

The Network Newsletter – Ebulletin 426, 19 November 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/Decolonisation

Ageing while Black: the experiences of older Black Caribbean people in England

Full report: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/siteassets/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/equality-and-human-rights/ageing-while-black.pdf>

Press release summary:

<https://theageactionalliance.org/2025/10/20/experiences-of-racism-continue-to-scar-and-disadvantage-englands-black-caribbean-people-in-older-age/>

(Source: *Later Life AGEnda*, 20 Oct 2025)

Important new report from Age UK, which:

“[...] draws on in depth interviews with older Black Caribbean people to understand more about what it’s like to age in our country while Black.

It finds that in later life, they often continue to face significant barriers in many aspects of their lives, including accessing vital public services like the NHS and benefits, because of disadvantages that have accumulated over a lifetime and the way this intersects with institutionalised racism and ageism they encounter today.” [Taken from summary]

“Handsworth: the colour Jenrick couldn’t see”

https://irr.org.uk/article/handsworth-the-colour-jenrick-couldnt-see/?ml_sub=2866932062760211496&ml_sub_hash=d2h1&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=passports_on_our_faces&utm_term=2025-10-30

(Source: *IRR News*, 30 Oct 2025)

Just in case you haven’t seen this terrific article by Mukhtar Dar (a founder of Sheffield Asian Youth Movement, political artist and activist, and now director at Kalaboration Arts), which gives some impression of the depth of Handsworth’s working-class culture.

“Foster carers across England facing widespread racism, sector leader says”

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/oct/27/foster-carers-social-workers-england-racism-far-right?ml_sub=2866932062760211496&ml_sub_hash=d2h1&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=passports_on_our_faces&utm_term=2025-10-30

“Social workers are experiencing unprecedented levels of racism, while foster carers whose ethnicity differs from the children they care for have

been accosted in the street, a fostering leader has said as he called on the government to take action.”

This issue is also picked up in:

“Children, foster carers and social workers facing rising levels of racism, MacAlister warned”, https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2025/10/24/children-foster-carers-and-social-workers-facing-rising-levels-of-racism-macalister-warned/?utm_campaign=CC%20Snapshot%2030%20October%202025&utm_content=Top%20news%20story%202&utm_term=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.communitycare.co.uk%2F2025%2F10%2F24%2Fchildren-foster-carers-and-social-workers-facing-rising-levels-of-racism-macalister-warned%2F&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Community%20Care.

Riots – Background info/explainers

Standing together: the health impacts of the racist riots on communities, one year on

<https://files.peopleshealthtrust.org.uk/production/documents/Standing-Together-report.pdf?dm=1753285945>

(Source: *Equally Ours Newsletter*, 17 Oct 2025)

Important insights and recommendations:

“This report lays bare the immediate and enduring health impacts of 2024’s racist riots on local people, communities, and grassroots organisations across Great Britain. The findings paint a stark picture of the toll taken on mental and physical health, particularly among racialised communities and those on the front lines of community support.

The research is based on testimony from over 50 community organisations working across England, Scotland and Wales at the sharp end of tackling health inequality, including in the neighbourhoods where the racist riots took place, who between them work with tens of thousands of local people every year.” [p3]

The recommendations include:

- “Tackle anti-immigration and hate rhetoric pushed by those in public office.”
- “Work with communities to develop plans for the housing of asylum seekers and refugees locally to ensure there is appropriate infrastructure and support to aid early integration.” [both quotes from p5]

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

“New research reveals Britain’s AI confidence gap risks leaving millions left behind”

<https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/discover/our-news/our-news-2025/good-things-foundation-ai-confidence-gap-research>

(Source: *Good Things Foundation News*, 20 Oct 2025)

News release from Good Things Foundation (to coincide with Get Online Week):

“New research from the UK’s leading digital inclusion charity, Good Things Foundation, reveals over a third (38%) of UK adults feel less confident going online since the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini.”

Elitist Britain 2025

https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Elitist-Britain-2025.pdf?utm_source=Left+Foot+Forward+Newsletter&utm_campaign=36f691be9b-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2025_10_30_12_41&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-36f691be9b-358672251&mc_cid=36f691be9b&mc_eid=e91604b40f

(Source: *Left Foot Forward*, 1 Nov 2025)

In their second report on “The educational backgrounds of Britain’s leading people”, the Sutton Trust has found:

“The six years since *Elitist Britain 2019* have been a time of political and social turbulence at home and abroad, including wars, a pandemic, a cost of living crisis, and five prime ministers. Racial diversity and inclusion leapt to the top of the agenda, before becoming subject of a ‘culture war’, while the 2024 General Election saw unprecedented political fragmentation, with many rejecting ‘establishment’ parties on both the right and left.

Elitist Britain 2025 finds that despite this volatility [sic], there has been little change in the backgrounds of Britain’s ‘elite’.” [p4]

Ending extraction in the UK care system

<https://publication.cles.org.uk/ending-extraction-in-the-uk-care-system>

(Source: email from New Economics Foundation, 14 Nov 2025)

New report from the New Economics Foundation, which questions the common response that there is not enough money to increase spending on care:

“Instead of facilitating the care of children, older people, disabled and learning disabled people, our care system facilitates the extraction of value and wealth from places and local public service budgets. While executive pay booms, frontline workers receive little more than the minimum wage. While local government and central government struggle to pay the bills to meet increasing demand, private company profits continue to rise.”

