

# The Network Newsletter – Ebulletin 427, 2 December 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

**“Racism never went away – it simply changed shape”**

[https://theconversation.com/racism-never-went-away-it-simply-changed-shape-270325?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20November%2028%202025%20-%203598736740&utm\\_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20November%2028%202025%20-%203598736740+CID\\_ba35f31d4c59b9ee66b74b5382b6edb1&utm\\_source=campaign\\_monitor\\_uk&utm\\_term=Racism%20never%20went%20away%20%20it%20simply%20changed%20shape](https://theconversation.com/racism-never-went-away-it-simply-changed-shape-270325?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20November%2028%202025%20-%203598736740&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20November%2028%202025%20-%203598736740+CID_ba35f31d4c59b9ee66b74b5382b6edb1&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Racism%20never%20went%20away%20%20it%20simply%20changed%20shape)

(Source: *The Conversation*, 1 Dec 2025)

Important article that challenges some of the recent simplistic discussions:

“In most media reporting and political discourse, the term ‘racism’ continues to refer primarily to individual prejudice based on outward appearance or group belonging. When Streeking talks about ‘1970s, 1980s-style racism’ he specifically means ‘abuse based on people’s skin colour’.

While it is undeniably a good thing that racist abuse is being vocally challenged by politicians, this narrow definition of racism obscures as much as it reveals. It fails to challenge forms of racism that do not appeal to physical traits but to cultural traditions. And it gives political agitators intent on sowing division on themes like immigration the opportunity to deflect criticism by denying that their ideas are racist.

Similarly, the notion that racism was already dealt with ‘decades ago’, in Starmer’s words, ignores the fact that racism never went away. It also downplays the extent to which the harm of past racism lives on in the present in structural issues like wealth and income gaps, uneven access to work or housing, unequal health outcomes, and police profiling.

To tackle racism, a widening of focus is needed. Our conception of racism cannot be restricted to instances of individual prejudice but must also include these structural effects.

At the structural level, racism causes certain individuals or communities to be more vulnerable to violence, exclusion, marginalisation, poverty, and other harmful outcomes on the basis of their membership of a particular racial, cultural, or religious group. Rhetoric that intensifies this

vulnerability feeds racism, even when it is not expressed in the language of “race” or when there is no prejudicial intent.

So long as these structural factors are not taken into consideration, more subtle forms of racism will continue to hide in plain sight and exert a corrosive influence on the health and wellbeing of those it targets.”

## National Year of Reading 2026

### Register for updates

[https://www.goallin.org.uk/join-us?utm\\_campaign=3934364\\_Training%20%26%20Resources%20Education%2019%2F11%2F25&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=The%20National%20Literacy%20Trust&dm\\_i=7RFL,2CBRW,3IMFBW,4MAXG,1](https://www.goallin.org.uk/join-us?utm_campaign=3934364_Training%20%26%20Resources%20Education%2019%2F11%2F25&utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20National%20Literacy%20Trust&dm_i=7RFL,2CBRW,3IMFBW,4MAXG,1)

(Source: National Literacy Trust *Training & Resources*, Autumn 2025)

Sign up, if you haven’t already, to keep up-to-date.

### “Reading for pleasure – MPs launch new inquiry to explore how to keep joy of reading alive”

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/203/education-committee/news/210587/reading-for-pleasure-mps-launch-new-inquiry-to-explore-how-to-keep-joy-of-reading-alive/>

(Source: LinkedIn)

“Amid a worrying decline in the number of children reading for pleasure, the Education Committee has launched a new inquiry to understand how reading can be nurtured, and what its benefits are [...]

A survey by the National Literacy Trust this year [see: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/children-and-young-peoples-reading-in-2025/>] found that just one in three children aged eight to 18 read in their spare time (33%) – a 36% decrease from 2005. The survey indicated a particularly steep drop over the last year among primary school children, and that reading continues to be less popular among boys than girls [...]

The cross-party Committee will look at the reasons behind this decline and what can be done to reverse it. It will examine the role of schools, early years settings and local libraries.

The inquiry will see MPs question experts on the interaction between reading for pleasure and children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

The Committee will examine the relationship between reading and the increase in children and young people’s screen time, as well as the role of technologies such as Kindles and audiobooks.

Another pillar of this inquiry will be how promoting reading could improve the attainment and development of disadvantaged children, and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) [...]

