

# 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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## Black Lives Matter

### ***Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities: the report (ctd)***

Since the comments and discussion that were included in the March *Newsletter*<sup>1</sup>, the following have appeared:

Archives for Learning and Education Section of ARA “Report from the government’s Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities”<sup>2</sup>, which points up some of the contradictions in the recommendations in the report, especially Recommendation 20: Making of modern Britain: teaching an inclusive curriculum:

“This recommendation is described in the report’s introduction as a response to ‘calls for “decolonising” the curriculum’ (p.8) and, indeed, the embedding of black histories within the school curriculum is precisely what many calls to decolonise the curriculum, including our own, were aiming to achieve. It also mirrors commitments to create inclusive resources made at a recent NASUWT conference. It seems odd, then, that the calls to which this is presented as a response are casually but dogmatically dismissed as ‘negative’ (p.8) [...]”

The government are yet to respond in full to the report, but equalities minister Kemi Badenoch has stated that the recommendations are being considered. As yet there has been no comment from DfE, so it is unclear whether work will proceed on the suggested curriculum redevelopment. The Black Cultural Archives’ response to the report notes some valid concerns about this recommendation; that it ignores the existence of teaching resources and CPD materials for educators already available, and that creation of such a resource will do little to resolve the lack of knowledge or confidence to employ them effectively. In their words ‘The teaching community’s call for support is not necessarily a call for resources’.”

Clinks have published a blogpost<sup>3</sup> which, drawing on their experience of working within the criminal justice system, argues that the report has ignored key social inequalities and has “[...] chosen to gloss over these factors without any proper interrogation, and instead treat contact with the criminal justice system as a form of moral failing for racially minoritised people.”

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<sup>1</sup> *The Network Newsletter*, 241, Mar 2021, <https://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Newsletter-NS-241.pdf>, pp3-15.

<sup>2</sup> Alexandra Healey “Report from the government’s Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities”, *ARALearning blog*, 7 May 2021, <https://arallearning.wordpress.com/2021/05/07/report-from-the-governments-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities/>.

<sup>3</sup> Zahra Wynne “Racism exists in the criminal justice system: why the Sewell report falls short”, Clinks blog, 12 May 2021, [https://www.clinks.org/community/blog-posts/racism-exists-criminal-justice-system-why-sewell-report-falls-short?utm\\_source=Light%2520Lunch&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=lightlunch683](https://www.clinks.org/community/blog-posts/racism-exists-criminal-justice-system-why-sewell-report-falls-short?utm_source=Light%2520Lunch&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=lightlunch683).

In Apr 2021, the RSA produced a Briefing paper<sup>4</sup> which looks at the impact of the pandemic on minority communities – they say that it:

“[...] directly challenges the recent findings of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities: namely the assertion that ‘institutional’ racism has largely lost its validity as a means of understanding discrimination in the UK. Our findings on discrimination and distrust add to the already extensive body of evidence that suggests the Commission’s report is not reflective of the experiences of many in the UK. The issues highlighted in this briefing are structural and systemic by nature and require a similar response: invest in resources, invest in conversations, invest in the longer-term and invest in experimentation.” [p9]

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

### ***Museums Change Lives: Wales***

The MA has just launched its case studies<sup>5</sup> from Wales:

“Day in, day out, often with no great fanfare, Welsh museums support their communities, and help deliver key social and government agendas in areas like community cohesion, the economy, health and wellbeing, learning, and skills development.” [p3]

They are grouped under three headings:

- Enhanced health and wellbeing
- Creating better places to live and work
- Inspiring engagement, reflection and debate.

