

The Network Newsletter – Ebulletin 429, 2 January 2026

With very best wishes for a healthy and peaceful New Year,

Events

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

National Year of Reading 2026

“Go All In”

<https://goallin.org.uk/>

The NYR website has recently launched.

Cost of living crisis/poverty – Other Agencies

“Child poverty: how bad is it in the UK?”

https://theconversation.com/child-poverty-how-bad-is-it-in-the-uk-271692?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20December%202017%202025%20-%203621436975&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20December%202017%202025%20-%203621436975+CID_860dde35150a9fa7ad518db03a57a69b&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Child%20poverty%20how%20bad%20is%20it%20in%20the%20UK

(Source: *The Conversation*, 18 Dec 2025)

“The UK government recently unveiled its child poverty strategy, with the removal of the two-child limit on benefits payments as the centrepiece.

What’s sobering is how desperately the UK needs a strategy to address child poverty. At the end of 2024, four and a half million children – 31% of all UK children – were in relative poverty, meaning that they live in households earning less than 60% of the UK’s median income.

And 18% of all children were growing up in food-insecure households, without consistent access to nutritious food.”

The ‘hostile environment’

A hostile environment: language, race, surveillance and the media (phase two)

[https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/61488f992b58e687f1108c7c/688b6baccbeeb036f9e0f022_A%20hostile%20environment_Phase%20Two_v6%20\(1\).pdf](https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/61488f992b58e687f1108c7c/688b6baccbeeb036f9e0f022_A%20hostile%20environment_Phase%20Two_v6%20(1).pdf)

(Source: email from the Runnymede Trust, 2 Aug 2025)

Apologies for being slow to mention this important report:

“This report, the second in the Runnymede Trust’s project on the ‘hostile environment’ [...] [It] shows how the increase in reactionary politics and the backlash against anti-racism has legitimised the targeting of people seeking asylum, who are largely people of colour. Racist discourse from the highest levels of UK society, including politicians and the media, is

used to frame immigration and Channel crossings as an existential threat to the British way of life – reproducing Islamophobic and racist tropes which associate violence (including terrorism) and the erosion of 'British culture' with migrants. This works to justify ever more hostile immigration policies, [...]" [p6]

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

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

Supporting museums to engage children educated outside of school: a toolkit for working with home educators and those with barriers to school attendance

<https://gem.org.uk/resource/supporting-museums-to-engage-children-educated-outside-of-school/>

(Source: email from Katya Provornaya to gem@jiscmail.ac.uk, 16 May 2025)

Useful toolkit:

"This toolkit highlights ways that we can reach out to home educating families and children with barriers to school attendance. There are ideas that can be used across all types and sizes of museums as well as advocacy data and case studies providing the ethical and business case for giving time and resource to this audience."

"Good Things Foundation launches landmark library digital inclusion project with Libraries Connected and WSA Community"

[https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/discover/our-news/our-news-2025/good-things-libraries-connected-digital-inclusion-](https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/discover/our-news/our-news-2025/good-things-libraries-connected-digital-inclusion-guide?utm_source=Good+Things+Foundation+Newsletter&utm_campaign=66a9f03f75-)
[guide?utm_source=Good+Things+Foundation+Newsletter&utm_campaign=66a9f03f75-](https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/discover/our-news/our-news-2025/good-things-libraries-connected-digital-inclusion-guide?utm_source=Good+Things+Foundation+Newsletter&utm_campaign=66a9f03f75-)

[Good Things Newsletter 12 19 25&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_874c1dbcc0-66a9f03f75-110066901](https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/discover/our-news/our-news-2025/good-things-libraries-connected-digital-inclusion-guide?utm_source=Good+Things+Foundation+Newsletter&utm_campaign=66a9f03f75-)

(Source: *Good News from Good Things Foundation*, 19 Dec 2025)

Just in case you haven't seen this:

"Good Things Foundation has launched a landmark library digital inclusion project with [Libraries Connected](#) and [WSA Community](#).