The Committee now welcomes written evidence submissions from experts and academics in this field. Submissions should respond to any of the below terms of reference for this inquiry, and can be made via the Committee's website [<https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/3791>] until 9 January 2026."

### **Human Rights – Other Agencies**

#### ***What are my human rights? A guide for young people***

Available to download from: <https://www.bihhr.org.uk/our-work/our-programmes/empowering-community-advocacy/community-programme-2022-2025/atd-fourth-world-uk>

(Source: UK Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) Network *Bulletin*, 20 Nov 2025)

"This guide has been created in collaboration with ATD Fourth World and the British Institute of Human Rights. The guide is for young people to understand their human rights in the UK, and what they can do to make sure that their rights are respected.

The guide will give an overview of how the UK Human Rights Act 1998 works, what duties it gives public officials, and what rights you have. It will then look at a few of the human rights in the Act and how you can use them." [p3]

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

#### **"House of Memories app launched for veterans living with dementia"**

[https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/11/house-of-memories-app-launched-for-veterans-living-with-dementia/#msdynmkt\\_trackingcontext=992c621a-f6ae-4cd0-82ff-c095c7fb0000](https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/11/house-of-memories-app-launched-for-veterans-living-with-dementia/#msdynmkt_trackingcontext=992c621a-f6ae-4cd0-82ff-c095c7fb0000)

(Source: Museums Association email updates, 11 Nov 2025)

"The National Army Museum has created a new app for veterans living with dementia in partnership with the House of Memories dementia awareness programme by National Museums Liverpool.

The new digital resource will connect veterans living with dementia to the museum's collection, using familiar military objects to spark memories and conversations.

The app features almost 100 objects and images from the National Army Museum's collection, including webbing, roll mats, boot brushes and rifle cleaning kits."

### **Health & Wellbeing issues – Other Agencies**

#### ***Policy Brief: Embedding and sustaining child and youth social prescribing***

Available to download from: <https://sbbresearch.org/how-to-embed-and-sustain-child-and-youth-social-prescribing/>

(Source: Social Biobehavioural Research Group *Newsletter*, 7 Oct 2025)

"In June 2025 more than a dozen policymakers and commissioners from across England came together to explore how we can increase children,

young people and their families' access to high quality social prescribing and how this can be embedded and spread nationally. This policy briefing shares our learning." [p2]

Useful summary of recommended actions including:

- Involving children and young people in designing and delivering services
- Investing in the workforce, ensuring people working across the sector are supported through training and supervision
- Increasing funding for child and youth social prescribing [taken from p8]

### **Disability issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government**

#### ***Locked out: exclusion of deaf and deafblind BSL users from health and social care in the UK***

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bsl-user-experience-of-health-and-social-care-in-uk/locked-out-exclusion-of-deaf-and-deafblind-bsl-users-from-health-and-social-care-in-the-uk-full-report-bsl-and-english-versions>

"This report outlines the relentless frustration, access failure and systemic exclusion of deaf and deafblind people locked out of adequate NHS and social care, despite their higher levels of healthcare and mental healthcare needs."

### **Older people and ageism issues – Other Agencies**

#### **"New commissioned report calls for national strategy for older prisoners as numbers reach record high"**

<https://www.manchester.ac.uk/about/news/new-commissioned-report-calls-for-national-strategy-for-older-prisoners-as-numbers-reach-record-high/>

(Source: *Later Life AGenda*, 19 Nov 2025)

"A major new report [\*see below], in partnership with Recoop [<https://www.recoop.org.uk/>]: *Supporting older people with convictions*, is calling for an urgent national strategy to support the rapidly expanding population of older prisoners in England and Wales. With people aged 50 and over now representing 24% of the prison population according to the most recent report of the Chief Medical Officer (2025), and four times as many people over 60 in custody compared with 2002, the report highlights the vital need for age-responsive practice across the prison estate.

These findings come as growing evidence shows that older prisoners are often assigned unsuitable activities or excluded from them altogether, resulting in disengagement from the prison community and long periods spent in their cells. As sentencing patterns mean more people are ageing behind bars, the report emphasises that the structure and purpose of daily activities have become central to maintaining wellbeing, dignity, and a sense of meaning to the time spent in prison.

The report stresses that improved staff awareness and training with respect to older prisoners must underpin any system-wide response.

