

The Network Newsletter – Ebulletin 433, 1 April 2026

Events

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

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

“Good Things Foundation, Autotrader and GMCA unite for landmark digital inclusion push”

<https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/discover/our-news/our-news-2026/autotrader-gmca-landmark-di-plan>

(Source: *Good News from Good Things Foundation*, Mar 2026)

Just in case you haven't seen this:

“Good Things, Autotrader, and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority have united in a partnership to address digital exclusion, bringing together regional leadership, national expertise, and private sector insight to develop a UK-first, long-term plan for affordable digital access in Greater Manchester [...]

The project, which will also involve academic research input from Professor Simeon Yates at the University of Liverpool, will develop a clear and coordinated pathway towards lasting change – strengthening Greater Manchester's position as a leading region tackling digital exclusion, and helping generate learnings that can benefit communities across the UK.”

Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion – Other Agencies

The RACE report: 2025 report

https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/623c7359fd38194a54b48eaa/697fb17455ac4fdee6014ab7_The%20RACE%20Report%202025_Full%20report_FINAL.pdf

(Source: email from RSPB, 14 Feb 2026)

Interesting background reading:

“The environment, climate, sustainability and conservation sector is unrepresentative of the racial and ethnic diversity seen across the UK. The RACE Report (Racial Action for the Climate Emergency) seeks to drive diversity and inclusion in charities and funders working on these issues through data transparency.” [p4]

Health & Wellbeing issues – Other Agencies

“This is a life and death story for the UK – so why is it being brushed under the carpet?”

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/mar/06/uk-death-healthy-life-expectancy-decline-state>

Just in case you haven't seen this article which highlights that the latest figures from the ONS show:

“[...] a child born this morning in Britain can expect to be in good health only until they are 61. The last 20 years of their life will be blighted by illness: dodgy hearts, painful joints, an inability to get about. Our healthy life expectancy has been dropping for years; it is now the lowest since 2011, when records began.”

The report, *Healthy life expectancy, UK: between 2011 to 2013 and 2022 to 2024*, is at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/bulletins/healthstatelifeexpectanciesuk/between2011to2013and2022to2024>.

Disability issues – Other Agencies

Platform for change: making rail journeys more accessible for people with sight loss

Press release: <https://www.rnib.org.uk/news/platform-for-change-new-rnib-report-reveals-barriers-to-accessible-train-travel-for-blind-and-partially-sighted-people/>

Report as pdf: https://media.rnib.org.uk/documents/Platform_for_Change_-_Making_rail_journeys_more_accessible_for_people_with_sight_loss_uAggK3I.pdf

The report is also available to download as a Word document.

(Source: LinkedIn)

“Accessible train travel is essential for blind and partially sighted people to live independently, get to work, visit friends and family, and access healthcare. Yet, RNIB’s new report, Platform for Change: Making rail journeys more accessible for people with sight loss, shows that too many journeys are still impacted or prevented by unnecessary barriers such as inconsistent passenger assistance, difficult ticket buying methods and the inaccessible design of trains and stations.” [Taken from press release]

Migration issues – Other Agencies

“Read these words from 100 years ago about immigrants in Britain – and see how history is chillingly repeating itself”

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/mar/05/shabana-mahmood-immigrants-britain-history>

(Source: *Left Foot Forward*, 5 Mar 2026)

Just in case you haven’t seen this article by George Monbiot, pointing up lessons from history:

“Our political memory fails us. We treat government policies as if we’re seeing them for the very first time. But much of what appears to be novel has deep historical roots. If we fail to understand those roots and the soil in which they grow, we will fail to resist the assaults on our humanity.”

“What is the Danish immigration model, and does it work?”

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/what-is-denmark-immigration-asylum-model-does-it-work-uk-starmer-migration-refugees/>

(Source: openDemocracy *Weekly Newsletter*, 7 Mar 2026)

Useful background info in this interview with Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen, Denmark's first-ever professor of migration and mobility law, who is the director of MOBILE, the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre of Excellence on Global Mobility Law, and the Nordic Asylum Law & Data Lab.