Examples include:

- Enhanced health and wellbeing
  - Intergenerational Memory Cafés (Monmouthshire Museums Service)<sup>6</sup>: “When we were approached by our local secondary school to help deliver the Welsh Baccalaureate Community Volunteering Challenge, it seemed an ideal opportunity to create a

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<sup>4</sup> *Crisis, communities, change: demands for an equitable recovery*. RSA (“Briefing” 007), 2021, [https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/foundation/new-site-blocks-and-images/reports/2021/04/rsa\\_communities-polling-briefing.pdf](https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/foundation/new-site-blocks-and-images/reports/2021/04/rsa_communities-polling-briefing.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> *Museums Change Lives: Wales*. MA, 2021, English: <https://ma-production.ams3.digitaloceanspaces.com/app/uploads/2021/04/13104842/MCL-Wales-English.pdf>. Welsh: <https://ma-production.ams3.digitaloceanspaces.com/app/uploads/2021/04/13104845/MCL-Wales-Welsh-Cymraeg.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> See: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/museums-change-lives/enhancing-health-and-wellbeing/monmouthshire-museums-service/>.

project that brought young people and people living with dementia together: intergenerational memory cafes.

Our first cohort of 10 young people were trained to use handling objects as conversation triggers and provided with Dementia Friends awareness sessions. The students worked together with museum staff to research and organise a series of two hour themed memory cafes that included music, handling objects, costume and afternoon tea.” [p8]

- “Hidden Now Heard was a three-year (2015-17) National Lottery Heritage Fund oral history project led by the learning disability charity Mencap Cymru. In partnership with St Fagans National Museum of History and regional museums across Wales, the project captured the untold and often painful living memories of patients, their relatives, and staff from six former long-stay hospitals in Wales.”<sup>7</sup> [p10]
- Creating better places to live and work
  - “Literature and Trauma is a community creative writing project run by Swansea Council’s Dylan Thomas Service, which builds on the Dylan Thomas Centre’s longstanding relationship with local refugee communities.”<sup>8</sup> [p12]
  - A space for communities (Cynon Valley Museum): “The museum has worked to host local artists and art groups, recruit volunteers locally reflect the community, and make the museum more relevant to the daily lives of the public, creating new ways to bring people through the museum’s doors.

To do this the museum sought to move beyond the restrictions of its own identity, to reflect the identities of the communities in Cynon Valley by utilising the museum as a venue for organisations working to benefit the local community. The museum took a proactive approach to this, building relationships with potential groups such as Project Unity, a LGBTQIA support group. Working with the group they expanded their programming from monthly coffee afternoons to include talks, awareness events and displays in the museum.” [p14]

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<sup>7</sup> See: <https://www.peoplescollection.wales/users/15475>.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example: <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/LiteratureAndTrauma>.

The project was the winner of the Best Small Museum Project in the 2020 Museums Change Lives Awards. The project description is: “Literature and Trauma is a writing project for refugees and asylum seekers in Swansea, enabling people to tell their unique stories through poetry and prose. The museum provides play facilities for the children of participants and free bus tickets to remove the barrier of travel costs. Sessions are led by Cameroonian writer Eric Ngalle Charles, whose personal experience of displacement and asylum provides a safe space for participants to express themselves.” Taken from: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/museums-change-lives/museums-change-lives-awards-2020/>.

- Inspiring engagement, reflection and debate
  - “The People of Butetown project was a collaboration between the Museum of Cardiff and a collective of community artists. Taking the centenary of the 1919 Race Riots as a starting point, it shared stories of the prejudice and racism experienced by the community, and celebrated its resilience and creativity.”<sup>9</sup> [p20]
  - “Dippy at the National Museum Cardiff”: “The remit from the Natural History Museum was that every partner venue should use Dippy as a way to inspire visitors to engage with contemporary environmental issues and engage with an underrepresented audience [...] Tasked with a way of making Dippy relevant to their peers, the young people chose to raise awareness and inspire positive action around the climate crisis. They identified the environmental impact of the fashion industry as their ‘big issue’ because of its massive environmental cost. They decided to link this with dinosaurs by fashioning a dinosaur from waste clothing and fashion items destined for landfill.” [p21]

Very useful set of case studies – recommended.<sup>10</sup>

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

### ***A connected recovery ...***

The APPG on Loneliness has just produced its first report<sup>11</sup>.

Key findings include:

- “There are too many barriers preventing people from connecting – such as a lack of safe, welcoming and accessible green spaces, parks and gardens, public toilets, playing areas, local bus services, and ramps for people with disabilities.
- Too many people face barriers to digital connection as a result of lack of access to mobile technology and the internet, as well as a lack of digital skills and confidence.

