

The Network Newsletter – Ebulletin 428, 10 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

Enforcing Britishness: from the ‘numbers game’ to far-right vigilantism

<https://irr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Enforcing-BritishnessFinal.pdf>

(Source: *IRR News*, 27 Nov 2025)

Important new paper from the IRR:

“This briefing paper is aimed at providing community sector voices, concerned politicians and policy makers with an overview of trends on the far Right, also examining developments in electoral politics, and international hard Right movements, that serve to amplify far-right themes.

The last six months have seen far-right manipulation of protests outside asylum accommodation, the Unite the Kingdom rally in London on 13 September, a rapid escalation in racial violence across the UK and threats issued against NGOs working on migration and refugee issues. In response to these multiple threats, the IRR published briefing holds these key findings:

- US hard-Right influence on UK political parties and the far Right is increasing
- The centre of UK politics has shifted towards the hard-right racist and anti-immigration politics associated with the global rise of the populist Right, Trumpism, and National Conservatism
- The organisation, branding, and merchandising of the Unite the Kingdom rally suggests an attempt to create a UK version of Make America Great Again (MAGA)
- The US trend associated with the rise of Trump, of anti-woke ‘citizen journalism’, has come to the UK and has led to attacks on the work of migrant and refugee charities, philanthropic trusts and foundations, lawyers, and judges
- Parliament is engaged in a race to the bottom on immigration: Reform, Conservative, and Labour politicians are playing the ‘numbers game’, attempting to mimic the approach of Enoch Powell” [taken from https://irr.org.uk/article/enforcing-britishness-from-the-numbers-game-to-far-right-vigilantism/?ml_sub=2887225258635433410&ml_sub_hash=f2f1&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=perverse_morality_perverse_patriotism&utm_term=2025-12-05]

National Year of Reading 2026

“Quick Reads turns 20: The Reading Agency Unveils New Titles During National Year of Reading”

https://readingagency.org.uk/quick-reads-turns-20-the-reading-agency-unveils-new-titles-during-national-year-of-reading/?utm_source=The+Reading+Agency&utm_campaign=e07b177beb-adult_news_03_12_2025&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_ef82b5d6fa-e07b177beb-51507097&mc_cid=e07b177beb&mc_eid=3fa1d39831

(Source: The Reading Agency *Adult Reading News*, 3 Dec 2025)

“The Reading Agency has today revealed the six authors behind the 2026 [Quick Reads](#) titles – marking 20 years of the life-changing initiative – publishing during the [National Year of Reading](#).

Quick Reads helps adults overcome barriers to reading by providing short, accessible books by leading authors. Unlike other short-form fiction, Quick Reads go through a rigorous review process to ensure accessibility – including testing for readability, concentration, and suitability for those rebuilding reading confidence.

The 2026 collection spans thrillers, romance and contemporary fiction – genres proven to tempt new or lapsed readers back to books. The full list is:

- Rachel Hore – *The Girl in the Picture* (Simon & Schuster)
- Leye Adenle – *Cell One* (Simon & Schuster)
- Rosie Goodwin – *Sweet Charity* (Bonnier Books UK)
- Louise Jensen – *The Woman Next Door* (HQ, HarperCollins)
- Derek Owusu – *Hunger Pains* (Merky Books, Penguin Random House)
- Carmel Harrington – *The Last Bench* (Headline, Hachette)”

Cost of living crisis/poverty – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

English indices of deprivation 2025: statistical release

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025-statistical-release>

(Source: *Heritage Update*, 557, 27 Nov 2025)

The Government has just published the latest updates. Headlines include:

- “The most deprived neighbourhood in England according to the IMD25 is to the east of the Jaywick & St Osyth area of Clacton-on-Sea in Tendring (Tendring 018a).
- Seven neighbourhoods in Blackpool rank amongst the top 10 most deprived in England according to the IMD25.
- Overall, 82% of neighbourhoods that are in the most deprived decile according to the IMD25 were also the most deprived according to the IMD19.