“What Denmark has done nationally is talked about as the ‘Danish model’ of immigration policy or immigration control. That model is sort of a conglomerate of more than 100 different legislative measures; some years, we’ve had more than 10 legislative changes to the Aliens Act in a year.

Each of them directly tightened almost all elements of Danish immigration policies, and the overarching logic has been two elements: the first is that, because of Denmark's position geographically – it's not a frontline country – we don't tend to do a lot of the kind of hard-edged migration control that some southern or eastern European countries are doing.

So it's been a lot of indirect deterrence. What Denmark has consistently pursued is to make conditions for arriving asylum seekers, refugees with status, all people in a return position, and rejected asylum seekers as unpalatable and as unattractive as possible. Some people have to wait years in order to be able to apply for family notifications. There have been restrictions on anything from housing during the asylum period, to [increasing] the fees you have to pay for applying for family reunification, cuts to social benefits and shortening of residence permits. There are also uncertainties around whether, if you then got a refugee status, that status would be revoked. Some refugees might face a situation where they'll be asked to return [to their home country], for instance, in the case of some of the Syrian refugees.”

“Stronger Together 2026-29”

Press release: https://togetherwithrefugees.org.uk/stronger-together-our-new-strategy-announced/?link_id=1&can_id=30e439a67211f81f4bbace156600453a&source=email-webinar-how-to-take-action-as-part-of-twrs-valentines-day-campaign-4&email_referrer=email_3136976&email_subject=our-new-strategy-stronger-together

Strategy outline: <https://togetherwithrefugees.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/TWR-Comms-strategy-one-pager-Feb-2026.pdf>

(Source: email from Together with Refugees, 12 Mar 2026)

Together with Refugees have just launched their new strategy:

“It sets out three key objectives:

1. **Mobilise and amplify community connection**, solidarity and collective action for a fair and compassionate asylum system, inspiring new and existing supporters.

2. **Promote a positive, inclusive narrative** that recognises refugees and people seeking asylum as valued and integral members of communities across the UK.
3. **Increase the collective impact** of our members by supporting and strengthening their skills and capacity to advocate for a fair and compassionate asylum system.” [taken from press release]

Safe Passage Explainer

<https://www.safepassage.org.uk/news/2026/3/10/shabana-mahmood-intensifies-her-attack-on-refugee-rights>

(Source: email from Safe Passage International, 10 Mar 2026)

Safe Passage summarise the latest changes to the refugee/asylum system proposed by the Home Secretary.

Earned Settlement: hostile immigration reforms – Not a Stranger Campaign Report

https://drive.google.com/file/d/16ITbRGNFNMLI8wuxjYFaE97b1gsOz1DR/view?link_id=8&can_id=30e439a67211f81f4bbace156600453a&source=email-march-newsletter-safety-on-trial-2&email_referrer=email_3142883&email_subject=march-newsletter-safety-on-trial

(Source: Migrants’ Rights Network *Newsletter*, Mar 2026)

New report from Migrants’ Rights Network and the Not a Stranger campaign, which focuses on the new proposals for “earned settlement”:

“The idea of ‘earned settlement’ is rooted in cruelty and creating more uncertainty for migrants. The new proposals will make migrants’ statuses even more insecure, with significant financial and mental health impacts on people affected by longer pathways to settlement.

In collaboration with the migrant-led Not a Stranger campaign, the Migrants’ Rights Network conducted a survey to understand migrants’ perspectives on the proposed changes.

The results are clear: the majority of survey respondents felt the ‘earned settlement’ proposals, as well as accompanying anti-migrant narratives, are worsening conditions for migrants.