Delivered in partnership, the programme will develop a new practical digital inclusion guide for public libraries, designed to ensure vulnerable communities are not left behind by AI and rapid digital change.

Titled 'Innovating in Trusted Spaces: Libraries Advancing the Digital Inclusion Action Plan', it will be financed by a grant through the [Digital Inclusion Innovation Fund](#), which is provided by the [Department for Science, Industry and Technology](#) (DSIT).

The project will run from November 2025 to March 2026 across four library services – Newcastle, Northumberland, Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire (Inspire) – covering a population of 1.8 million through 121 individual libraries.

Target groups include older people, low-income families and individuals with disabilities.”

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

“Digital Nation 2025”

<https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/policy-and-research/research-and-evidence/research-2024/digital-nation>

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

Just in case you haven't yet seen the latest Good Things Foundation report.

Key points include:

- “3.7m families are below the minimum digital living standard
- 7.9m lack basic digital skills
- 1.9m households struggle to afford their mobile contract
- 21m adults can't complete the essential digital tasks for work
- 1.6m adults don't have a smartphone, tablet or laptop”

“What Counts as ‘Social Change for Public Good’? A York perspective on people, data, and action”

<https://blogs.york.ac.uk/social-change-catalyst/2025/12/08/what-counts-as-social-change-for-public-good-a-york-perspective-on-people-data-and-action/>

(Source: email from The Equality Trust, Dec 2025)

“Writing for the University of York's social change blog, Professor Kate Pickett – whom you may remember from co-authoring the Spirit Level and helping found the Equality Trust – examines the work of the Born in Bradford Centre to better understand “social change for public good.”

The Born in Bradford approach is to build grassroots ideas with communities, understand how they may work, and then try to help them scale up into other cities around the country. Social change is about sharing power, she writes: it's a *“broader, more hopeful story when we see the change as coming from a chorus rather than a solo.”* [Taken from email, italics theirs]

Getting connected: digital provision and education in prison

<https://prisonerseducation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Getting-Connected-December-2025.pdf>

(Source: email from Prisoners' Education Trust, 13 Dec 2025)

“This briefing explores current digital provision in prisons more broadly, with a focus on platforms and devices (laptops, tablets or desktop computer terminals) which are relevant to education and learning. It makes recommendations for next steps which build on the work already undertaken over the past few years by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and the Ministry of Justice.” [p6]

Human Rights – Other Agencies

Examining 10 reasons to stay in the European Convention on Human Rights: informing the public debate in the UK

https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2025-12/Bonavero%20Report_Examining%2010%20Reasons%20to%20Stay%20in%20the%20ECHR.pdf

(Source: UK Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) Network *Network Bulletin*, 18 Dec 2025)

Important analysis of the current arguments:

“Opinion polls show that more people in the UK support staying in the ECHR than leaving, with 48% in favour and 26% against [...]

The UK has now reached a position in which a future government could withdraw from the ECHR, based on inaccurate or false premises and without an informed public debate about the benefits of the ECHR and the consequences of withdrawal.

It is through evidence-based debate that human rights law and policy evolve in democratic societies, as they have always evolved with the changing times, and as they must continue to develop in response to the challenging landscape the UK faces at home and internationally. Yet reasons for the UK to remain in the Convention are largely missing from media reporting and political discussion. This report identifies and examines 10 reasons why the UK should stay in the ECHR, and addresses the counterarguments, based on a comprehensive review of evidence derived from a wide range of sources.” [p3]

Diversity in books and other materials for children & young people

“IBC reveals 2026 Awards longlist”

https://www.inclusivebooksforchildren.org/blog/ibc-reveals-2026-awards-longlist?utm_source=Klaviyo&utm_medium=email&kx=TsA_i8KotcpmEZZ5yGuK5JrXEIzYjiPVm_E4I7rzuFc.WQjvCN

(Source: email from Inclusive Books for Children, 10 Dec 2025)

“We are thrilled to announce the longlist for our 2026 Awards, recognising outstanding inclusive books for young readers, published in the UK.

