

# The Network Newsletter: tackling social exclusion in libraries, museums, archives and galleries

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The Network's Website is at [www.seapn.org.uk](http://www.seapn.org.uk) and includes information on courses, good practice, specific socially excluded groups, as well as the newsletter archive.

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## Did you see ...?

### GEM Case Studies

The latest issue<sup>1</sup> has just been released; it focuses on 'Remote learning in museums, heritage and cultural settings'.

It includes:

- Amy Eastwood “Memories of London: Lockdown Lessons”, which outlines how the “Memories of London” project<sup>2</sup> moved from being face-to-face to running online [pp4-5]. One of the ‘lessons learned’ is particularly powerful:

“Cultural provision is not just a nice add on, it’s essential to combatting social isolation and loneliness.” [p5]

- Susan Griffiths, Beth McDougall, Nicola Bird and Thandi Wilson “Out of touch? Flexible connections with community partners” [pp6-7], which outlines how: “During lockdown, the Community Engagement Team tested new methods to support community groups with activities for wellbeing. Each activity was developed by listening to long-term local partners and working with Community Ambassadors” [p6] Provision included distributing Multaka Art Packs and linked social media for local families<sup>3</sup>.
- Marie Kennedy “Engaging children and young people with SEND virtually through lockdown”, which describes how, during lockdown, the University of Cambridge Museums engaged remotely and maintained relationships with their pre-existing audience of children with special educational needs and disabilities. [pp8-9]
- Amy McDonald and Cat Hood “Learn at Home: Digital resources for lockdown learning” [pp10-11], which describes how the learning team at Historic Environment Scotland created a new section of their website, now called “Learn, Create and Play”<sup>4</sup>
- Emily Nelson “Leeds Museums and Galleries: #MuseumFromHome Learning Videos and Additional Resources”<sup>5</sup> [pp12-13].

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<sup>1</sup> *Case Studies*, vol 26, 2020. Available to download as a pdf from: [https://gem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/GM160-Gem-Case-Studies-26\\_AW-SP.pdf](https://gem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/GM160-Gem-Case-Studies-26_AW-SP.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example: <https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/memories/creative-connected/december-2020>.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example: <https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/multaka-oxford-0> and <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKY2WDJQm47NfEFxI6bBSUw/videos>.

<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/learn/learn-create-play>.

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.youtube.com/user/leedsmuseums/playlists> and <https://museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/virtual-visit/online-activities/>.

“At the start of lockdown, Leeds Museums and Galleries (LMG) looked to our pre-existing school loans box scheme as a way of being able to continue to engage with the public, and to support teachers and parents with home schooling.

The Museum From Home videos were made daily, and promoted by LMG through Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Each week is complimented by an additional resources sheet, giving the videos a legacy as accessible learning resources for the future.” [p12]

- Hannah Sweetapple “Starting from Scratch: Creating a Digital Learning Programme in Response to Covid-19” [pp14-15], which focuses on the Egypt Centre, Swansea University:

“This case study is the story of how creativity came out of a crisis and how we digitised a learning programme in a matter of months with a limited budget.” [p14]

One of their outcomes was the development of their Virtual Classroom<sup>6</sup>.

- Leah Dungay and Becky Parry “Creating Pixelheads: The National Videogame Museum at Home”<sup>7</sup> [pp16-17]:

“Pixelheads is the National Videogame Museum’s informal community for children who want to learn about, talk about and create videogames. In the summer we ran virtual Saturday Pixelhead club in weekly live-streamed sessions on our YouTube channel.” [p16]

- Kate Noble, Rosanna Evans and Holly Morrison “Look Think Do: creating accessible and relevant content for schools and families during lockdown”<sup>8</sup> [pp18-19]. Created by the Fitzwilliam Museum:

“Look Think Do are digital learning activities for students and families to do together. They are designed to encourage them to look closely at an artefact, to think, and do an activity.” [p18]

One positive outcome was that:

“In order to reach families who didn’t have access to a home computer, we successfully gained funding from the Fitzwilliam Museum Marlay Group and repurposed other budgets to create over 1,000 Look Think Do activity packs. These were distributed to local families via our community partners and city council foodbanks [...]” [p19]

- Lucy Maycock “Getting ‘Hands on’ with Digital”<sup>9</sup> [pp20-21]:

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<sup>6</sup> For info about learning at home, see: <https://www.egypt.swan.ac.uk/learning-from-home/>.