With a greater understanding of age-related health conditions, mobility limitations, and psychosocial challenges, prison staff can play a crucial role in enabling access to what the report emphasises as ‘meaningful’ activities. The report includes a practical toolkit designed to support officers and managers in adapting to the distinct needs of an ageing population.

The new report mentioned is *Finding meaning behind bars: activities for older prisoners in England and Wales*,  
<https://research.manchester.ac.uk/en/publications/finding-meaning-behind-bars-activities-for-older-prisoners-in-eng/>.

## Migration issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

### “Earned settlement” (Open consultation)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/earned-settlement?utm\\_source=Dynamics%20365%20Customer%20Insights%20-%20Journeys&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=N%2FA&utm\\_campaign=MKT%20%7C%20The%20Pulse%20%7C%20Members%20%7C%20November%202025&utm\\_content=MKT%20%7C%20The%20Pulse%20%7C%20Members%20%7C%20November%202025#msdynmkt\\_trackingcontext=a59d76c4-1a94-4e4a-afc7-9a84b0340200](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/earned-settlement?utm_source=Dynamics%20365%20Customer%20Insights%20-%20Journeys&utm_medium=email&utm_term=N%2FA&utm_campaign=MKT%20%7C%20The%20Pulse%20%7C%20Members%20%7C%20November%202025&utm_content=MKT%20%7C%20The%20Pulse%20%7C%20Members%20%7C%20November%202025#msdynmkt_trackingcontext=a59d76c4-1a94-4e4a-afc7-9a84b0340200)

(Source: NCVO *The Pulse* campaign update, 28 Nov 2025)

“The government is consulting on how the current settlement system should be reformed and how those reforms should be implemented. This consultation closes at **11:59pm on 12 February 2026**”

“Settlement refers to a person’s right to live in the UK permanently without any immigration restrictions. It is also known as Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) [...]”

Under proposals in the 2025 UK Immigration White Paper:

“Settlement will no longer be granted automatically after a fixed period. Instead, migrants will need to earn it by demonstrating sustained good conduct, contribution and integration.”

One suggested element of this “earned” settlement is via volunteering, although there is growing opposition to this – as NCVO put it:

“While volunteering is a powerful way to connect with communities, linking it to immigration status undermines its voluntary nature and would create significant administrative and reporting burdens for charities and volunteers.” [Taken from *The Pulse*]

## Migration issues – Other Agencies

### **“Reclaiming the Narrative: Why Refugee Voices Must Be at the Heart of Media Storytelling”**

<https://www.sounddelivery.org.uk/2025/10/reclaiming-the-narrative-why-refugee-voices-must-be-at-the-heart-of-media-storytelling/>

(Source: email from Sounddelivery Media, 20 Nov 2025)

Powerful brief statement about why refugees’ voices must be heard.

### ***Welcoming growth: the economic case for a fair and humane asylum system***

Executive Summary:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Jjtx\\_ygsAd2rkVzzhcU\\_EtHnSfbNiPWR/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Jjtx_ygsAd2rkVzzhcU_EtHnSfbNiPWR/view)

Full report: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DI5gM-QWqcNzTSwYgzG2TCOoYRCuiYJo/view>

(Source: email from Together with Refugees, 17 Nov 2025)

“Carried out by the London School of Economics (LSE), this report makes the economic case for a fair and humane asylum system. It sets out how inexcusable inefficiencies in the UK’s asylum system are inflating public costs, alongside the rarely told reality that refugees not only play a significant role in our communities but could make a vital financial contribution.

These findings undermine arguments claiming that refugees drain public services. It demonstrates that with the right changes to the asylum system, refugees would be able to contribute more to our country, not only as friends and neighbours, but through taxes and economic growth.”  
[Executive Summary, p2]

### ***Children of migrants in the UK***

Web version: <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/children-of-migrants-in-the-uk/>

Pdf version: <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2025-Briefing-Children-of-Migrants-in-the-UK.pdf>

(Source: *Migration Observations: the newsletter from the University of Oxford’s Migration Observatory*, Nov 2025)

Important new “Briefing” from the Migration Observatory, which “[...] looks at the children of migrants, including those born abroad and those born in the UK to foreign-born parents.”