The annual awards celebrate excellence in storytelling and representation across three categories: baby and toddler books (ages one to three), picture books (ages three to seven) and children’s fiction (ages five to nine).”

Health & Wellbeing issues – Other Agencies

Wellbeing While Waiting (‘INSPYRE’): evidence summary

<https://sbbresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/WWW-Complete-Evidence-Summary-FINAL.pdf>

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

“This briefing describes key results from Wellbeing While Waiting (WWW), a study launched in 2022 by UCL’s Social Biobehavioural Research Group, funded by the Prudence Trust.

Young people referred for NHS mental health support currently face long waiting lists, and up to three quarters experience deterioration in their mental health while waiting. Social prescribing offers an opportunity to help young people in this situation, by connecting them to non-medical forms of community support such as skills development, peer support, befriending and social or cultural activities.”

Migration issues – Other Agencies

Stripped: the citizenship divide

<https://reprieve.org/uk/2025/12/11/stripped-the-citizenship-divide/>

(Source: email from Reprieve, 11 Dec 2025)

“The Runnymede Trust and Reprieve’s analysis finds that legislation and government practice have created a fundamentally racist, two-tier citizenship regime that undermines community strength and is at odds with the foundational British principle of equality before the law. Under this regime, the legal rights of people with a connection to another country are less secure than those without such connections and can be taken away with a stroke of the Home Secretary’s pen.” [p6]

The report also helpfully outlines the historical background to deprivation of citizenship:

“Deprivation of citizenship was first enshrined in UK statute in 1914 with the outbreak of the First World War [...] However, it fell almost completely into disuse across Europe following the Second World War, in revulsion at the Nazis stripping the citizenship of Jewish citizens of Germany.

From 1973-2002 there were no deprivations of UK citizenship, other than for fraud [...] Mass citizenship stripping began in 2010, and since then more than 200 people have been stripped of their citizenship on ‘public good’ grounds [...] The only countries to remove citizenship more often than the UK during this period were Bahrain and Nicaragua [...]” [p8]

“Germany’s plan to deport Syrian refugees echoes 1980s effort to repatriate Turkish guest workers”

https://theconversation.com/germanys-plan-to-deport-syrian-refugees-echoes-1980s-effort-to-repatriate-turkish-guest-workers-271475?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Europe%20Newsletter%20-%203612036885&utm_content=Europe%20Newsletter%20-%203612036885+CID_9eb90b5635b65437aded52e7cef1ec84&utm_source=campaign_monitor_europe&utm_term=Germanys%20plan%20to%20deport%20Syrian%20refugees%20echoes%201980s%20effort%20to%20repatriate%20Turkish%20guest%20workers

(Source: *The Conversation*, 11 Dec 2025)

“For 14 years while Syria’s brutal civil war raged, Germany provided a safe haven for those fleeing the violence. Now, a year after that conflict ended with the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, many in Germany – including the country’s leader – want those same Syrians gone.”

“What Labour’s migration reforms mean for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers”

https://theconversation.com/what-labours-migration-reforms-mean-for-lgbtq-asylum-seekers-271239?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20December%2011%202025%20-%203612736882&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20December%2011%202025%20-%203612736882+CID_de563726f5253fc97e5dd2148d3b0a53&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=What%20Labours%20migration%20reforms%20mean%20for%20LGBTQ%20asylum%20seekers

(Source: *The Conversation*, 11 Dec 2025)

“The UK government’s recently-announced plan to overhaul the asylum system rests on the idea that protection for refugees should be temporary and subject to regular review.

Currently, refugees are usually granted five years’ permission to stay, after which they can apply for settlement (indefinite leave to remain). Under the new proposals, recognised refugees would first receive ‘core protection’ – 30 months’ leave, renewable after review. The government is also proposing a system that would make some people wait 20 years for settlement.