We have compiled research findings to help inform communities and their allies, and empower them to challenge the cruel new proposals, including that:

- These proposals have made people feel unwelcome and isolated, and cause concern about immigration status, family separation, and access to public services
- Anti-immigrant narratives surrounding these proposals have amplified the isolation, anxiety, and lessened sense of belonging felt by migrants.

- 88% feel more anxious due to how migrants are portrayed by media or politicians, amplifying fears around racism and discrimination as a result. 92% of those surveyed see the public conversation as worsening
- While respondents emphasised a desire to feel connected to migrant communities, only 39% currently feel supported by their communities” [p2]

“Stop the Block on Talented Students from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar & Sudan”

https://cityofsanctuary.org/2026/03/19/stop-the-block-on-talented-students-from-afghanistan-cameroon-myanmar-sudan/?fbclid=IwY2xjawQqF3BleHRuA2FibQlxMABicmlkETF1QjF3RHF4aThsYWdwVXNnc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODlwMDg5MgABHsRz0N-uBcObYkbtTZpN5sRkw9B52dTzFhDpJSmuqnLC3yjod2vhNvX_HnUI_aem_jXzNKMo-PkRlpZw4ZGeGEw

Just in case you missed this:

“The Universities of Sanctuary network, which now represents over a third of UK universities, has raised serious concerns about the UK Home Office’s recent decision to impose an ‘emergency brake’ on student visas for nationals of Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar, and Sudan starting 26 March 2026.”

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

“Almost half of England’s library staff axed during austerity”

https://www.unison.org.uk/news/2026/03/almost-half-of-englands-library-staff-axed-during-austerity/?fbclid=IwY2xjawQogHJleHRuA2FibQlxMABicmlkETF1QjF3RHF4aThsYWdwVXNnc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODlwMDg5MgABHvIjDD5-Uwj9xAsLbemix13LGPBFs7QKA5UL9R_V-MmUUVrJctqgwRWi8gR_aem_Bse5n_49Pp9MDuMPBBKJCA

(Source: LinkedIn)

Press release from UNISON highlighting the shocking findings from their latest research:

“Research by the union, based on data provided by England’s councils, shows staffing levels fell by 47% between 2010 and 2025.”

The full report, *Closing chapters? The impact of austerity on council libraries*, is available at: <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2026/03/UNISON-Closing-Chapters-2026-.pdf>.

Raising the profile of prison libraries: final evaluation report

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/raising-profile-prison-libraries>

This report was published at the end of 2025 by ACE.

“Prison libraries are part of statutory provision within prisons, but they have a low profile and priority within many prison regimes. ‘Raising the Profile of Prison Libraries’ was developed in response to need for greater awareness of the benefits of prison libraries in supporting wider objectives within the criminal justice system. The project consisted of:

- An in-cell radio campaign for prisoners with the call to action to ‘visit your library’
 - Development of prison staff training on the benefits of library usage to improve access to the library service
 - A feasibility study for a through the gate volunteering-into-work in Newham and Croydon
 - A Stakeholder Board responsible for steering the dissemination and implementation of the project’s findings.”
- [p5]

The report is available to download from the ACE website.

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

Broader issues – Other Agencies

“Policy: Our response to the schools white paper”

https://literacytrust.org.uk/blog/policy-our-response-to-the-schools-white-paper/?utm_campaign=4289939_Literacy%20news%20March%202026_HL&utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20National%20Literacy%20Trust&dm_i=7RFL,2JY4Z,3IMFBW,5LOPR,1,0,0,0

(Source: National Literacy Trust *Literacy News*, 9 Mar 2026)

On 27 Feb, the NLT published a blogpost outlining their response to the White Paper, *Every child achieving and thriving*.

As they emphasise, this “[...] presents a significant opportunity to place literacy at the centre of education reform.”

The post ends with a key message:

“With sustained investment, aligned policy and strong local partnerships, this moment presents a genuine opportunity to ensure that every child, regardless of background, can achieve and thrive.”

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