<sup>7</sup> See: <http://www.thenvm.org/>.

<sup>8</sup> Further info at: <https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/lookthinkdo/about>.

“In March 2020, The Horniman’s Schools team produced 5 curriculum-linked videos for home educating families. These new resources were created over a week in response to the Museum’s closure.

Whilst the videos have had over 4,000 views and received fantastic feedback, the steep learning curve (starting with few digital skills) has taught us many useful lessons.” [p20]

- Frances Jeens “Virtual Classrooms: Facilitated Teaching to Schools”<sup>10</sup> [pp22-23], which looks at work at the Jewish Museum London:

“The Virtual Classrooms are our flagship digital programme launched in the middle of the lockdown. This is a new, and now permanent, aspect of programming for schools.” [p22]

- Morgan Fail “Home Education and Arts Award: Remote Learning and Progression” [pp24-25]. Based on work at the Laing Art Gallery, this case study describes:

“A home education project to establish provision and progression through all levels of Arts Award through remote working and gallery visits, and its adaptations for Covid-19.” [p24]

- Rebecca Barclay “Heritage Hero Awards: Through lockdown and beyond”<sup>11</sup> [pp26-27]: “How Archaeology Scotland’s Heritage Hero Awards were adapted to support educators and young people during lockdown.” [p26]

- Laura Nicholls “Facilitating Remote Work-Placements: When work is something that you do, not a place you go to” [pp28-29]:

“My role as Community Engagement Officer encompasses recruiting, managing and training volunteers for Bath’s new World Heritage Centre due to open in 2021 as part of the NHLF funded Archway project. Acutely aware that the Covid-19 pandemic will have had an impact on potential volunteer concerns and motivations, I wanted to explore this area further. Working with MA students remotely, changing attitudes to volunteering during the Covid-19 pandemic was explored. This research will feed into the design of the new volunteer offer.” [p28]

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<sup>9</sup> The videos are available at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/horniman>.

<sup>10</sup> Further info on Virtual Classrooms at: <https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/virtual-classrooms/>. Their *Lockdown impact report* is available to download as a pdf from: [https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/JM\\_Lockdown-Impact-Report\\_Interactive.pdf](https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/JM_Lockdown-Impact-Report_Interactive.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Details of the Awards, including case studies, are on their website: <https://archaeologyscotland.org.uk/learning/heritage-hero-awards>.

- Jack Shoulder, Danny Tokay Reid and Myla Corvidae “Queer Heritage Forum: Taking Museum Pride Online During Lockdown” [pp30-31], in which the Forum discuss how they put together an online Pride<sup>12</sup>:

“The Queer Heritage Forum (QHF) began in April 2020 in response to the UK’s lockdown, providing a supportive digital space for LGBTQ+ people working in heritage. In June we launched #QHFPride2020 – a digital programme offering resources, activism, and celebration.” [p30]

- Finally, there is a list of further remote learning projects, with brief info on each [p32].

### **ARC Magazine**

The Jan 2021 issue<sup>13</sup> includes a wide range of articles, primarily focusing on “Science and Archives” – amongst these is:

- David Luck “Bethlem Museum of the Mind” [pp29-31], which “[...] highlights the collections of the oldest mental health hospital in the world, and reflects on the importance of these collections to a modern user.”<sup>14</sup> [p29]

### **CMI Magazine**

The Winter 2020 issue<sup>15</sup> includes:

- Jermaine Haughton “Conversations: we need to talk about race ...”, which includes insights from six of Britain’s top leaders on what needs to be done to tackle racism in the workplace<sup>16</sup>

## **The ‘hostile environment’**

### **Public Sector Equality Duty assessment of hostile environment policies**

The EHRC have just published this assessment report<sup>17</sup> which concluded:

“In the documents we assessed, we found insufficient evidence of the Home Office taking the required steps to show due regard to the need to

<sup>12</sup> Further info from: [QueerHeritageForum@Gmail.com](mailto:QueerHeritageForum@Gmail.com) and @QHForum.

<sup>13</sup> *ARC Magazine*, 377, Jan 2021.

<sup>14</sup> See also: <https://museumofthemind.org.uk/>.

<sup>15</sup> *CMI Magazine*, no.4, Winter 2020.

