The Network Newsletter – Ebulletin 446, 9 November 2026

Events

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

Climate emergency/the environment/sustainability – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

"England's cultural organisations unprepared to deal with extreme heat, survey finds"
https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2026/10/englands-cultural-organisations-unprepared-to-deal-with-extreme-heat-survey-finds/#msdynmkt_trackingcontext=a928fe05-980f-42c3-ab27-62636b480200
(Source: Museums Association email updates, 13 Oct 2026)
Important article:

> "Fewer than 1% of cultural organisations surveyed in England feel very prepared for future extreme heat, according to new research by Arts Council England (ACE).
>
> A survey by the arm's-length body has found that almost all (96%) of the 296 respondents were affected by this summer's heatwaves, citing staff wellbeing, falling visitor numbers and financial losses among their main concerns."

In addition:

> "The findings raise questions about the sector's ability to cope with future extreme heat. None of the respondents described their organisation as very prepared to deal with extreme heat, while 31% said they were mostly unprepared or not prepared at all."

The sector clearly needs to do more as the weather patterns seem set to continue.

Cost of living crisis/poverty – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

"Costs and 'lack of confidence' limit library use in deprived areas, research finds"
https://www.thebookseller.com/news/costs-and-lack-of-confidence-limit-library-use-in-deprived-areas-research-finds
(Source: *Public Libraries News*, 8 Nov 2026)

> "Hidden costs, travel issues and concerns around behaviour expectations are among the main barriers to library access among low-income families, according to research by Children North East and Libraries Connected."

This is a summary of the recent research report – the full report is available at: https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/sites/default/files/2026-11/Poverty%20Proofing%20Libraries%20-%20Findings%20and%20Framework%20-%20FINAL.pdf.

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

"A prison library is about so much more than books, it can be a lifeline."
https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/prison-library-so-much-more-than-books-can-lifeline-serco-buquf/
(Source: *News from CILIP*, 4 Nov 2026)
Just in case you haven't seen this post:

> "HMP Thameside librarian, Neil Barclay, talks about how the library can offer lessons that extend beyond the page - creating opportunities for self-development, connection, confidence, and a sense of identity. And above all, giving people a space to be themselves and imagine a different future."

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

"Millions of UK households struggle with the cost of getting online as roadmap launches to tackle digital poverty"
https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/policy-and-research/research-and-evidence/research-2026/greater-manchester-action-roadmap
(Source: *Good Things Foundation Newsletter*, Oct 2026)

> "The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), Autotrader, Good Things Foundation, and the University of Liverpool have today launched a five-year roadmap for action on making internet access affordable for all Greater Manchester residents […]
>
> Shaped by stakeholder workshops and people with lived experience, the roadmap sets out a practical, evidence-based agenda for the future, suggesting 'quick wins', short-to-medium term, and longer term actions in four focus areas:
>
> - Social housing: towards ensuring every social housing tenant can access affordable broadband, by tackling infrastructure barriers, strengthening the Greater Manchester Good Landlord Charter, and embedding connectivity into new housing developments.
> - Cost-of-living support: towards ensuring low-income households can access connectivity that meets their needs, through effective use of discretionary funds (such as the current Crisis & Resilience Fund), and local promotion of national social tariffs.
> - Community spaces and local infrastructure: towards ensuring free, secure public Wi-Fi, device access, and digital skills support are embedded in trusted neighbourhood spaces such as libraries, Live Well Centres, and voluntary community organisations.

- Priority groups: towards ensuring internet access, and digital inclusion, are 'baked in' to strategic commissioning of statutory provision for priority groups, such as people and families in temporary or unstable housing, and care leavers."

The roadmap is available to download from: https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/policy-and-research/research-and-evidence/research-2026/greater-manchester-action-roadmap.

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

"NHS and GLL partner to bring mental health support into libraries"
https://www.healthclubmanagement.co.uk/health-club-management-press-releases/nhs-and-gll-partner-to-bring-mental-health-support-into-libraries/363933
(Source: *Public Libraries News*, 8 Nov 2026)
Announcement of new development:

> "The NHS in England is partnering with charitable social enterprise GLL to raise awareness of NHS Talking Therapies through its network of Better libraries, helping more people find out about the mental health support available to them."

Health & Wellbeing issues – Other Agencies

"'The biggest challenge is decolonising mental health and providing a way for Somali mental health to be translated.'"
https://www.sounddelivery.org.uk/2026/09/the-biggest-challenge-is-decolonising-mental-health-and-providing-a-way-for-somali-mental-health-to-be-translated/
(Source: email from Sounddelivery Media, 29 Oct 2026)
Important article about making access to mental health support more universal:

> "Psychotherapist and Founder of the Somali Mental Health Network, Salma Mohamed, is working to make mental health support more culturally responsive, accessible and meaningful for Somali communities. Through the Somali Mental Health Network, Salma brings together mental health professionals, community organisations, healthcare services and wider partners to strengthen mental health literacy, improve early prevention and help shape services that better understand culture, faith, identity and lived experience."