- Deprivation is dispersed across England - 65% of Local Authority Districts contain at least one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England.
- Middlesbrough, Birmingham, Hartlepool, Kingston upon Hull and Manchester are the Local Authority Districts with the highest proportions of neighbourhoods among the most deprived in England.
- Two London boroughs (Tower Hamlets and Hackney) rank as the most deprived regarding income deprivation among children. Alongside Newham, Islington and Southwark, these 5 London boroughs rank as the most deprived regarding income deprivation among older people.”

Cost of living crisis/poverty – Other Agencies

Warm Welcome Week 2026

<https://www.warmwelcome.uk/warm-welcome-week>

(Source: Warm Welcome Spaces *E-News*, 3 Dec 2025)

“Warm Welcome Week starts on Blue Monday and runs for seven days from Monday 19 January to Sunday 25 January 2026.”

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

“£1.5m project to address museum attendance inequality”

<https://museumsandheritage.com/advisor/posts/1-5m-project-to-address-museum-attendance-inequality/>

(Source: LinkedIn)

“A four-year research partnership is to examine how museums can reduce inequalities in visitor demographics and societal benefits.

The project, led by The Research Centre for Museums and Galleries at the University of Leicester, has secured £1.49m from the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

The ‘Addressing the Museum Attendance and Benefit Gap’ project brings together Birmingham Museums Trust, University of Birmingham, UCL and multiple sector partners to develop evidence-based approaches to widening participation.

The research team will conduct a major survey of existing knowledge on opening museums to more representative audiences and test new approaches to public programming at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.”

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

“Indicators of digital inclusion (IDI)”

<https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/policy-and-research/indicators-of-digital-inclusion>

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

Developed by Good Things Foundation, these indicators include:

“[...] a small number of questions that would be ‘good enough’, that can be recommended to others, to best measure Digital exclusion/inclusion.”

Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion – Other Agencies

“Women are still absent from how history is taught and assessed in England”

https://theconversation.com/women-are-still-absent-from-how-history-is-taught-and-assessed-in-england-270738?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20December%204%202025%20-%203604936800&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20December%204%202025%20-%203604936800+CID_9dfc34c270e32b22d602076f3a77bd64&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Women%20are%20still%20absent%20from%20how%20history%20is%20taught%20and%20assessed%20in%20England

(Source: *The Conversation*, 5 Dec 2025)

A shocking finding:

“Women are largely absent from the questions, sources, and mark schemes that shape how history is taught and assessed in schools in England.”

Migration issues – News

“Shabana Mahmood urged not to help those ‘seeking to build division’”

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/dec/05/shabana-mahmood-urged-not-to-help-those-seeking-build-division-asylum-system?link_id=2&can_id=30e439a67211f81f4bbace156600453a&source=email-reminder-show-hope-in-every-window-this-weekend-2&email_referrer=email_3007374&email_subject=communities-together-with-refugees-launches-today&&

(Source: email from Together with Refugees, 5 Dec 2025)

Just in case you haven’t seen this coverage of an open letter to the Home Secretary:

“The home secretary has been urged not to ‘play into the hands of those seeking to build division’ by more than 200 community groups across the UK who have described Shabana Mahmood’s plans to overhaul the asylum system as ‘cruel’ and ‘ruthless’.”