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<sup>9</sup> See: <https://cardiffmuseum.com/whatson/people-of-butetown/>.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Museums Association email updates, 16 Apr 2021.

<sup>11</sup> *A connected recovery: findings of the APPG on Loneliness Inquiry*. British Red Cross, 2021, [https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/action-on-loneliness/all-party-parliamentary-group-on-loneliness-inquiry/a-connected-recovery?utm\\_source=The+Digest&utm\\_campaign=b9122495e6-The+Digest+22+February+19+COPY+01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1a82d36a80-b9122495e6-110241028##](https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/action-on-loneliness/all-party-parliamentary-group-on-loneliness-inquiry/a-connected-recovery?utm_source=The+Digest&utm_campaign=b9122495e6-The+Digest+22+February+19+COPY+01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a82d36a80-b9122495e6-110241028##).

- Poorly designed or unsuitable housing and neighbourhoods can make it hard for people to meet each other, maintain social connections and develop a sense of belonging.
- Some communities and groups were highlighted as facing particular disadvantage in relation to transport and mobility.”<sup>12</sup>

Recommendations include:

- “Tackle loneliness through national leadership, including re-establishing the cross-government approach to tackling loneliness, long-term funding and improving the evidence base.
- Translate national policy into local action, including incentivising local authorities and their partners to develop local action plans to tackle loneliness.
- Invest in the community and social infrastructure needed to connect, particularly in areas with higher levels of deprivation. This should include a long-term investment in the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector to realise the full potential of social prescribing – a flagship of the Government’s original loneliness strategy.
- Loneliness proof all new transport and housing developments, and close the digital divide by increasing digital skills and confidence.”<sup>13</sup>

The report begins by putting its work into context, including:

“We launched our inquiry to provide support and challenge the UK Government. We also wanted to provide practical suggestions for progressing the Loneliness Action Group’s challenge to move beyond the “foundations” of the initial strategy to embedding action on loneliness across public policy.” [p10]

This is followed by an outline of what loneliness is and its effects, and a look at those groups that may be particularly affected. As one respondent said:

“People who are experiencing significant life changes including recent migration, parenthood particularly new young mothers, separation, bereavement, leaving prison or retirement are at increased risk of experiencing loneliness. Those experiencing crisis points in their life, such as domestic abuse, homelessness, or substance abuse, are also at greater risk of experiencing loneliness.” [p12]

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<sup>12</sup> Taken from: [https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/action-on-loneliness/all-party-parliamentary-group-on-loneliness-inquiry/a-connected-recovery?utm\\_source=The+Digest&utm\\_campaign=b9122495e6-The+Digest+22+February+19+COPY+01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1a82d36a80-b9122495e6-110241028##](https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/action-on-loneliness/all-party-parliamentary-group-on-loneliness-inquiry/a-connected-recovery?utm_source=The+Digest&utm_campaign=b9122495e6-The+Digest+22+February+19+COPY+01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a82d36a80-b9122495e6-110241028##).

<sup>13</sup> Also taken from: [https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/action-on-loneliness/all-party-parliamentary-group-on-loneliness-inquiry/a-connected-recovery?utm\\_source=The+Digest&utm\\_campaign=b9122495e6-The+Digest+22+February+19+COPY+01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1a82d36a80-b9122495e6-110241028##](https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/action-on-loneliness/all-party-parliamentary-group-on-loneliness-inquiry/a-connected-recovery?utm_source=The+Digest&utm_campaign=b9122495e6-The+Digest+22+February+19+COPY+01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a82d36a80-b9122495e6-110241028##).

Red Cross research<sup>14</sup> has also shown the impact that the pandemic has had on loneliness, and the report focuses on the mental health impacts.

It asks the question ‘what works?’ – and recommends that responses move beyond any kind of ‘one solution fits all’ approach.

