

# The Network Newsletter – Ebulletin 412, 15 February 2025

## Events

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

## Riots – Background info/explainers

**Press statement: “IRR statement on research findings on charging and sentencing patterns following the summer 2024 racist riots”**

[https://irr.org.uk/article/irr-statement-on-research-findings-on-charging-and-sentencing-patterns-following-the-summer-2024-racist-riots/?ml\\_sub=2674836999923308277&ml\\_sub\\_hash=j6o9&utm\\_source=newletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=the\\_racist\\_roots\\_of\\_last\\_summers\\_riots\\_cannot\\_be\\_normalised&utm\\_term=2025-02-07](https://irr.org.uk/article/irr-statement-on-research-findings-on-charging-and-sentencing-patterns-following-the-summer-2024-racist-riots/?ml_sub=2674836999923308277&ml_sub_hash=j6o9&utm_source=newletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=the_racist_roots_of_last_summers_riots_cannot_be_normalised&utm_term=2025-02-07)

(Source: *IRR News*, 7 Feb 2025)

Very brief press statement, highlighting the IRR findings that there was a failure to acknowledge the full extent of the racial dimension within the violence.

## Funding & Opportunities

**News release: “The National Archives to establish new hub for community-led research in the cultural heritage sector”**

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/news/the-national-archives-to-establish-new-hub-for-community-led-research-in-the-cultural-heritage-sector/>

(Source: email from Joseph Kelly, The National Archives to [archives-nra@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:archives-nra@jiscmail.ac.uk), 12 Feb 2024)

“Staff working in galleries, libraries, archives and museums around the UK will soon be able to ask The National Archives for help funding community-led research projects, following a generous £1 million award by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

The project, known as Spaces, Places and Belonging, will help a wider range of people engage with cultural organisations.”

## Family Friendly Museum Award 2025

<https://kidsinmuseums.org.uk/what-we-do/family-friendly-museum-award/nominate-a-museum-for-the-family-friendly-museum-award/>

(Source: *Museum Development North Newsletter*, 14 Feb 2025)

Nominations are now open – details at the above weblink.

## Cost of living crisis/poverty – Other Agencies

**“‘When you’ve got nothing in your belly, you can’t concentrate’: teachers on the food banks they run in schools”**

[https://theconversation.com/when-youve-got-nothing-in-your-belly-you-cant-concentrate-teachers-on-the-food-banks-they-run-in-schools-248507?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20February%2011%202025%20-%203256133258&utm\\_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20February%2011%202025%20-%203256133258+CID\\_184b818268c35c77b26d592b218208ab&utm\\_source=campaign\\_monito](https://theconversation.com/when-youve-got-nothing-in-your-belly-you-cant-concentrate-teachers-on-the-food-banks-they-run-in-schools-248507?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20February%2011%202025%20-%203256133258&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20February%2011%202025%20-%203256133258+CID_184b818268c35c77b26d592b218208ab&utm_source=campaign_monito)

[r\\_uk&utm\\_term=When%20youve%20got%20nothing%20in%20your%20belly%20you%20cant%20concentrate%20teachers%20on%20the%20food%20banks%20they%20run%20in%20schools](https://www.theguardian.com/uk&utm_term=When%20youve%20got%20nothing%20in%20your%20belly%20you%20cant%20concentrate%20teachers%20on%20the%20food%20banks%20they%20run%20in%20schools)

(Source: *The Conversation*, 12 Feb 2025)

“Across England, schools are running food banks to help the children and their families. Research suggests that 21% of schools in England now offer some form of food charity.”

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

**“Tackling digital exclusion and health literacy: how libraries can help bridge the gap”**

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/tackling-digital-exclusion-and-health-literacy-how-libraries-can-help-bridge-the-gap/>

(Source: *Public Libraries News*, 29 Jan 2025)

NHS blogpost outlining the role that libraries can play in tackling digital exclusion and promoting the work to involve libraries in helping people access the NHS App and their NHS account.

### **Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies**

**“If Rachel Reeves wants growth, improved community cohesion could be essential”**

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/jan/19/rachel-reeves-growth-community-cohesion-social-capital>

Just in case you missed this article:

“A new paper has found that social capital ‘is the cake, not the icing’ of a strong, well functioning economy”

The article reports that:

“In areas where a big industrial employer has shut down, followed by a period of neglect and underinvestment, [the paper’s author] says social capital tends to be weakened over time in a way that exacerbates the impact on the economy.

‘It’s the things that make places, really: those parks, those youth clubs, those sports facilities, those libraries and museums. And in a sense, social capital has been depleted as a result of the economic shocks, but then has provided its own amplifier,’ he says.

‘A community that is socially divisive and mistrustful has no hope, whatever you throw at it by way of money, jobs, businesses, infrastructure: basically, you are building them on shifting societal sands.’

It should go without saying that there are already good, solid, Labour reasons for funding youth centres, parks and libraries. Sure Start centres, too.”