Disability issues – Other Agencies

"Inclusive Research Guide: Conducting research with blind and partially sighted people"
https://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/research-and-data/inclusive-research-guide/
New from RNIB:

> "Drawing on RNIB's experience of conducting research with blind and partially sighted people, alongside lived experience within our team, the guide provides practical advice to help researchers remove barriers to participation and make their work more accessible and inclusive."

The guide, *How to conduct inclusive research with blind and partially sighted people: principles, considerations and practical examples from RNIB*, is available to download from the website.

SEND issues – Other Agencies

"Making mainstream inclusion work"
https://www.nfer.ac.uk/blogs/making-mainstream-inclusion-work/?utm_campaign=nd_jun_24&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dotdigital&dm_i=7IN9,DKKO,16YTPV,1WMQP,1,0,0,0
(Source: *NFER Direct*, Oct 2026)
New blogpost from NFER, which looks at the challenges schools face in trying to create a situation where "more children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) learning and thriving in mainstream settings alongside their peers."

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

Autism issues – Other Agencies

"Autism is genetic"
https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/news/autism-is-genetic?utm_campaign=554422484-IG_ZS_CatchALL_wrapup2026&utm_medium=email&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-9wkBVAI9HXPbDt790dPcB6ulrra6KDblzWVWdOurvZ44Pl0WhVb_gExQhIZoKTr7rfABdWeCG7_k9D2wE9MoEk2xWIdQ&_hsmi=150128108&utm_content=150128108&utm_source=hs_email
(Source: email from the National Autistic Society, 6 Nov 2026)
Just in case you haven't seen this important news-post from the National Autistic Society.

Care-experienced children & young people – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Kinship care: statutory guidance for local authorities
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6ae32967d22fc5fecb3eb75a/Kinship-care-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-October-2026.pdf
(Source: email from Research in Practice, 30 Oct 2026)
DfE have just published this guidance on "How local authorities should support children who are cared for by extended family, friends or connected persons and their families."

Migration issues – City of Sanctuary

"MP slams plans to make Hertfordshire county of sanctuary for refugees"
https://www.hemeltoday.co.uk/news/politics/mp-slams-plans-to-make-hertfordshire-county-of-sanctuary-for-refugees-8952930?fbclid=IwY2xjawUI6LBwZG9mAWV4dG4DYWVtAjEwAGJyaWQRMX

EwMTJocnNNNEp0RW5iRW5zcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEe1WBCtio_-T148X9-Eg4MK_V0IaxhsKXK3ceid8y4ifN_BPUxRia1fIRK2Io_aem_wDx7PJamIe_T0bR0_7n_5w
Another attack on the idea of places of Sanctuary:

> "An MP has blasted a proposal for Hertfordshire to become a county of sanctuary for refugees as a 'grandstanding gesture' in favour of 'people who have entered the UK illegally'."

Migration issues – Other Agencies

"Labour's immigration dilemma: with social care exceptions, the party is trying to have it both ways"
https://theconversation.com/labours-immigration-dilemma-with-social-care-exceptions-the-party-is-trying-to-have-it-both-ways-295909?utm_campaign=the-daily-40250&utm_content=the-daily-40250_uk%7C2%7C40250%7C284c375e&utm_medium=email&utm_source=braze&utm_term=Labour%E2%80%99s+immigration+dilemma%3A+with+social+care+exceptions%2C+the+party+is+trying+to+have+it+both+ways
(Source: *The Conversation*, 9 Nov 2026)
Important brief article:

> "Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood's headline announcement on immigration centred on how long someone must spend in the UK before they can be granted indefinite leave to remain (ILR). She said this period will double from five to ten years – but social care workers will be exempt. This proposal was widely expected, but exempting social care workers is a U-turn for the government.
>
> The proposals were met with a mixed response. Some on the left said the qualifying period is too high, while others on the right claimed the plans were too lax on immigration by exempting care workers.
>
> Many migrants came to the UK on the understanding that five years of lawful residence would provide a path to settlement. So the government's decision to retrospectively change those terms raises serious questions about fairness, trust and the legitimacy of immigration policy.
>
> The UK is now moving towards one of the toughest settlement and naturalisation systems in Europe. In fact, this direction is more readily associated with the political right than a Labour government that presents itself as committed to equality, workers' rights and social justice. So where are we now with immigration policy, and what does this shift tell us about British politics?"