Section 2 looks at ‘National leadership on loneliness’. It recommends that key roles for Government include:

- “Setting strategic direction and a sense of priority around tackling loneliness.
- Ensuring that national policy supports connection.
- Funding – including for community and social infrastructure and to support local authority activity.
- Growing the evidence base and sharing best practice.
- Encouraging culture change – for example by tackling the stigma of loneliness.” [p18]

In order to achieve a ‘connected recovery’:

The Government must therefore ensure that rebuilding connection is a core objective of its COVID-19 recovery plans and investment.

This should include:

- Support for local places to develop and deliver cross-sector recovery plans to tackle loneliness, including:
  - Targeted support for those shown to be at greatest risk of loneliness.
  - Support for social prescribing services.
  - Investment in community infrastructure to support social connection.
- Additional investment in mental health support to meet needs exacerbated by the pandemic.” [p20]

This should also include a commitment and action towards proper cross-Government working; and any policies developed should be tested to see what their impact on loneliness is – one proposal is:

“Using a mechanism akin to the Public Sector Equality Duty (under the Equality Act 2010) to require action from public bodies on tackling loneliness.” [p23]

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<sup>14</sup> *Life after lockdown: tackling loneliness among those left behind*. British Red Cross, 2020, <https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/we-speak-up-for-change/life-after-lockdown-tackling-loneliness>.

*Lonely and left behind: tackling loneliness at a time of crisis*. British Red Cross, 2020, <https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/we-speak-up-for-change/lonely-and-left-behind##>.

The intention of all this work is to create a cultural shift around loneliness – which includes not only work at Government level, but also by the private sector, and “[...] practitioners in services likely to come into contact with people who are lonely (across both statutory and non-statutory sectors, as well as to support practical action by individuals).” [p31]

Section 3 looks at ‘Local leadership on loneliness’. This includes:

- “Working with local people to develop local strategies.
- Commissioning and funding community responses.
- Providing key public services including housing, transport and community infrastructure.
- Shaping the places people live.” [p33]

In terms of developing local strategies:

“Local authorities should include an assessment of local levels of loneliness, including groups at particular risk of loneliness and their needs, within their Joint Strategic Needs Assessments.” [p34]

and:

“Decision makers across local government, health authorities and others should develop local loneliness action plans with a named leader to be held account to for delivery.” [p36]

One respondent organisation had commented:

“Local authorities also have access to community assets like libraries and museums who are crucial in the response to loneliness locally.” [p35]

In terms of shaping key public services:

“Another critical role for local authorities is as a provider and commissioner of key public services – including local community infrastructure such as parks and libraries, transport, housing and care services.” [p38]

The report also emphasises the need to build actions to tackle loneliness into any plans for recovery from COVID:

“The COVID-19 pandemic will have a lasting impact on our communities – on the facilities that are available within them and how they are used. The Government has already signalled its intent to support communities to recover through a range of initiatives. If we build a commitment to addressing loneliness and social isolation into these we can ensure that economic regeneration and social regeneration go hand in hand.” [p38]

Section 4 looks at ‘Community infrastructure’. As the report says:

“The term ‘community infrastructure’ encompasses a wide range of concepts – including the physical places and spaces in our communities

(e.g. parks and community centres), the infrastructure enabling people to connect (e.g. transport, digital infrastructure), as well as the less tangible 'social infrastructure' that is made up of the groups, associations and organisations within a community.

This infrastructure is vital to supporting the social fabric of communities – the bonds between different people in a community and upon which the community is built.” [p40]

In terms of 'Spaces to connect':

“Responses to our survey highlighted the importance of access to a wide range of community assets. However, we heard real concern that some communities lack sufficient shared spaces, and that community venues are increasingly vulnerable to closure, particularly as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, and especially in more deprived areas.

Respondents highlighted the importance of:

- Libraries – which are increasingly acting as community hubs but are nevertheless still under threat of closure in many areas [...]
- Outdoor spaces, such as parks.
- Public transport – which was recognised not just as a means of getting around but as a space in which people could connect.
- Pubs and cafes.” [p41]

One organisation that gave evidence said:

“Creating accessible community hubs is another opportunity that we would encourage the inquiry to consider. They are a fantastic means to join up health, leisure and wider public services in one location, bringing together leisure centres, libraries, GP surgeries and retail shopping, and supporting more practical and social local connections.” [p42]

The report cites Norfolk Libraries' Loneliness project as a small case study<sup>15</sup>.

