

The Network Newsletter – Ebulletin 430, 14 January 2026

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

“Focusing on surface-level diversity is stopping Britain from becoming truly multicultural”

https://theconversation.com/focusing-on-surface-level-diversity-is-stopping-britain-from-becoming-truly-multicultural-268013?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%206%202026%20-%203633137103&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%206%202026%20-%203633137103+CID_86abbfaacf358283057314b5deb179&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Focusing%20on%20surface-level%20diversity%20is%20stopping%20Britain%20from%20becoming%20truly%20multicultural

(Source: *The Conversation*, 6 Jan 2026)

Interesting and thoughtful article which argues that advances in multiculturalism are being held back by what the author calls “multicolourism”:

“[...] many politicians and culture warriors obsess over the colour of faces in adverts, media and public spaces.”

National Year of Reading 2026

“5 things you need to know about the National Year of Reading 2026”

https://literacytrust.org.uk/blog/5-things-you-need-to-know-about-the-national-year-of-reading-2026/?utm_campaign=4091154_Education%20Resources%20and%20Training%20%2F1%2F26&utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20National%20Literacy%20Trust&dm_i=7RFL,2FO_R6,3IMFBW,4ZOK2,1

(Source: National Literacy Trust *Training & Resources*, Jan 2026)

New blogpost from the National Literacy Trust.

“How to share books with children to help them love reading”

https://theconversation.com/how-to-share-books-with-children-to-help-them-love-reading-271023?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%209%202026%20-%203638737169&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%209%202026%20-%203638737169+CID_e2f8a2815b78be9f6c7613567dd3eca0&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=How%20to%20share%20books%20with%20children%20to%20help%20them%20love%20reading

(Source: *The Conversation*, 12 Jan 2026)

Just in case you haven't seen this interesting article which looks at the importance of shared reading with children.

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

“Community Life Survey 2024/25: Headline findings”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202425-annual-publication/community-life-survey-202425-headline-findings>

(Source: *Heritage Update*, 559, 8 Jan 2026)

Released 10 Dec 2025:

“The Community Life Survey is a nationally representative annual survey of adults (16+) in England that tracks the latest trends and developments across areas related to encouraging social action and empowering communities. This release provides estimates reported during the period of October 2024 to March 2025 (2024/25).”

It reports on:

- Loneliness and support networks
- Neighbourhood and community
- Volunteering and charitable giving
- Civic engagement and social action.

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

“Martin Lewis: Don't trust councils' online info about the Council Tax Carers Discount – one in five English and Welsh councils get it wrong”

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2026/01/carer-council-tax-investigation-martin-lewis/>

(Source: *Later Life AGEnda*, 13 Jan 2026)

Shocking:

“An investigation by MoneySavingExpert.com (MSE) into 'the councils that couldn't Care less' has found that, in a spot check, at least 69 councils in England and Wales have information about the live-in Carer Council Tax discount on their websites that incorrectly indicates far fewer people are eligible than really are. This is likely to be putting off some of the millions of unpaid Carers from claiming what they're legally entitled to.”

Community cohesion – Other Agencies

Community powered neighbourhoods: how community anchor organisations can transform our places

<https://locality.org.uk/assets/images/Community-powered-neighbourhoods.pdf>

(Source: Community Libraries Network Newsletter, Jan 2026)

This new report from Locality focuses on “anchor” organisations “[...] the most well-established community organisations, who employ staff, manage assets, provide services and support local enterprise.” [p3]

“To put community anchor organisations at the heart of a new age of neighbourhoods, devolution can't just be about the public sector 'letting go'. More important is that we support communities to 'power up', so they can change their own neighbourhoods themselves. To do this we're calling for a bold new approach to community ownership. We need ambitious, long-term, coordinated investment in community assets. This

can strengthen the foundations of community power and enable community anchors to be true partners with state, rather than simply providers of services.” [p4]

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

Art cure: the science of how the arts transform our health

Further info at: <https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/462340/art-cure-by-fancourt-daisy/9781529935530>

NB Charged-for publication

“A groundbreaking exposé showing how the arts – alongside diet, sleep, exercise and nature – are the forgotten fifth pillar of health” [Taken from email from The Social Biobehavioural Research Group]

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

“Inclusive Heritage Advice Hub”

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/inclusion/>

(Source: LinkedIn)

This important resource was launched in Jun 2025 – apologies for being slow to highlight it.

“The Inclusive Heritage Advice Hub is part of Historic England's commitment to supporting the heritage sector in becoming more diverse.

It features in-depth sections with a wealth of case studies and digestible resources, helpful for any organisation looking to celebrate inclusive heritage and ensure their work is as diverse and inclusive as possible.”

Its current advice sections include:

- “Inclusion in the Workplace”,
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/inclusion/workplace/>
- “Supporting and Surveying Heritage Sector Workforces”,
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/inclusion/sector/>
- “Inclusive Boards and Diverse Trustees”,
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/inclusion/boards/>
- “Working with Diverse Groups”,
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/inclusion/audiences/>
- “Exploring Diverse Histories”,
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/inclusion/histories/>
- “Training and Professional Development”,
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/inclusion/training/>

- “Disability Access to Heritage”,
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/inclusion/disability-access/>.

This last set of advice is very useful, including sections on:

- “Understanding the Experiences of Disabled People”
- “Training and Skills for Disability Inclusion”
- “Welcoming Disabled Visitors to Heritage Places”.

