we had no choice’”

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jan/08/life-and-death-on-the-bibby-stockholm-no-one-wanted-to-go-inside-but-we-had-no-choice>

Just in case you haven't seen this article in *The Guardian*.

“How the Nationality and Borders Act is endangering queer asylum in Britain”

https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/uk-nationality-borders-act-queer-lgbtqi-asylum-immigration/?utm_source=oD%20Daily%20SEGMENT&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=%E2%80%98How%20do%20%20prove%20%E2%80%99m%20gay%20with%20documentary%20evidence%3F%E2%80%99& kx=1_8D1xQ Sf81SrwgQ7oVGBK2bIBk82Fazlk5OMY7463I.YjCYwm

(Source: email from openDemocracy, 15 Jan 2025)

“The Home Office has been widely criticised for its culture of disbelief and the raised standard of proof has only made this worse. Interview times have been cut to two-hours, giving people less time to build trust to share their stories, and in our experience has led to even more confused decision making; with interviewers telling people to keep their answers brief, but then refusing claims based on there being “insufficient detail”.

The NABA [Nationality and Borders Act 2022] entrenches a culture of suspicion, particularly for LGBTQI+ cases, both in interviews and in decisions, with the unfettered influence of preconceived and often Western-centric notions of LGBTQI+ experiences.

It is devastating for an LGBTQI+ person to have their asylum claim refused because the Home Office does not believe them. It compounds their emotional distress and prolongs the process indefinitely as they face the long road to an appeal or onward legal challenge.

This situation is only getting worse as we know the Home Office has essentially shifted its backlog onto the Tribunal; as the number of appeals lodged rose from 8,000 in 2022 to 29,000 in 2023 after the new law was passed.”

“Criminalising migrants is a racist race to the bottom”

https://migrantsrights.org.uk/2024/12/15/criminalising-migrants-government-announcement/?link_id=16&can_id=30e439a67211f81f4bbace156600453a&source=email-help-keep-our-solidarity-space-alive&email_referrer=email_2574825&email_subject=what-does-migrant-justice-mean-to-you

(Source: Migrants’ Rights Network *Newsletter*, Jan 2025)

Powerful statement from Migrants’ Rights Network:

“Punishing migrants without permission to work or reside fails to address the fundamental failures within the immigration system that continuously pushes migrants into exploitative conditions because they can become undocumented so easily. Increasing surveillance and policing of migrant and racialised communities will only drive fear and increase suffering.”

“Racist, anti-migrant tropes do nothing to help victims of sexual violence”

https://migrantsrights.org.uk/2025/01/10/racist-anti-migrant-tropes-do-nothing-to-help-victims-of-sexual-violence/?link_id=13&can_id=30e439a67211f81f4bbace156600453a&source=email-help-keep-our-solidarity-space-alive&email_referrer=email_2574825&email_subject=what-does-migrant-justice-mean-to-you

(Source: Migrants’ Rights Network *Newsletter*, Jan 2025)

“At first, we were not going to speak on this issue because we didn’t want to wade into a conversation that was clearly being whipped up by the far-right and opportunistic commentators for political gain. We also felt like it failed to adequately understand or address systemic violence against women and girls.

However, we are becoming increasingly worried about spiralling misinformation and the potentially devastating consequences this could have on migrant and racialised communities.

This issue isn’t about migration. It’s about sexual violence, paedophilia, patriarchy and systematic police failures.”

Broader issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Survey of Adult Skills 2023 (PIAAC): National Report for England: research report

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675330e020bcf083762a6d48/Survey_of_Adult_Skills_2023_PIAAC_National_Report_for_England.pdf

(Source: LinkedIn)

This important report has just been published without much fanfare. As Jonathan Douglas (CE, NLT) says on LinkedIn:

“18% of adults in England were found to have low levels of literacy (level 1 or below in the study). This means that since the last study in 2012 the

group with the lowest literacy skills has actually grown - the previous study found that 16.4% of adults in England fell into this category.”

Jonathan concludes his post with a powerful message:

“Faced with falling levels of adult literacy, the national focus on basic skills needs to be renewed. The creation of Skills England is an important development but its focus on literacy and numeracy (as opposed to vocational and technical skills) is yet to be established. Make no mistake, literacy and numeracy are issues of social and economic inequality, which need to be addressed with lifelong support. A strong commitment to both must run through the Government’s Opportunity Mission. A cross sectoral commitment to basic skills is required as a matter of social justice and as the platform for economic growth.”

Broader issues – Other Agencies

“Musk’s posts on British grooming gangs are rooted in a far-right conspiracy”

https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/far-right-elon-musk-grooming-gangs-britain-keir-starmer-tommy-robinson-great-replacement/?utm_source=oD%20Daily%20SEGMENT&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Musk%E2%80%99s%20posts%20on%20British%20grooming%20gangs%20are%20rooted%20in%20conspiracy&kx=1_8D1xQSf81SrwgQ7oVGBK2bIBk82Fazlk5OMY7463I.YjCYwm

(Source: email from openDemocracy, 10 Jan 2025)

Grim but important explainer about Elon Musk’s interventions in UK politics.

“Academies haven’t raised pupil achievement – there’s no need for them to have privileges that other schools do not”

https://theconversation.com/academies-havent-raised-pupil-achievement-theres-no-need-for-them-to-have-privileges-that-other-schools-do-not-247023?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%2014%202025%20-%203226632942&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%2014%202025%20-%203226632942+CID_8462bfd72827c433f8a5034a1fa49225&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Academies%20havent%20raised%20pupil%20achievement%20%20theres%20no%20need%20for%20them%20to%20have%20privileges%20that%20other%20schools%20do%20not

(Source: *The Conversation*, 15 Jan 2025)

Interesting article reporting research that shows: “[...] that academy schools are no better at raising attainment than the schools they replaced. The pupil premium policy – which gives schools funding according to their intake – appears considerably more effective when it comes to improving education for disadvantaged children.”