

The Network Newsletter – Ebulletin 432, 5 March 2026

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

Why reading matters a local authority toolkit

<https://readingagency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Reading-Advocacy-Toolkit-3.pdf>

(Source: The Reading Agency *Adult Reading News*, 28 Jan 2026)

Just in case you haven't seen this toolkit:

“Developed with support from Arts Council England, this toolkit is designed to help position libraries centrally within the National Year of Reading and support fundraising and advocacy to amplify the library reading offer. It aims to give public libraries the language and tools to show how reading delivers against key local authority priorities such as health and wellbeing, community understanding and integration, employment, loneliness reduction, and skills and learning; positioning libraries' work with reading not just within the service itself but as a tool for delivering priority outcomes for the whole local authority.” [p1]

Cost of living crisis/poverty – Other Agencies

Cost of Living Action

<https://www.costoflivingaction.org.uk/>

(Source: email from The Equality Trust, 19 Feb 2026)

Launch of a new campaign:

“Cost of Living Action is made up of 38 civil society organisations, trade unions and grassroots groups, united around a series of practical demands to reduce costs, increase incomes and introduce fairer and better taxes on wealth.”

The campaign's first steps are:

- “ensuring everyone has access to the income they need to live well;
- ensuring essentials are affordable; and
- rebalancing our system to more fairly tax the wealthiest.” [Taken from email]

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

"Revealed: Women suffer most from spiralling court backlog"

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/crisis-prisons-remand-overcrowding-mental-health-uk-politics--women-england-wales/>

(Source: email from openDemocracy, 2 Feb 2026)

Just in case you haven't seen this article from openDemocracy, headline findings:

“Women disproportionately locked up as number of English and Welsh prisoners held on remand rises by 44% in 10 years”

Community cohesion – Other Agencies

“Reclaiming Britain: the nation against ethno-nationalism”

Blogpost: https://www.ippr.org/articles/the-nation-against-ethnonationalism?mc_cid=3343605e22&mc_eid=fbc917e5f6

Press release: <https://www.ippr.org/media-office/revealed-shared-values-still-define-britishness-for-most-but-ethno-nationalist-views-are-rising-fast>

(Source: IPPR *The Progressive Insider*, 30 Jan 2026)

Important blogpost outlining new research results:

“Since the 1990s, progressives enjoyed considerable success in disentangling the politics of nation from the nationalist right, offering more inclusive visions of community and belonging. Today, those achievements are under attack. Used to opponents who challenge them mainly on grounds of economic equality, progressives now find themselves locked in conflict with those who reject far more basic tenets of human equality.

‘there has been a notable rise over the past two years in the number of people who think being “truly British” is something you are born with rather than something you can become” [Taken from blogpost]

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

“New online hub helping partnerships promote wellbeing through archive exploration”

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/stories/online-hub-helping-promote-wellbeing-through-archive-exploration>

(via LinkedIn)

Heritage Fund article about “Change Minds” “[...] run by The Restoration Trust in partnership with Norfolk Record Office, uses heritage as a form of cultural therapy for people living with or recovering from mental health problems.”

As the article says: “Heritage can make a significant, positive contribution to how we feel about our lives.”

Health & Wellbeing issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Health and Social Care Committee. *First 1000 days: a renewed focus – Fifth Report of Session 2024–26* [HC 802]

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhealth/802/report.html>

(Source: *Public Sector News*, 28 Jan 2026)

New report which focuses on the start of children’s lives – and finds that English children have “[...] some of the worst child health outcomes in Europe [...]”:

“The first 1,000 days of life—from conception to age two—are universally recognised as a critical window for child development. Positive early experiences shape brain development, emotional regulation and long-term health, while adversity during this period can lead to poorer outcomes across education, wellbeing and life chances. Investment in early intervention is highly cost-effective, yet England continues to record some of the worst child health outcomes in Europe, including rising obesity, uneven vaccination coverage and persistent inequalities.”

Health & Wellbeing issues – Other Agencies

Missing out: creative ageing and men

https://cdn.baringfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/BF_Creative-ageing-and-men_WEB-LR-3.pdf

(Source: *Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance Bulletin*, Jan 2026)

“This report looks at the participation of older men in creative ageing. It begins by defining terms and looking at the case for creative ageing giving the benefits for men and women. It gathers the admittedly limited evidence for the under-representation of men and suggests some possible reasons for this. It then looks at existing guidance as to how this can be remedied both for community projects in general and creative ageing projects in particular.

The heart of the report are 15 good practice examples targeting older men.

The report concludes with some observations around the scarcity of work in general, the lack of consideration of the diversity of men, the importance of the Men’s Sheds Movement, probable male preference for some arts forms, and the relevance of health inequalities.” [p5]

“Evidence hub: What drives health inequalities?”

<https://www.health.org.uk/evidence-hub>

(Source: *Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance Bulletin*, Jan 2026)

New from the Health Foundation, this hub:

“[...] brings together data, insights and analysis exploring how the circumstances in which we live shape our health.