Migration issues – Other Agencies

Until harm ends: an update report on trafficked and unaccompanied children going missing from care in the UK

<https://www.ecpat.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=c50384fa-156f-4d74-af22-5089bad9a932>

(Source: EoE AS&R/MW *Newsflash*, Aug/Sep/Oct 2025)

Report that looks at children going missing from care, which found that:

“Once again this research has shown that unaccompanied and trafficked children remain at high risk of going missing from care in the UK. This

has been a persistent finding over the last decade, showing a continuing and significant failure in safeguarding these children, many of whom face significant risks and vulnerabilities. Many systems and processes in force in the UK currently appear to be exacerbating this risk, with little meaningful consideration of, or ability to, provide care and safety for these children.” [p15]

“Open Letter to Arts & Culture Sector”

https://refugeeweek.org.uk/open-letter-to-arts-culture-sector/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=refugee-week-updates-opportunities-plus-read-our-new-theory-of-change&utm_term=2025-12-10

(Source: Refugee Week Updates & Opportunities, 10 Dec 2025)

From Refugee Week ahead of Refugee Week 2026 (15-21 June), the theme of which is “courage”:

“In June 2026, Refugee Week marks 75 years since the 1951 Refugee Convention – a commitment that people forced to flee deserve protection, dignity and hope. We reach this anniversary in a challenging moment, as refugees in the UK and globally face rising hostility, harmful rhetoric and exclusion. Those who stand in solidarity, including charities and communities, also face growing pressure.

Now more than ever, art and culture matter. Creativity helps us recognise our shared humanity, imagine better futures and create spaces of welcome and belonging. Cultural organisations play a vital role in bringing people together and helping shift harmful narratives.”

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

“Almost 530 museums have closed since 2000, study finds”

https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/12/almost-530-museums-have-closed-since-2000-study-finds/#msdynmkt_trackingcontext=55cecfce-7046-4657-a6d5-8985fdba0200

(Source: Museums Association email updates, 2 Dec 2025)

“Almost 530 museums have closed since 2000 and the risk of closure is far higher within the first 10 years of a museum’s life, a groundbreaking report has found.

Published by the Mapping Museums Lab at Birkbeck, University of London this week, the report is based on a large-scale, two-and-a-half year research project on museum closures over the past 25 years.”

Research to understand the lifecycle of children and young people’s engagement in museums

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/children-and-young-people-museums>

(Source: GEM eNews, 202, 31 Oct 2025)

“This report, commissioned by Arts Council England and produced by Verian, analyses children and young people’s (CYP) engagement with museums and the important role that museums play in their lives. The research aimed to understand how CYP engage with museums over the course of their childhood through to young adulthood, and to explore various influences that shape (or prevent) engagement.”

Headline findings include:

- “37% of children aged 11-15 reported visiting museums to spend time with family or friends
- Parents and carers find museums to be important avenues for recreation and bonding with children, with 75% reporting visiting museums to spend time with family and friends
- Despite important work by museums, barriers – most commonly money (38%) and time (36%) – remain for some children and young people in accessing museums
- Just over half (52%) of children aged 0-15 had visited a museum in the last year
- Children and young people in London were the most likely to have visited a museum (63%), with the lowest engagement being in the West Midlands (39%).” [Taken from: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/children-and-young-people-museums>]

Broader issues – Other Agencies

Press release: *Let’s create change: artistic freedom in a time of genocide and rising fascism*

https://queercircle.org/lets-create-change/?_kx=BULnOHK2hYnu_g1dv9vQGlhvP72erkjGkj5ExjUctqA.Vqnsfv

Full report: : <https://website-artlogicwebsite0206.artlogic.net/usr/library/documents/main/let-s-create-change.pdf>

(Source: email from Queercircle, 2 Dec 2025)

Important new report from Queercircle, which “[...] exposes a growing climate of censorship, funding pressures and political influence across the UK arts sector, particularly in relation to Palestine and trans rights.”

Key findings include:

- “72% of respondents observed inconsistencies in how free speech principles are applied within their organisations.
- Over half reported being directly affected by Arts Council England’s guidance on “matters of political debate.”
- 56% said they had been warned that expressing certain views - particularly support for Palestine - could jeopardise funding.
- Almost half had experienced trustees objecting to or intervening in politically engaged programming.
- More than a quarter had been formally reported to the Charity Commission, often after making public statements in support of Gaza.”