LGBTQ+ issues – Other Agencies

"'That's So Gay' – Practical Steps for How to React When you Hear Homophobic Language in School"
https://www.popnolly.com/post/that-s-so-gay-practical-steps-for-how-to-react-when-you-hear-homophobic-language-in-school?utm_campaign=056d9fca-c421-4173-9cf1-c06dd9ac67ad&utm_source=so&utm_medium=mail&cid=adb15866-5d0d-4e4f-8e39-abeeb2da8ae4
(Source: Pop'n'Olly *Newsletter*, Oct 2026)
Very useful practical guide to tackling anti-queer language:

> "Our latest blog, released earlier this month, empowers teachers and educators with 5 simple, practical steps to tackle anti-LGBT+ language the moment they hear it."

Pride in Education *Newsletter*
https://www.prideineducation.co.uk/
Just in case you haven't caught up with their website – and you can also subscribe to the *Newsletter* (scroll down to foot of page).

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

"Public libraries are doing more for their communities, but they need support"
https://theconversation.com/public-libraries-are-doing-more-for-their-communities-but-they-need-support-287429?utm_campaign=the-daily-40115&utm_content=the-daily-40115_uk%7C2%7C40115%7C0547a0c9&utm_medium=email&utm_source=braze&utm_term=Public+libraries+are+doing+more+for+their+communities%2C+but+they+need+support
(Source: *The Conversation*, 28 Oct 2026)
Important article by Jo McKenna-Aspell and Briony Birdi (University of Sheffield), which begins:

> "Public libraries remain a vital part of community life, providing free information and reading materials to everyone. Their role is particularly important amid a long-term decline in reading for pleasure among children and young people. But our research indicates that England's public library collections are being hollowed out through long-term underinvestment."

It is a timely reminder that we had been promised a new library strategy: "However, we have a new libraries minister but no published strategy."

It continues:

> "The national strategy matters because many of the challenges facing public libraries are systemic and cannot be addressed by individual services alone. Library services are reporting a decline in funds to buy

> and maintain books and other resources, complicated and expensive approaches to accessing digital reading materials for their borrowers, and continued pressures on workforce capacity.
>
> At the same time, they are being expected to take on an ever-broadening range of roles as the government increasingly sees libraries as partners in delivering wider public policy. This ranges from improving digital inclusion and promoting reading to supporting public health and helping people use the NHS App.
>
> These ambitions are not misplaced. Public libraries are trusted local institutions with an impressive record of adapting to changing social needs. If libraries can help people access healthcare, develop digital skills and connect with public services, that should be celebrated."

As it wisely argues:

> "The capacity of libraries to support wider government priorities depends on the health of the library service itself […]
>
> A strategy that celebrates libraries' contribution to health, education and economic growth without addressing the condition of their core functions risks treating symptoms rather than causes."

and concludes:

> "The new strategy needs to address the pressures facing the service itself. Asking libraries to do more for their communities must go hand in hand with strengthening the collections, workforce and financial support that allow them to do it."

Recommended.

"'Tangible action': ACE and DCMS set out details of long-awaited plan for England's museums"
https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2026/11/tangible-action-ace-and-dcms-set-out-details-of-long-awaited-plan-for-englands-museums/#msdynmkt_trackingcontext=caf5befb-cbc4-40bf-8d45-6c441f9c0200
(Source: Museums Association email updates, 6 Nov 2026)

> "Arts Council England (ACE) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have started work on a new Museums Plan for England – a strategic vision for the sector that will cover the coming decade […]
>
> The arts council is aiming to publish the Museums Plan in autumn or winter 2027, following a year of consultation and development."

Broader issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Hope on the High Street

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6ae4531ba5c2f99e3a7b83bb/Hope_on_the_high_street.pdf

(Source: LinkedIn)

New cross-Government strategy:

> "Our plan for hope on the high street is about putting them back under local control; properly managed by local leaders, who can drive the change their community wants to see. Every town and city centre is its own unique ecosystem shaped by where it is and who it's for. It's not going to work for us to try and fix everything from Westminster. Instead, we are backing councils, Mayors and communities with new powers and investment. A successful high street also depends on the people willing to invest their time, talent and ambition in it. That is why we must give independent traders and young entrepreneurs a real chance to thrive, combining affordable premises, accessible finance, practical mentoring and digital support with decisive action on the costs of doing business." [Taken from the Foreword by Angela Rayner, p7]

The strategy has been guided by six "pillars":

- "Active leadership and management (reasons to have confidence)
- Strong businesses, anchors and amenities (reasons to visit)
- Vibrant culture, leisure and entertainment (reasons to get together)
- Easy access and connectivity (reasons to explore)
- Safe, clean and welcoming (reasons to return)
- A place to call home (reasons to move in)." [p8]

Libraries and museums are mentioned, for example:

> "Museums, galleries, libraries and heritage assets also act as important anchors for high streets, generating visitor spend, preserving local identity and bringing historic assets back into productive use." [p42]

This does argue a good case for our role in High Streets, but the "What comes next" section [p68] is a bit vague – some real actions here would have been helpful.