Good health is important for both individuals and society as a whole, but not everyone has the same opportunities for good health. Extensive research has shown that differences in social and economic circumstances lead to deep inequalities in health outcomes.” [Taken from: <https://www.health.org.uk/about-the-evidence-hub>]

“Inequality and health: Lost in the mists of time?”

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/inequalities/2026/01/28/inequality-and-health-lost-in-the-mists-of-time-social-stress-mortality-life-expectancy/>

(Source: email from The Equality Trust, Jan 2026)

New blog post by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett:

“Inequality does not behave like a toxin that produces a sharp spike in mortality after a fixed incubation period. It behaves more like a fog that gradually seeps into every corner of social life, altering trajectories rather than triggering events. Expecting to see clear effects in brief changes over time in national mortality data is to misunderstand the nature of the process itself.

Inequality has left such a deep imprint on health and wellbeing not because it suddenly kills, but because it slowly reshapes how people live, relate, cope, and age – until the damage can no longer be hidden, even by the most impressive achievements of modern medicine.”

Neurodivergence issues – Other Agencies

“Schools aren’t designed for autistic children – these are the sensory challenges they face”

https://theconversation.com/schools-arent-designed-for-autistic-children-these-are-the-sensory-challenges-they-face-273498?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20February%209%202026%20-%203668137479&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20February%209%202026%20-%203668137479+CID_f9a0e437bdd31788cdb4d0aaa2e7fbf0&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Schools%20arent%20designed%20for%20autistic%20children%20%20these%20are%20the%20sensory%20challenges%20they%20face

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

Interesting background article:

“Our schools and education system have not been designed for autistic children, who have neurological or thinking styles that diverge from what society sees as typical.”

Migration issues – Other Agencies

The facts about sanctuary

https://cityofsanctuary.org/facts/?fbclid=IwY2xjawPoFs9leHRuA2FlbQlxMABicmIkETBVVIRyaVJrMURSMGFVaVFuc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODlwMDg5MgABHp4oVwlfY0nSi5JUEWqWKFVU7YJmBphVRIKwSprGa9Rmj9aHSvFaSaYmc6_aem_057MeUw05s_mwukhAfpqeg

New resource from City of Sanctuary:

“The Facts about Sanctuary provides clear, accessible information about people seeking sanctuary in the UK. But facts alone don’t change hearts and minds. This guide encourages you to bring your own thoughts, experiences, and humanity into the conversation – because connection is what truly transforms understanding.”

Complete the form on the webpage, and they will email you with the resource.

Brexit and immigration: the arc of the pendulum

Report: <https://fedtrust.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Brexit-and-Immigration-The-Arc-of-the-Pendulum.pdf>

Press release: <https://fedtrust.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Press-Release-Brexit-and-Immigration-The-Arc-of-the-Pendulum.pdf>

(Source: email from the Federal Trust, 29 Jan 2026)

New report from The Constitution Society and the Federal Trust, which:

“[...] tackles the role immigration policy played in causing Brexit, and that Brexit has since played in driving UK immigration policy [...]

The restrictiveness of today’s immigration policy proposals goes far beyond anything envisaged by Brexit. Some are even at odds with it. Yet Brexit can also be seen to have fuelled these developments, ‘take back control’ living on as an everlasting slogan for a quest for immigration control now pushing to greater extremes.

Politically, the UK’s huge pendulum swing on immigration policy has now delivered a mirror image of the more liberal immigration era of the 2000s.” [Taken from Press release]

“The Constitution Society is an independent educational foundation founded in 2009. It promotes public understanding of the UK constitution and works to encourage informed debate between legislators, academics and the public about proposals for constitutional change.” [Report, p4]

“The Federal Trust is a think tank that studies the interactions between regional, national, European and global levels of government.” [Report, p4]

“‘It takes a town to raise a family’: the community sponsors supporting refugees in the UK”

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/jan/07/community-sponsors-supporting-refugees-uk>

Just in case you didn’t see this article which looks at community sponsorship schemes which “[...] provides refugees with wraparound support from a group of residents who agree to fundraise, source affordable accommodation, and help with the basic challenges of life in a new country such as learning English, accessing work, study or benefits, and registering with a GP and dentist.”

“Are asylum seekers really more likely to commit violent crime in the UK?”

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/dec/14/truth-about-crimes-committed-by-foreign-nationals-uk>

This is also an interesting, thought-provoking piece:

“As claims spread suggesting men from certain backgrounds have a propensity to commit certain crimes, here’s why the statistics fail to provide the full picture”

“EU Migration to and from the UK”

https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/eu-migration-to-and-from-the-uk/?mc_cid=e427089de9&mc_eid=5bedccdc31

(Source: *Migration Observations: the newsletter from the University of Oxford's Migration Observatory*, Jan 2026)

Latest “Briefing” with the following ‘headlines’:

“Since 2022, more EU citizens have left the UK than have arrived. Net migration of EU nationals was -70,000 in the year ending 30 June 2025. Around 155,000 EU citizens emigrated from the UK, while 85,000 immigrated. Most EU nationals who immigrated to the UK during this period already had status under the EUSS, around 53% of the total. This was a consistent pattern in recent years – as discussed below, relatively few EU nationals have been granted visas under the post-Brexit immigration system.”