The paper, *Social capital 2025: the hidden wealth of nations*, is at [https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Social-Capital-2025\\_The-Hidden-Wealth-of-Nations.pdf](https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Social-Capital-2025_The-Hidden-Wealth-of-Nations.pdf) and an assessment will appear in *The Network Newsletter*.

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

### “Transforming Patient Outcomes Through Reading”

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/transforming-patient-outcomes-through-reading-the-reading-agency-urrcf/?trackingId=d0oXjOIRPz50ip5lp7ZOZQ%3D%3D>

(Source: LinkedIn)

“In November, The Reading Agency partnered with the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) to deliver a first-of-its-kind professional development webinar for GPs, exploring how reading can significantly improve patient health and wellbeing. The event highlighted the powerful potential of bibliotherapy in modern healthcare, through Reading Well, our national Books on Prescription programme.”

### “No Questions Asked: Public libraries build no-return collections for addiction and mental health support”

[https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2025/01/02/no-questions-asked-addiction-mental-health/?utm\\_campaign=1802844\\_Fortnightly%20newsletter%2012%20February%202025%20%20MEMBER&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=The%20Chartered%20Institute%20of%20Library%20and%20%20Information%20Professionals&dm\\_i=6WFS,12N30,9VBO9,4JAO5,1](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2025/01/02/no-questions-asked-addiction-mental-health/?utm_campaign=1802844_Fortnightly%20newsletter%2012%20February%202025%20%20MEMBER&utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20Chartered%20Institute%20of%20Library%20and%20%20Information%20Professionals&dm_i=6WFS,12N30,9VBO9,4JAO5,1)

(Source: *News from CILIP*, 12 Feb 2025)

“Every day in public libraries across San Francisco, patrons find their way to a discreet shelf and pick up titles including Alcoholics Anonymous’ (AA) *Big Book*, *Narcotics Anonymous*, and *The Zen of Recovery* by Mel Ash.

Then, without checking out these titles, these patrons leave. They may mark up the books they take. They won’t return the materials. And, according to Doreen Horstin, manager of San Francisco Public Library’s (SFPL) Park branch, this is just fine.

These patrons are participants in Read to Recovery, an SFPL program that has been providing free addiction recovery materials since spring 2023. The initiative is a way to quietly get thousands of books into the hands of people who need them, ensuring that barriers such as a lack of a library card or hold times don’t get in the way.”

## Migration issues – Other Agencies

### “Lights, camera, and a new low: why is the government making Deportation TV”

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/feb/10/immigration-asylum-labour-deportation-flights>

Just in case you missed this article from the Chief Executive of the Refugee Council, which makes some very important points:

“It is, of course, vital that the public has trust in the government to run an orderly and controlled asylum and immigration system. But melodramatic footage and maligning narratives that risk punching down on the men, women and children in the boats who are victims of traffickers and smugglers will not give the public confidence that the system is working.

To gain that confidence, the most important thing is to clear the asylum backlog and actually fix the asylum accommodation system. The use of hotels in communities across the country has become the most damaging symbol of government failure and a flashpoint for community tensions. Billions are being wasted on appallingly run contracts with private companies that cream off vast profits. Yet there is no serious plan emerging from the Home Office to trigger the contract break clauses due next year and radically reform the system.

The urgency being given to removals should be focused on proposals to quickly transform asylum housing and support.

And let’s not forget, it was only in August that mobs seemingly stirred up by the social media antics of the far-right criminal Tommy Robinson sought to burn refugees alive in a hotel. Communities are still healing from that appalling violence. The government must not increase mistrust with performative tactics that play into negative and dangerous stereotypes.”

### **“Counter-terror and the Border Security Bill”**

[https://migrantsrights.org.uk/2025/01/31/counter-terror-border-security-bill/?link\\_id=7&can\\_id=30e439a67211f81f4bbace156600453a&source=email-what-does-migrant-justice-mean-to-you&email\\_referrer=email\\_2605767&email\\_subject=stand-against-the-border-security-bill](https://migrantsrights.org.uk/2025/01/31/counter-terror-border-security-bill/?link_id=7&can_id=30e439a67211f81f4bbace156600453a&source=email-what-does-migrant-justice-mean-to-you&email_referrer=email_2605767&email_subject=stand-against-the-border-security-bill)

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

Briefing from MRN:

“The key difference with the Border Security Bill is that for the first time, the counter-terror framework is being used as the primary approach to migration policy. What this means is that excessive powers are able to be brought in with regard to surveillance, pre-crime policing and sentencing. This use of manufacturing a crisis to bring in such legislation mirrors what has happened to Muslim communities with counter-terror powers time and time again. Many of the Border Security Command’s functions have therefore been enabled without any scrutiny; the Border Security Bill exists in part to strengthen and expand these capabilities.

A counter-terror approach also enables the Government to bring in powers that would otherwise be seen as excessive and extreme. Overall, the Bill is intended to target intermediaries, who act as agents or brokers to facilitate the travel of undocumented people, including across the Channel in small boats.”