<sup>16</sup> See: [https://issuu.com/cmi/docs/cmi\\_magazine\\_issue\\_4/s/11462916](https://issuu.com/cmi/docs/cmi_magazine_issue_4/s/11462916).

<sup>17</sup> *Public Sector Equality Duty assessment of hostile environment policies*. EHRC, 2020. Available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/public-sector-equality-duty-assessment-of-hostile-environment-policies.pdf>.

advance equality of opportunity in relation to colour. This included the documents the Home Office supplied to show compliance.

We have therefore concluded that the department did not comply with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the PSED) in understanding the impact on the Windrush generation and their descendants when developing, implementing and monitoring the hostile environment policy agenda.

We also agree with the Windrush Lessons Learned Review conclusion that the experiences of the Windrush generation were ‘foreseeable and avoidable’. Specifically, we have found:

- When negative equality impacts were identified by the Home Office and stakeholders, they were repeatedly ignored, dismissed, or their severity disregarded at crucial points of policy development. This happened particularly when they were seen as a barrier to implementing hostile environment policies in a highly-politicised environment.
- Limited engagement with stakeholders representing members of the Windrush generation and their descendants, even as the severe effects of hostile environment policies began to emerge. The engagement that did take place was too focused on groups that would help to implement the measures, and not those who could make sure the department fully understood the equality implications of its policies.
- That equality impacts were often considered too late to form a meaningful part of many decision-making processes, with their reputational or legal implications for the Home Office given greater weight than the real-life consequences for the people affected.
- That exceptions to the PSED for immigration functions were often interpreted too broadly, incorrectly and / or inconsistently.
- A lack of organisation-wide commitment, including by senior leadership, to the importance of equality and the Home Office’s obligations under the PSED. Any action taken to record and respond to negative equality impacts was perfunctory, and therefore insufficient.” [p6]

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

### **“Fight for Fairness”**

In a speech delivered on 17 Dec 2020, Liz Truss (Minister for Women and Equalities) set out the Government's new approach to tackling inequality across the UK.

The speech caused considerable consternation – however, it has now been published<sup>18</sup> with what is described as “political content” redacted.

According to *The Independent*:

“The speech was branded ‘bonkers’ by critics after the Tory claimed children in her class at school were left unable to read or write because too much time was taken up learning about racism and sexism.

The minister, who went to school in Leeds under Margaret Thatcher’s government, said children had been deprived of a proper education and ‘business opportunities’.”

and, in relation to some of the redacted text:

“One such redacted passage, which included a bizarre rant about French philosopher Michel Foucault, read: ‘While we were taught about racism and sexism, there was too little time spent making sure everyone could read and write.

‘These ideas have their roots in postmodernist philosophy – pioneered by Foucault – that puts societal power structures and labels ahead of individuals and their endeavours.

‘In this school of thought, there is no space for evidence, as there is no objective view – truth and morality are all relative.’”<sup>19, 20</sup>

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## Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

### ***UK poverty 2020/21***

The latest JRF annual report<sup>21</sup> has just been published.

“This report highlights early indications of how poverty has changed in our society since the start of the coronavirus outbreak, as well as the situation revealed by the latest poverty data, collected before the outbreak. It examines overall changes to poverty, with sections looking at the impact of work, the social security system and housing. It also

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<sup>18</sup> See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/fight-for-fairness>.

<sup>19</sup> Jon Stone “‘Bonkers’ Liz Truss speech pulled from government website”, *The Independent*, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/liz-truss-equality-foucault-b1776142.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Source: *PinkNews*, 14 May 2020.

<sup>21</sup> *UK poverty 2020/21*. JRF, 2021. Full report and “Findings” available to download as pdfs from: [https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2020-21?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=JRF%20weekly%20round-up%2011%20January%202021&utm\\_content=JRF%20weekly%20round-up%2011%20January%202021+CID\\_fc2c40127bb7119c48fd59aef6fbb669&utm\\_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm\\_term=Take%20a%20look%20at%20this%20years%20key%20findings%20and%20recommendations](https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2020-21?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=JRF%20weekly%20round-up%2011%20January%202021&utm_content=JRF%20weekly%20round-up%2011%20January%202021+CID_fc2c40127bb7119c48fd59aef6fbb669&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=Take%20a%20look%20at%20this%20years%20key%20findings%20and%20recommendations).

benefits from powerful insights from members of our Grassroots Poverty Action Group, who have direct experience of living on a low income.”