“People crossing the English Channel in small boats”

<https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/people-crossing-the-english-channel-in-small-boats/>

(Source: *Migration Observations: the newsletter from the University of Oxford's Migration Observatory*, Jan 2026)

This “Briefing” includes some useful info, for example:

“A small number of nationalities make up a large share of people crossing the Channel in small boats. From 2018 to 2024, nationals of six countries accounted for 70% of all arrivals – Iran (17%), Afghanistan (15%), Iraq (12%), Albania (10%), Syria (9%), and Eritrea (8%).”

“Mahmood to stop study visas from four countries due to 'abuse'”

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2jy74895eo>

(via LinkedIn)

Just in case you haven't seen this:

“The UK government will stop issuing study visas to people from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar and Sudan from this month, Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood has said, as well as stopping skilled work visas to Afghans.

The Home Office said the action was being taken due to what it said was widespread visa abuse.

According to official figures, people from the four countries were the most likely to make an asylum claim after originally coming to the UK to study.

‘The government is clamping down on visa abuse so the UK can maintain its ability and proud tradition of helping those genuinely in need,’ a government spokesperson added.

In its release, the government said asylum claims from people who had originally travelled to the UK legally – to do something like studying – had more than tripled between 2021 and 2025.”

As people have commented, the article fails to point out that you cannot claim asylum in the UK until you are here ...

LGBTQ+ issues – Other Agencies

“People from sexual minorities really do die younger, new data suggests”

https://theconversation.com/people-from-sexual-minorities-really-do-die-younger-new-data-suggests-273415?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%2026%202026%20-%203655137341&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%2026%202026%20-%203655137341+CID_adf3f1b5c74478478c0668be85d67378&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=People%20from%20sexual%20minorities%20really%20do%20die%20younger%20new%20data%20suggests

(Source: *The Conversation*, 27 Jan 2026)

“New data has revealed something the UK has never seen before: clear evidence that sexual minority people die earlier, and at higher rates, than their straight or heterosexual peers [...]

The headline result is difficult to ignore. People identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or another minority sexual orientation were 30% more likely to die from any cause during the study period than those identifying as straight or heterosexual. In age-standardised terms, this equates to 982.8 deaths per 100,000 people in the LGB+ group, compared with 752.6 per 100,000 among straight or heterosexual people.”

“Unsafe and unprotected: how the UK is failing LGBTQI+ people in immigration detention”

<https://www.rainbowmigration.org.uk/news/unsafe-and-unprotected/>

(Source: email from Rainbow Migration, 28 Jan 2026)

New blogpost from Rainbow Migration, which “[...] exposes a dangerous gap between the government’s promises to protect LGBTQI+ people and the reality they face inside immigration detention.” [Taken from email]

Broader issues – Other Agencies

“I research the harm that can come to teenagers on social media. I don’t support a ban”

https://theconversation.com/i-research-the-harm-that-can-come-to-teenagers-on-social-media-i-dont-support-a-ban-273835?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%2022%202026%20-%203650537286&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20January%2022%202026%20-%203650537286+CID_1f6001fd22936593c1af6c0a60ae2263&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=I%20research%20the%20harm%20that%20can

[%20come%20to%20teenagers%20on%20social%20media%20I%20dont%20support%20a%20ban](#)

(Source: *The Conversation*, 22 Jan 2026)

Interesting article which makes some strong points, rooting social media use in a wider context:

“If harms are socially rooted, then technical restrictions alone are unlikely to solve them. A ban treats social media as the problem, rather than asking deeper questions about why certain behaviours – harassment, shaming, misogyny, exploitation – occur in the first place.

We also need to ask why digital spaces have become the default arenas for meeting so many needs in the first place. Over years of funding cuts to youth services, reduced community spaces and intensified academic pressures, online platforms have filled a gap [...]

They did not simply colonise young people’s lives. They were invited into a vacuum created by adult policy decisions. A ban addresses the symptom of these developments while leaving the wider contexts untouched.”

“Co-creation with young people isn’t a ‘nice to have’ - it’s essential”

https://www.cypnow.co.uk/content/comment/co-creation-with-young-people-isn-t-a-nice-to-have-it-s-essential?utm_campaign=CYPnow%20Update%2028%2F01%2F26&utm_content=&utm_term=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cypnow.co.uk%2Fcontent%2Fcomment%2Fco-creation-with-young-people-isn-t-a-nice-to-have-it-s-essential&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Children%20%26%20Young%20People%20Now

(Source: *Children & Young People Now Update*, 28 Jan 2026)

Just in case you didn’t see this article to celebrate the launch of Libraries Rising:

“Libraries are leading the way in demonstrating how public spaces and services can be transformed by embracing co-creation with young people, says Tabitha Witherick Macaulay.”