Like in Norway and Denmark, the UK is proposing allowing refugee status to be revoked and people deported if their country of origin is deemed to have become ‘safe’. In 2021, Denmark judged parts of Syria safe to return to and revoked or refused renewals for hundreds of Syrians, even as charities warned that returnees still faced serious risk.

For LGBTQ+ people, these plans present particular risks that could undermine their safety and ability to live openly.”

Displaced Ukrainians in the UK: experiences and future intentions – policy report

<https://blog.bham.ac.uk/supportukrainians/wp-content/uploads/sites/149/2025/11/Displaced-Ukrainians-Experiences-and-Intentions-FINAL-for-print.pdf>

(Source: West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership *Newsletter*, Nov 2025)

“Since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, over 218,000 displaced Ukrainians have arrived in the UK under the Ukraine visa schemes. These initially offered three-year stays, later supplemented by the Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE), which now grants an additional 18 months of temporary residence, with a further extension of 2 years announced. However, there remains no pathway to

permanent settlement, and time spent under these schemes does not count toward the UK's 10-year Long Route to permanent residency. A nationwide survey of nearly 3,000 Ukrainians reveals the deep emotional and practical toll of this uncertainty. Respondents report widespread challenges in employment, housing, education, and mental health, with many struggling to secure jobs or leases due to their temporary status.” [p4]

Migrants and modern slavery protection in the UK

<https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-Briefing-Migrants-and-modern-slavery-protection-in-the-UK.pdf>

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

The latest “Briefing” looks at “[...] the relationship between migrants and the modern slavery identification and support system in the UK, known as the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).” [p1]

“English classes are being targeted by anti-immigration protesters – but they’ve been politicised for years”

https://theconversation.com/english-classes-are-being-targeted-by-anti-immigration-protesters-but-theyve-been-politicised-for-years-270872?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20December%2019%202025%20-%203626837041&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20December%2019%202025%20-%203626837041+CID_ed7f3a760bafda4dfc4aea3eb89c0870&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=English%20classes%20are%20being%20targeted%20by%20anti-immigration%20protesters%20%20but%20theyve%20been%20politicised%20for%20years

(Source: *The Conversation*, 22 Dec 2025)

Important article, showing how anti-immigration protests have shifted:

“Just as the protests outside asylum hotels of summer 2025 faded from headlines, some anti-immigration groups turned their attention to another target: English classes.

On November 24, a protest was organised outside a primary school in Glasgow, in opposition to an Esol (English for speakers of other languages) class being delivered for parents of children at the school. Holding placards reading ‘protect our kids’, protesters claimed that these classes presented a danger to children at the school.”

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

“Libraries Rising”

<https://librariesrising.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/>

Just in case you haven't seen this:

“Libraries Rising is the national network for leaders in children’s, public and Schools Library Services. We believe that children and young people need safe spaces and real-life connections to support the demands of modern life. Together, we’re working with partners and supporters to create libraries for today’s world, where children and young people feel understood, empowered and inspired.

With our members we create inclusive spaces where young minds discover stories and discover themselves. The potential is limitless. We create new initiatives and shares ideas that speak to children and young people today, tomorrow, and years from now. Made up of regional networks, we work in partnership to drive collective national impact. We are creating libraries of tomorrow with children and young people today.

Libraries Rising is the working name of Association of Senior Children’s and Education Librarians. (Our former working name was ASCEL).”

[Taken from: <https://librariesrising.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/>]

“Why your local library might surprise you”

https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/blog/why-your-local-library-might-surprise-you?utm_campaign=4848281_Fortnightly%2017%20December%202025%20-%20MEMBER&utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20Chartered%20Institute%20of%20Library%20and%20%20Information%20Professionals&dm_i=6WFS.2VWYH,9VBO9,81KLC,1

(Source: *News from CILIP*, 17 Dec 2025)

ACE blogpost:

“As we celebrate 175 years of public libraries, Luke Burton – our national director for libraries – reflects on the why they are still so important to communities across the country, and why a library card is actually about opportunity and potential – as well as to a world of reading.”