The report also considers how accessible places are:

“We heard that accessibility solutions were often simple and low cost – for example creating guides to local toilet facilities or altering pedestrian crossing timings to give disabled people more time to cross.” [p45]

and talks about 'designing out' loneliness.

The report highlights the importance of 'community infrastructure', “[...] the web of community groups, faith organisations and voluntary sector organisations that encourage, enable and sustain these connections.” [p48]

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/news/2018/06/great-get-together-in-norfolk-libraries-to-help-tackle-loneliness-and-social-isolation>; and <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/news/2018/12/libraries-help-tackle-loneliness-in-norfolk-over-christmas>.

Within that, the report considers the impact of the pandemic, for example in terms of the increased demand for services and the impact on funding for voluntary services.

It looks at social prescribing and recommends that:

“The cross-government taskforce on social prescribing should publish proposals to deploy resources from across government to support activities linked to social prescribing in local areas.” [p56]

Section 5 looks at transport, particularly issues faced by disabled people, older people, and people in rural communities – and the cost of transport.

Section 6 looks at housing:

“Two key issues were raised in response to our inquiry: the impact of inadequate, unsuitable or poorly-maintained housing on people’s ability to connect socially; and the need to improve the design of new housing to support social connection.” [p65]

Section 7 looks at digital infrastructure:

“The urgency of addressing the digital divide has become clearer than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic. While digital inclusion was not identified as a priority at the outset of our inquiry, the rapid shift of services and support online during the pandemic, and the cancellation of face-to-face services has hastened the imperative for action.” [p71]

This Section recommends:

“The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport should adopt the recommendation of the Good Things Foundation to invest £130 million over four years to support four million people cross the digital divide, including by increasing digital skills and confidence.” [p74]

Finally, Section 8 is a summary of the recommendations.

This is an important report which contains some key calls to action. Highly recommended.<sup>16</sup>

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## ***Emerging together: the Tackling Loneliness Network Action Plan***

DCMS have just published this Action Plan<sup>17</sup> in May 2021.

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<sup>16</sup> Source: Good Things Foundation *The Digest*, 1 Apr 2021.

<sup>17</sup> *Emerging together: the Tackling Loneliness Network Action Plan*. DCMS, 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emerging-together-the-tackling-loneliness->

Key actions include:

1. “Bringing together funders interested in social connection to share learning and look for opportunities to align and join up funding where possible.
2. Creating volunteering opportunities that build connection, particularly for people experiencing loneliness
3. Exploring a range of opportunities to tackle digital exclusion, including how government’s Inclusive Economy Partnership can facilitate high-impact partnerships between government, business and civil society to support digital inclusion”

For its first year, the Tackling Loneliness Network will focus on:

1. Tackling loneliness in young people
2. Tackling loneliness in older people
3. Local and place-based approaches to tackling loneliness
4. Digital inclusion

These four actions were, in turn, grouped into two themes:

1. Supporting organisations to tackle loneliness
2. Supporting individuals to tackle loneliness.

There is an outline of the work that is intended to develop over the next year, together with the announcement that:

“Government will shortly be launching a new digital platform, the Tackling Loneliness Hub, to support organisations interested in tackling loneliness to share evidence, insights and ideas. The Hub will be run by Campaign to End Loneliness and What Works Centre for Wellbeing and will support organisations to expand their networks and identify new opportunities for partnership working at both a local and a national level. Through increased access to research, guidance and best practice, organisations will have the opportunity to increase their understanding of loneliness and what works to tackle it.

DCMS will use the Tackling Loneliness Hub to gather insights on people’s individual experiences of loneliness and what they feel will make the most difference to them.”

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[network-action-plan/emerging-together-the-tackling-loneliness-network-action-plan#theme1](https://www.gov.uk/government/network-action-plan/emerging-together-the-tackling-loneliness-network-action-plan#theme1).