### **“Voters blame politicians for cost of living crisis”**

[https://www.jrf.org.uk/public-attitudes/voters-blame-politicians-for-cost-of-living-crisis?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Joseph%20Rowntree%20Foundation&utm\\_id=4769116\\_281125\\_newsletter\\_November%202025&utm\\_campaign=4769116\\_281125\\_newsletter\\_November%202025&dm\\_i=7ADY,2U7VG,1R494R,7WI31,1](https://www.jrf.org.uk/public-attitudes/voters-blame-politicians-for-cost-of-living-crisis?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Joseph%20Rowntree%20Foundation&utm_id=4769116_281125_newsletter_November%202025&utm_campaign=4769116_281125_newsletter_November%202025&dm_i=7ADY,2U7VG,1R494R,7WI31,1)

(Source: JRF *Newsletter*, 1 Dec 2025)

This is a slightly negative way of making a good point (!):

“[...] as new research published by the Nuffield Politics Research Centre (Nuffield College, University of Oxford) makes clear, households feeling

economically insecure is the clearest driver of Labour's dramatic loss of support since the election.

By way of comparison, we can compare the impact of economic security on voter behaviour to the impact of immigration attitudes, the oft-cited reason for Labour's electoral woes: Nuffield find that becoming economically insecure increases that chance of defecting from Labour 3 times more than becoming more opposed to immigration."

**"Asylum is not illegal migration – why the UK government shouldn't conflate the two"**

[https://theconversation.com/asylum-is-not-illegal-migration-why-the-uk-government-shouldnt-conflate-the-two-270106?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20November%2020%202025%20-%203589136643&utm\\_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20November%2020%202025%20-%203589136643+CID\\_fcf4f9e0723c2d67c8fd77569b15de61&utm\\_source=campaign\\_monitor\\_uk&utm\\_term=Asylum%20is%20not%20illegal%20migration%20%20why%20the%20UK%20government%20shouldnt%20conflate%20the%20two](https://theconversation.com/asylum-is-not-illegal-migration-why-the-uk-government-shouldnt-conflate-the-two-270106?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20November%2020%202025%20-%203589136643&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20November%2020%202025%20-%203589136643+CID_fcf4f9e0723c2d67c8fd77569b15de61&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Asylum%20is%20not%20illegal%20migration%20%20why%20the%20UK%20government%20shouldnt%20conflate%20the%20two)

(Source: *The Conversation*, 21 Nov 2025)

Important article:

"The UK government's latest proposals on asylum rest on an incorrect premise. In announcing them, home secretary Shabana Mahmood argued that "illegal migration is tearing our country apart". But asylum-seeking is not illegal migration."

**"Net migration is plummeting. Why can't Labour say so?"**

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/nov/30/net-migration-is-plummeting-why-cant-labour-say-so>

This is an opinion piece, but also makes some important points about the current climate:

"Keir Starmer's response to the 69% fall in net migration revealed in official figures last week was to remark: 'That's a step in the right direction.'

Describing a reduction of more than two-thirds of any indicator in a single year as a 'step' would be a creative use of statistics, putting it kindly.

But on this most polarising of topics, and for the prime minister, whose job it is to shape public opinion, not cower before it [...] it was inexcusable.

Starmer's insouciance about the collapse in numbers – from 649,000 last year to 204,000 in the year to June – was just the latest example of how



damagingly detached from reality political debate about migration has become.”

The article goes on to make some strong points (which ought to get more of an airing!), based on those made at a panel discussion by Brian Bell, the chair of the independent Migration Advisory Committee, including:

“First, and contrary to Starmer’s claim last year that Boris Johnson deliberately engaged in a ‘one-nation experiment in open borders’, Bell described the extraordinary increase in net migration that followed Brexit and the Covid pandemic as ‘an accident’.

He cited three factors. First, the Homes for Ukraine scheme and the decision to allow Hong Kong citizens with British passports to come to the UK. ‘All politicians said that was a good idea, but that gave us 200,000 migration in one year, and additionally, some Hong Kong citizens because of the crackdown from the Chinese authorities,’ he said.

Second were the pressures facing UK universities as they emerged from the pandemic facing soaring inflation and the continuing freeze on tuition fees – and turned to enrolling a growing number of foreign students to fill the gap [...]

Third was the decision – again in the aftermath of the pandemic, with the NHS and care homes under intense pressure – to extend healthcare visas so that care workers, many of whom would otherwise be too low-paid to qualify for a skilled worker visa, could come to the UK.”