Key findings include:

“Before coronavirus, an unacceptable 14.5 million people in the UK were caught up in poverty, equating to more than one in five people. Child poverty and in-work poverty had been on the rise for several years and some groups were disproportionately likely to be pulled into poverty. Many of those groups already struggling most to stay afloat have also borne the brunt of the economic and health impacts of COVID-19. These include:

- part-time workers, low-paid workers and sectors where there are much higher rates of in-work poverty, such as accommodation and food services
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic households
- lone parents – mostly women, many of whom work in hard-hit sectors – who are more reliant on local jobs, and are more likely to have struggled with childcare during lockdown
- private renters, who have higher housing costs, and social renters, who tend to have lower incomes, both leading to higher poverty rates. Renters in work are also more likely to be in a sector more affected by coronavirus
- areas of the UK where there were already higher levels of unemployment, poverty and deprivation” [“Findings”, p2]

The report makes the following recommendations as “solutions”:

“During the coronavirus outbreak, the Government has quickly – and rightly – implemented some radical policies to protect people from the huge economic forces unleashed by the coronavirus storm. The Government must continue to be bold and compassionate as it decides how to redesign policies on work, social security and housing so that they work better for everyone after coronavirus.

These policy solutions would help:

1. We need as many people as possible to be in good jobs.
2. We need to improve earnings for low-income working families and ensure more people are in secure, good quality work..
3. We need to strengthen the benefits system
4. We need to increase the amount of low-cost housing” [Taken from full report, pp4-5]

Recommended.<sup>22</sup>

JRF have also published a blogpost<sup>23</sup> which explains more about the way the report has been compiled this year:

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<sup>22</sup> Source: JRF *Weekly round-up*, 15 Jan 2021.

“But even before the pandemic we knew we wanted to do things differently and create greater opportunities for people living in poverty to shape our UK Poverty report.

We felt that people with direct experience of poverty would be best placed to identify the most pertinent issues to focus on, and work with us to connect personal experiences of living in poverty with statistical findings [...]

We assembled a group of fifteen people who could draw on the expertise they had from living in poverty. We made sure we had a good mix in terms of age, sex, ethnic origin, disability status, employment status and caring responsibilities. Some people were new to working with JRF. Others had worked with us before.

A small group of JRF staff participated in all the sessions [...]

All meetings took place over Zoom since face-to-face meetings were not possible due to the ongoing pandemic. We tried to overcome as many of the barriers as possible to allow people to participate online. This included offering payment for additional data costs and keeping things simple to allow people to join via a smartphone. We offered the opportunity of a trial run for people unfamiliar with Zoom.

The online format allowed people to attend who would not normally be able to travel to a face-to-face event. This includes people with disabilities or poor health and those with caring responsibilities. We were also able to bring together people from all four nations of the UK [...]

We are in no doubt that the contributions of GPAG [Grassroots Poverty Action Group] members made a huge difference. Alongside the evidence produced by JRF analysts, the report includes summaries from group discussions and some quotations from individuals. What is less obvious is how it influenced the analysis process as a member of the JRF analysis team reflects below.

‘Involving those with lived experience right from the start was critical for shaping the analysis. It enabled me to compare the quantitative analysis with the experiences of group members: were they aligned? If not, why not? The conversations that took place highlighted some areas for analysis that I had not considered. This all led to a deeper, more considered analysis that more closely reflected the experiences of those living in poverty.’

Working with the GPAG brought the statistics alive. GPAG members spoke about what it feels like to live in the grip of poverty and how it impacts on people’s sense of self-worth. Undoubtedly this helped us to

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<sup>23</sup> Emma Wincup “Blending expertise to create a better understanding of UK poverty”, JRF, 13 Jan 2021, <https://medium.com/inside-jrf/blending-expertise-to-create-a-better-understanding-of-uk-poverty-a64186c49ba3>.

create a better understanding of poverty across the UK and made us even more determined to outline the case for a bold and compassionate response.”

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

### “Contested heritage”

Further to previous coverage, you may have seen news coverage of the Government’s decision to announce new laws:

“[...] to protect England’s cultural and historic heritage [...]”