## **“AI Under Watch: Scrutinising the asylum system by those most affected”**

[https://migrantsrights.org.uk/projects/hostile-office/the-digital-hostile-environment/ai-under-watch/?link\\_id=9&can\\_id=30e439a67211f81f4bbace156600453a&source=email-what-does-migrant-justice-mean-to-you&email\\_referrer=email\\_2605767&email\\_subject=stand-against-the-border-security-bill](https://migrantsrights.org.uk/projects/hostile-office/the-digital-hostile-environment/ai-under-watch/?link_id=9&can_id=30e439a67211f81f4bbace156600453a&source=email-what-does-migrant-justice-mean-to-you&email_referrer=email_2605767&email_subject=stand-against-the-border-security-bill)

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

“In August 2024, we received funding from Public Voices in AI Fund to investigate the potential role and impact of AI on people seeking asylum in London and the South of England. Through workshops and interviews, we set out to inform and be informed by people seeking asylum about AI through creative activities and gather evidence of its impact on their daily lives.”

Findings include:

- “The widespread prevalence of errors relating to names, date of birth or inaccuracies in asylum interview transcripts.”
- “Concerns were consistently raised around the limitations of AI in its ability to understand human behaviour and emotions”
- “Some of the participants stated they had concerns about how AI would impact disabled people, specifically neurodivergent people
- Participants stated they were cautious of AI due to the lack of transparency around how it would be used, and what datasets it would rely on.”

This research is available in English, Arabic, Pashto, Farsi and Dari.

## **LGBTQ+ issues – Other Agencies**

### **“My university’s failure to confront homophobia has forced me to quit”**

[https://www.timeshighereducation.com/opinion/my-universitys-failure-confront-homophobia-has-forced-me-quit?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=editorial-weekly&spMailingID=30611470&spUserID=MTAxNzc5Mzc5Nzk1MQS2&spJobID=2632099624&spReportId=MjYzMjA5OTYyNAS2](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/opinion/my-universitys-failure-confront-homophobia-has-forced-me-quit?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=editorial-weekly&spMailingID=30611470&spUserID=MTAxNzc5Mzc5Nzk1MQS2&spJobID=2632099624&spReportId=MjYzMjA5OTYyNAS2)

(Source: email from Times Higher Education, 30 Jan 2025)

Important article showing how one university has failed to engage with criticism about including LGBTQ+ issues in a course about intersectionality.

## **Broader issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations**

### **“Libraries: the essential service”**

<https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/news/libraries-essential-service>

Edited version of the talk given by Libraries Connected President Ed Jewell to the Librarian’s Toolkit session on 24 November 2024.

It summarises briefly some current issues, and concludes with:

“[...] aligning our services to local and national priorities shouldn’t just be a political expediency to secure our futures – it should actually be at the core of what we do, hardwired into our DNA.”

## “Increasing the digital impact of public libraries – evaluating LibraryOn’s £1.5m grants programme”

[https://blogs.bl.uk/living-knowledge/2025/02/increasing-the-digital-impact-of-public-libraries.html?utm\\_source=The%20Audience%20Agency&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=14877509\\_11%2F02%2F25%20Digital%20Snapshot&utm\\_content=LibraryOn%20evaluation&dm\\_i=1X00,8UVK5,9OWQ85,10VQN1,1](https://blogs.bl.uk/living-knowledge/2025/02/increasing-the-digital-impact-of-public-libraries.html?utm_source=The%20Audience%20Agency&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=14877509_11%2F02%2F25%20Digital%20Snapshot&utm_content=LibraryOn%20evaluation&dm_i=1X00,8UVK5,9OWQ85,10VQN1,1)

(Source: Audience Agency *Digital Snapshot*, Feb 2025)

Just in case you haven’t seen this new “Knowledge Matters” blogpost from the BL:

“A comprehensive evaluation has now been published looking at the impact of funded activity on libraries and their users. The report will be used to help shape future digital development for the library sector.

The report is packed with case studies, quotes from applicants and useful tips for libraries hoping to deliver similar projects. It also contains an evaluation into how the grant programme was administered and suggests some takeaways about the overall status of digital development in the library sector.”

## Broader issues – Other Agencies

### **School readiness survey**

<https://kindredsquared.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/School-Readiness-Survey-January-2025-Kindred-Squared.pdf>

(Source: Children & Young People Now *Update*, 3 Feb 2025)

Just in case you haven’t seen this report – which has had a huge amount of media coverage – it provides some grim stats, eg:

“In the 2024 Reception cohort, teachers report over a third (36%) of children struggle to play / share with other children, 34% don’t know how to listen or respond to simple instruction, and a quarter (25%) are not toilet trained.” [p3]

It has been produced by Kindred<sup>2</sup>: “Kindred<sup>2</sup> is a charitable foundation working collaboratively with partner organisations to improve early education and early child development.” [Taken from: <https://kindredsquared.org.uk/about-us/>]