However, what is very unclear at this stage is how this relates to the APPG's work and report! Once this becomes clearer, there will be further info in the *Newsletter*.<sup>18</sup>

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

### ***'It's more than just Black people on a stage': the barriers and opportunities to meaningful collaboration across the arts, migration and racial justice sector***

This is an important new report<sup>19</sup> from Counterpoints Arts.

“This report is the culmination of 19 interviews with a number of activists, artists and cultural practitioners, researchers and experts in the migration, racial justice and cultural sector across the UK, taking place from November 2020 to February 2021 [...]

As with any research project, it is important to consider who the interviewees are as well as the time in which the research takes place. The majority of interviewees were BPOC and these interviews were conducted months after conversations around race and Black Lives Matter (BLM) resurfaced to the mainstream. Therefore, while the scope of this research begins to explore the degree to which all three sectors collaborate, most interviewees reflect on partnerships between BPOC led and white led cultural organisations, especially given the increased interest many BPOC individuals and organisations are experiencing from white led organisations during this time.

The terms ‘white led’ and ‘BPOC led’ organisations should also be noted. For the purpose of this report, this refers to organisations where most, if not all strategic, board and managerial positions are occupied by white employees and BPOC employees respectively. As the report will unpack, this research takes place in a context where, as extensive research shows, the institutions with the most power in the UK lack meaningful diversity, and the cultural and civic sector are no exceptions within this trend [...]” [p4]

The report first identifies barriers to collaboration, which include:

- Historical and institutional power of large, white-led [...] organisations
- Gatekeeping and knowledge extraction:

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<sup>18</sup> Source: MARCH Mental Health Network *Newsletter*, May 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Selina Nwulu. *'It's more than just Black people on a stage': the barriers and opportunities to meaningful collaboration across the arts, migration and racial justice sector*. Counterpoints Arts, 2021, <https://counterpointsarts.org.uk/the-barriers-and-opportunities-to-meaningful-collaboration/>.

“Larger organisations often extract ideas and knowledge from smaller BPOC grassroots organisations without due recognition. Lack of diversity within leadership and strategic positions within powerful institutions was also cited as a problem.” [p2]

- Collaborations can often feel superficial and tokenistic
- A punitive culture:

“The deep-rooted denial about race and empire has become so normalised that even speaking factually about the matter is perceived as a transgression.” [p2]

- Different working cultures and material resources
- Physical disconnection and digital divide

“The pandemic has exacerbated existing levels of data poverty leading to further disconnection.” [p2]

It then looks at opportunities for collaboration, which include:

- Organisations are now more open to intersectional thinking and collaborative working
- There is resilience and innovation outside of the mainstream
- Collaboration based on shared values can create larger networks, expertise and platforming opportunities
- There is a strong foundation for continued collaboration and diverse leadership:

“Existing work from The Lived Experience Leaders Movement, The Quakers, We Belong, PopChange, as well as creative collaborations reflecting on Windrush offer hope for the legacy of what collaboration around culture, migration and race could look like.” [p2]

Finally, the report makes a set of recommendations for the future, including:

- Organisations need to rearticulate and work from their core values:

“Tensions arise when organisations co-opt the language of progress and equality for their forward-facing work, without working on this internally [...]” [p19]

- Artists as cultural strategists, including:

“Artists have much to contribute when it comes to re-envisioning narratives and work streams, as well as engaging wider communities into the conversation.” [p19]

- Lived experience and knowledge should be honoured
- Funders should have more proactive strategic involvement:
 

“Funders have the power to set the agenda and therefore hold recipients of their funds accountable. This means there is huge potential in funders encouraging work that looks at migration more explicitly through a racial justice lens, using the cultural sector to both convey and create work connected to this. If a funded organisation working within the race and migration sector is majority or all white led, there needs to be criteria and evaluation that ensures good collaboration with relevant partners with lived experience as well as equitable pay scales in operation.” [p20]
- Normalising care:
 

“Care needs to be front and centre of working relationships, particularly within migrant and racial justice sectors which have very real and tangible impacts on people’s lives. Race, displacement and oppression are neither neutral nor theoretical subjects. If someone is called to speak extensively about difficult subjects that go hand in hand with oppression, there needs to be some understanding of the emotional labour that goes into this [...]