The press release continues:

“The new legal protections mean that historic statues should be ‘retained and explained’ for future generations. Individuals who want to remove any historic statue, whether listed or not, will now require listed building consent or planning permission.

Under the new regulations, if the council intends to grant permission for removal of a particular statue and Historic England objects, the Communities Secretary will be notified so he can make the final decision about the application in question.

Historic England and the Secretary of State will apply the new policy of ‘retain and explain’, meaning historic statues will only be removed in the most exceptional circumstances.”<sup>24</sup>

According to *The Guardian*, the Communities Secretary, using terminology very reminiscent of the 1980s, wrote (apparently in *The Sunday Telegraph*<sup>25</sup>) about the removal of statues as being:

“[...] at the hand of the flash mob, or by the decree of a ‘cultural committee’ of town hall militants and woke worthies.”<sup>26</sup>

In his written statement<sup>27</sup> to Parliament on 18 Jan 2021, he said:

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<sup>24</sup> Quotations taken from the press release, “New legal protection for England’s heritage”, 17 Jan 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-legal-protection-for-england-s-heritage>.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Jenrick certainly wrote a piece in *The Telegraph*, 16 Jan 2021, “We will save Britain’s statues from the woke militants who want to censor our past”, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/01/16/will-save-britains-statues-woke-militants-want-censor-past/>.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example: Maya Wolfe-Robinson “UK government should focus on Covid, not statues, campaigners say”, *The Guardian*, 17 Jan 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jan/17/robert-jenrick-statues-must-be-protected-from-baying-mob>.

“I would like to update the House about the role of the planning system in relation to the protection of historic statues, plaques, memorials and monuments. I am concerned that, over the last few months, some such heritage assets may have been removed without proper debate, consultation with the public and due process.

Indeed, the removal of a statue in Bristol was an act of criminal damage. We should never tolerate criminal acts and mob rule [...]

I am today therefore setting out my intention to make the removal of any historic unlisted statue, plaque, memorial or monument subject to an explicit requirement to obtain planning permission. I also intend to require local planning authorities to adhere to similar notification requirements as for listed building consent applications involving listed statues, plaques, memorials and monuments. This will require Directions and changes to secondary legislation including the permitted development right for the demolition of buildings.

In considering any applications to remove a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether a listed building or not), local planning authorities should have regard to the government’s clear policy on heritage (summarised as ‘retain and explain’) as set out by the Minister for Digital Infrastructure to Parliament on 25 September 2020. This statement now forms part of national planning policy and should be applied accordingly [...]

I would like to make clear that, as the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, I have wide discretion to ‘call in’ planning applications or recover appeals for my own determination, not least because of the controversy attached to such decisions. I will not hesitate to use those powers in relation to applications and appeals involving historic statues, plaques, memorials or monuments where I consider such action is necessary to reflect the Government’s planning policies as set out above.

In conclusion, this Government believes it is always right to examine Britain’s history, but the knee-jerk removal of statues does harm rather than good. Our aim should be to use heritage to educate people about all aspects of Britain’s past rather than censoring our shared British history.”

The MA also covered this in a news-story<sup>28</sup> which notes:

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<sup>27</sup> Planning and Heritage Update: Statement made on 18 January 2021, Statement UIN HCWS713, <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-01-18/hcws713>.

<sup>28</sup> Geraldine Kendall Adams “Minister outlines controversial rules to protect statues from ‘baying mob’”, 19 Jan 2021, [https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2021/01/minister-outlines-tougher-rules-to-protect-statues-from-baying-mob/?utm\\_campaign=1875089\\_19012021&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Museum%20Association&dm\\_i=2VBX,146TT,27LU0M,4ATZT,1](https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2021/01/minister-outlines-tougher-rules-to-protect-statues-from-baying-mob/?utm_campaign=1875089_19012021&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Museum%20Association&dm_i=2VBX,146TT,27LU0M,4ATZT,1).

“The plans have been met with concern and criticism by heritage professionals, who have described the legislation as unnecessary and unworkable, and accused the government using the issue of contested heritage to stoke a culture war.”

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

CMI = Chartered Management Institute

EHRC = Equality and Human Rights Commission

GEM = Group for Education in Museums

JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation

MA = Museums Association

NHLF = National Lottery Heritage Fund

PSED = Public Sector Equality Duty

SEND = Special Educational Needs and Disability

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