“Britain’s youth clubs have been quietly decimated. What’s most revealing is that few seem to care”

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/oct/12/britain-youth-clubs-social-division-polarisation-loneliness>

Article which highlights the work that youth clubs do and notes that:

“These vital spaces have been the first targets of cuts in a nation that favours age over youth – despite being the remedy for blights such as social division, polarisation and loneliness [...]

There is [...] something deep within the British psyche that favours age over youth, and consequently misrepresents and ignores the latter in a way that sometimes looks almost pathological.

If you want a vivid example, consider a drastic loss from millions of young lives that is still bafflingly overlooked. During the first 10 years of the spending cuts that began in 2010, councils’ funding for youth services in England and Wales suffered a real-terms cut of 70%. By 2023, about 1,200 publicly run youth centres had closed, and more than 4,500 youth workers had lost their jobs. Villages, towns and cities still bear the scars: empty buildings that look just as forlorn as any shuttered library or Sure Start centre. But while other aspects of the austerity disaster have at least been acknowledged, this one still seems to be a strange kind of guilty secret, with seemingly no chance of all that lost provision ever being restored.”

“The former fire station fighting the far-right radicalisation of young men”

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/youth-workers-hull-uk-far-right-radicalisation-fightback-andrew-tate-teenage-boys/>

A terrific article showing the positive impact that a youth project can have:

“It’s 10am on a Thursday, and young people are already eagerly waiting outside the front door of an old Victorian fire station in central Hull. Inside is the Warren youth project, which has been supporting young people in the East Yorkshire port city for more than four decades [...]

In Hull, Tatten has seen the most extreme consequences of this trend. The city’s once-thriving fishing and shipping industries have been in decline since the 1970s, and today it faces high levels of deprivation, child poverty and youth unemployment. Against this backdrop, far-right gangs lure in young men by offering money, drink, drugs and clothes, as well as the promise of status and belonging, while far-right politicians vow to help them reclaim the power they believe they have lost [...]

The Warren offers a safe space for young men to discuss their emotions, express their fears and difficulties without being judged, and find a new community where they are valued for who they are, not for how they can be exploited. Its teams, including young people who have left extremist movements, build long-term, strong and trusting relationships with disenfranchised young men, helping them escape the trap of radicalisation.”

Diversity in books and other materials for children & young people

Excluded voices

<https://www.inclusivebooksforchildren.org/excluded-voices-report>

(Source: email from *Books for Keeps*, 26 Oct 2025)

Inclusive Books for Children have just published their second *Excluded voices* report which:

“[...] examines how much input British authors and illustrators from marginalised communities have had in the creation of Own Voice books, mainly stories, for children aged 1 to 9, including books for babies and toddlers, picture books and young children’s fiction.”

The *Books for Keeps* web summary (<https://booksforkeeps.co.uk/inclusive-books-for-children-publishes-new-excluded-voices-report/>) highlights key findings.

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

Reflecting realities – survey of ethnic representation within UK children’s literature 2024

https://clpe.org.uk/research/clpe-reflecting-realities-survey-ethnic-representation-within-uk-childrens-literature-3?utm_campaign=3935083_Literacy%20news%20NOV%202025_HL&utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20National%20Literacy%20Trust&dm_i=7RFL,2CCBV,3IMFBW,4L0VV,1

(Source: National Literacy Trust *Literacy News*, Nov 2025)

This eighth edition of the survey:

“[...] shows a modest increase in minoritised characters in books published for children in the UK, as CLPE approach almost a decade’s worth of insight.

While this demonstrates a steady increase from the 17% reported in 2023, reporting is yet to return to the levels reported in 2022 of 30%, before last year’s dramatic drop.”

The report “[...] calls on the publishing industry to remain steadfast in its commitment to consistently producing high quality inclusive and representative literature as standard practice.” [quotations taken from website]

Neurodiversity issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

“The Outdoor Explorer Club”

<https://www.librariesunlimited.org.uk/services/health-and-wellbeing/the-outdoor-explorer-club/>

(Source: Devon County Council *Weekly round-up*, 17 Oct 2025)

“Working with several wonderful partners, we [*] are excited to share the new ‘The Outdoor Explorer Club’ resource for children, young people and families with neurodiverse conditions, wanting to access nature in Devon.

This leaflet brings together information on some of the more accessible outdoor walks, into the hands of those who need it most. It includes five carefully selected spots across Devon, a short story to accompany each one and accessibility information for when you get there. Each short story also has a wonderful audio recording from Sound Communities and some of the leaflet information can also be requested in braille by demand.

* Libraries Unlimited is the charity commissioned by Devon County Council to run the libraries in Devon.

Migration issues – Other Agencies

Coalition for Language Education: *Response to the 2025 UK Government White Paper “Restoring control over the immigration system (CP1326)”*

<https://coalitionforlanguageeducationuk.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/cle-response-to-immigration-white-paper-cp1326-15.10.25.pdf>

(Source: ESOL-Research@JISCMAIL.ac.uk, 18 Oct 2025)

Useful critique of the Government White Paper, which argues, amongst other things, that the Paper:

“[...] places disproportionate burdens on refugees, asylum seekers, and other forced migrants who may have experienced interrupted education, trauma, or limited literacy in their first language. ESOL provision across the UK remains underfunded, fragmented, and unevenly distributed. Community providers, particularly in England and Northern Ireland, are expected to deliver high-stakes language outcomes with limited training, resourcing, or recognition.” [p1]

Asylum housing: how to change the conversation

<https://stories.freedomfromtorture.org/changing-the-conversation-on-asylum-housing-freedom-from-torture/>

(Source: email from Freedom from Torture, 30 Oct 2025)

Very useful new briefing which corrects many of the myths about the housing of people seeking asylum.