A recurring theme through many of the interviews was a sense of exhaustion for those working in this space [...]” [p21]
- More privileged institutions need to mobilise their power and resources in a practical way, including:
 

“For organisations reckoning with their privilege, there needs to be an understanding that if anti-racist work is solely about educating white people and institutions, it still centres whiteness and does not help to rectify the ways in which living under oppressive structures have stifled the progress and talents of the BPOC community. Understanding how this privilege can be mobilised to support the work of BPOC collaborators is crucial.” [p21]

The report concludes:

“Understanding the nature of relationships between the cultural, migration and racial justice sector is important and complex work. While the findings of this report highlight some of the barriers and opportunities to meaningful collaboration, largely between white and BPOC led organisations, it’s clear more focus and investment into how to build better understanding of the links between racial and migration justice is essential work moving forward.

Though themes of race, structural oppression and power are very apparent within this research, it’s essential to understand this is an underlying and systemic issue that could therefore speak to any sector. However, those working specifically in the race, migration and the

cultural sector, which has the gift and responsibility of conveying these stories, need to be at the forefront of conversations around power, representation and meaningful change, as a leading example to others.” [p22]

And, finally:

“However, just as the pandemic has prompted new means of communication and engagement, it also presents an opportunity to reframe and reflect more broadly on how to repair past and current harms and commit to deep change for collaborations based on shared values, care and true equity.” [p22]

A thoughtful piece of work – recommended.<sup>20</sup>

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

### “Contested heritage”

The Culture Secretary, Oliver Dowden, has written an opinion piece<sup>21</sup> in *The Telegraph*, which explains his rationale behind the Government's "retain and explain" policy. The article, “We won't allow Britain's history to be cancelled”, links the moves to remove statues as part of “the culture wars” – and also announces the setting-up of a new Heritage Advisory Board whose job is to draw up new guidelines for heritage organisations on how “retain and explain” will operate.

There is also an important questioning MA “Opinion” article<sup>22</sup> by David Anderson (Director General of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales) in which he argues:

“As a political construct, the UK is failing. Its postwar cultural assumptions and compromises have finally been overwhelmed by multiple emergencies – the destruction of nature, inequalities, the pandemic, poverty and the undermining of democracy by populist politicians.

The Black Lives Matter movement has challenged cultural institutions to address their embedded structural racism. Many museums across the world have issued strong public statements of support, and committed to change their practices.”

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<sup>20</sup> Source: *Black & Asian News*, 7 May 2021.

<sup>21</sup> Source: Tweet from Lizzie Glithero-West (Chief Executive, The Heritage Alliance), see: [https://twitter.com/heritage\\_lizzie/status/1393878056222171136/photo/1](https://twitter.com/heritage_lizzie/status/1393878056222171136/photo/1).

<sup>22</sup> David Anderson “The sector is no longer unified on the subject of the British empire”, MA, 18 May 2021, <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/opinion/2021/05/the-sector-is-no-longer-unified-on-the-subject-of-the-british-empire/>.

David concludes by saying:

“After years of avoiding the issue of the British empire and colonialism, in which landowners, ship owners and traders in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland were actively engaged, we in museums should perhaps recognise that, on this crucial issue, we are no longer one unified sector.

At the heart of this debate is an ethical question that can no longer be evaded. As institutions of public memory, are we willing to publicly acknowledge the historical crimes committed by the British empire, from which our nations’ economies still benefit? Will we honour the promises many made last year to work to remove the structural inequalities minority groups face in museums?

If not, the growing tensions between the government-compliant museums in England, and museums across the four nations that strongly reject their position, may become a permanent schism.”

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

APPG = All-Party Parliamentary Group  
ARA = Archives and Records Association  
BPOC = Black People and People of Colour  
CPD = continuing professional development  
DCMS = Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport  
LGBTQIA = lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual  
MA = Museums Association  
NASUWT = National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers  
[former title – now known just as NASUWT – the Teachers’ Union]  
RSA = Royal Society of Arts

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