Finally, there is a set of “Inclusive Heritage Case Studies”,
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/inclusion/case-studies/> which includes examples of:

- Making heritage spaces and content accessible and welcoming
- Broadening participation and representation
- Creating inclusive programming and engagement.

Older people and ageism issues – Other Agencies

“Growing numbers of over-60s facing homelessness, charities warn”

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/jan/03/growing-numbers-over-60s-homelessness-charities-warn>

(Source: *Later Life AGEnda*, 5 Jan 2026)

“The housing crisis has reached the country’s oldest generations, charities have warned, with a growing number of people over the age of 60 seeking help for homelessness.

Housing charities said they had seen cases of people over-60 developing health problems from being forced to sleep in their car for months, having to sleep on camp beds in emergency shelters and seeking homelessness support even while suffering illnesses such as cancer.”

Migration issues – Other Agencies

“Afghan asylum seekers and refugees in the UK”

<https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/afghan-asylum-seekers-and-refugees-in-the-uk/>

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

Apologies for being slow to include this, but the info is still valuable background:

“This briefing examines the migration of Afghan asylum seekers and refugees to the UK. It presents statistics on the number of Afghans arriving via small boat, and those given protection in the UK under the three resettlement schemes for Afghans – the Afghan Relocation Route (ARR), the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). The UK government

closed the Afghan resettlement schemes to all new applicants in July 2025.”

“Bristol Refugee Rights: Supporting refugees and asylum seekers through rising hostility”

https://www.transformingsociety.co.uk/2025/12/15/bristol-refugee-rights-supporting-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-through-rising-hostility/?utm_source=Bristol+University+Press%2FPolicy+Press+sign+up+list&utm_campaign=804c99851c-TS+ICYM+Jan+26&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-7383c3ff8d-129850705

(Source: Bristol University Press “Transforming Society” blog, 6 Jan 2026)

Set in the current grim climate, this is a positive piece about Bristol Refugee Rights:

“At Bristol Refugee Rights, we support refugees and those seeking asylum to feel welcome, live free of poverty and rebuild their lives. We provide crisis and wellbeing support through our Welcome Centre, while our Advice service provides casework and advocacy to resolve the underlying causes of poverty, homelessness and destitution. Our specialist services provide tailored support to some of the most vulnerable sanctuary seekers in our community – Pride Without Borders for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and Project CLEAR for those facing multiple disadvantages (e.g. severe health conditions, disabilities, long-term homelessness and survivors of domestic violence).”

“English lessons shouldn’t be an immigration test – why the UK’s new policy risks deepening exclusion”

https://theconversation.com/english-lessons-shouldnt-be-an-immigration-test-why-the-uks-new-policy-risks-deepening-exclusion-268158?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%202014%202026%20-%203641437190&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%2014%202026%20-%203641437190+CID_92bb43ef586c8b7d6e78958ce6a7bd56&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=English%20lessons%20shouldnt%20be%20an%20immigration%20test%20%20why%20the%20UKs%20new%20policy%20risks%20deepening%20exclusion

(Source: *The Conversation*, 14 Jan 2026)

Article which raises some key questions:

“What happens when learning English stops being a bridge into society and starts to feel like a test of belonging you can fail?

That is the question raised by the UK government’s proposed new immigration policy, which would raise English-language requirements for most visa routes, with the aim of improving integration and workforce readiness.”

It concludes:

“By replacing the language of rights and participation – teaching English not just for jobs, but to empower migrants to understand, claim and exercise their rights and engage in civic life – with conditional belonging,

the proposed policy risks reinforcing inequality rather than reducing it. Presenting linguistic mastery as proof of national worth corrodes the democratic values language education should uphold.”

LGBTQ+ issues – Other Agencies

“Safe Warm Spaces Are Not a Luxury — They Are a Political Responsibility”

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/safe-warm-spaces-luxury-political-responsibility-dr-tony-malone-d22ee/?trackingId=YT9LodiFFd8JLO4%2Bw8zYzw%3D%3D>

(Source: LinkedIn)

Important challenge from Tony Malone:

“In recent winters, local authorities across the UK have promoted ‘warm spaces’ — libraries, community centres and halls where people can stay warm without cost. These initiatives matter. But they are often temporary, unevenly distributed, and not always safe or welcoming for LGBTQIA+ women and girls.”

Broader issues – Other Agencies

Challenges facing charities in divided times: findings from our member listening sessions

<https://ncvo-app-wagtail-mediaa721a567-uwkfinin077j.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/challenges-facing-charities-in-divided-times-report.pdf>

(Source: Museums Association email updates, 9 Jan 2026)

Just in case you haven’t seen this important round-up of the issues charities (and other organisations) are facing.

The listening sessions identified four key themes:

- A pervasive climate of fear
- Operational disruption and forced invisibility
- Direct targeting and abuse
- Increasing internal tensions

and the report looks at the action required to start dealing with all this.

“Want to read more? Two experts give their tips on what you can do”

https://theconversation.com/want-to-read-more-two-experts-give-their-tips-on-what-you-can-do-269450?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%209%202026%20-%203636837138&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%209%202026%20-%203636837138+CID_3e5f745729253bd58f85d7971f269dff&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Want%20to%20read%20more%20Two%20experts%20give%20their%20tips%20on%20what%20you%20can%20do

(Source: *The Conversation*, 9 Jan 2026)

Interesting and practical guide by Paty Paliokosta (Associate Professor of Special and Inclusive Education, Kingston University) and Alison Baverstock (Professor of Publishing, Kingston University).