

Migration news roundup 27 June 2022

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Stories that inspired us this week

For Refugee Week the giant puppet Little Amal visited school children in Bradford and then received a warm welcome in sunny Leeds. (Sources: Bradford Telegraph and Argus, Yorkshire Evening Post)

Yezi, a Hong Kong teenager forced to leave their homeland, and Mona, a refugee from Sudan who has become a Labour councillor reflect on why they have become Refugee Week Ambassadors. (Sources: Politics Home, Metro)

A sewing group enabled a refugee to speak English more confidently in this informal, comfortable setting after she'd spent ten years in the UK making little progress with learning the language. (Source: BBC)

International news

37 million children were displaced worldwide in 2021 marking the highest number ever recorded. In his message for World Refugee Day, the UN Secretary General stated that protecting refugees is 'a responsibility we all share', highlighting the fundamental right to seek asylum and cross borders safely. (Sources: UNICEF, UN)

On Ukraine:

- As the total number of refugees from Ukraine passed 7.5 million people, UNHCR and charities warn that we need to plan for the long term. (Source: the Guardian)
- This op-ed from a Ukrainian refugee calls for more to be done to safeguard refugees in Europe vulnerable to human trafficking. (Source: inews)
- Poland has now received over four million Ukrainian refugees with 25,400 people crossing into the country on 17 June alone. (Source: The First News)

UK borders and migration policy

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced a policy change enabling unaccompanied children who have applied through the Homes for Ukraine scheme to have their applications processed. DLUHC is asking sponsors to provide accommodation for up to three years for children where their parents have consented to the arrangement. Already, a 17-year-old Ukrainian teenager's visa has now been approved months after she first applied to come to the UK. (Sources: DLUHC, BBC)

Other stories on Ukraine hitting the news include delayed payments for hosts have led to some sponsorship arrangements to breakdown as result of the financial burdens on hosts, and there continue to be reports of delayed visas for Ukrainians – sitting uncomfortably alongside reports of other children and families being left in precarious situations due to slower visa processing times caused by the Home Office giving priority to Ukraine Scheme applications. (Sources: Sky, Yorkshire Post, BBC, the Guardian)

Government published its Bill of Rights outlining its intentions to bring legal reforms to the UK. Proposals include stopping removals being blocked by human rights claims and ensuring that

injunctions from the European Court of Human Rights will not override British courts. Government hopes this will prevent incidences like the blocked removals of asylum seekers to Rwanda in future. Government confirmed it does not intend to leave the European Convention on Human Rights. (Sources: UK Parliament, Ministry of Justice, BBC)

The Prime Minister accused critics of the Rwanda policy of being condescending as he prepared to travel to the East African country where he was expected to raise concerns about human rights and Boris Johnson also met with Prince Charles who has been unsupportive of the policy. Migration Observatory published a briefing on the Rwanda policy. (Sources: Sky, the Guardian, Migration Observatory)

The government opened a consultation on legal aid fees for immigration cases, asking legal aid providers to respond by 8 August. (Source: Ministry of Justice)

Several new legal articles on refugees include this piece exploring the UK asylum system analysing the latest government data, a briefing examining the rights of refugees under the Refugee Convention and this article on the legal definition of a refugee (including a series of short explanatory videos). (Source: Free Movement)

Specific migrant groups

Asylum housing in Halifax is often of poor quality and in Doncaster people are increasingly housed in outlying villages with limited access to support according to 'Asylum housing in Yorkshire: a case study of two dispersal areas' - qualitative research exploring people's experiences of the asylum dispersal system (the report link is in the first paragraph). (Source: Solidarities)

There's a reported backlog of 23,000 cases in the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme as a result of staff cuts and legal challenges. Apparently only two cases have been processed since April. (Source: Daily Mail)

Government published statistics related to school placements for children from Afghanistan, Ukraine and Hong Kong arriving via formal programmes, with local authority breakdowns for September 2021 - May 2022. The data shows, for example, 8,500 applications for school places for Hong Kong children nationally with over 300 places offered in Yorkshire and Humber. (Source: Department for Education)

'No Light at the End of the Tunnel' is a research report on refugee family reunion from Europe that highlights the impact of family separation on refugees and the concerns over a lack of safe and legal routes enabling refugee family reunion between the UK and Europe following Brexit. (Source: Refugee Legal Support)

A survey of EU nationals on experiences of migration and settlement after Brexit describes Brexit as an 'open wound' as EU nationals continue to feel insecurity over their legal status and right to residence, and it's had a lasting impact on their feelings about Britain. In other news, these information sheets in different languages explain rights of EU migrants on topics from Universal

Credit to pensions. (Sources: Migzen, Citizens Rights Project)

A National Windrush Monument was unveiled at Waterloo station to mark Windrush Day on 22 June. Commemoration and celebration of the contributions and resilience by those identifying with the Windrush generation sit somewhat in tension with slow processing of compensation and given the needs of many claimants to the compensation scheme have not yet been met. An estimated 7% of those affected by the scandal have been financially compensated. London Mayor Sadiq Khan called for healthcare to be made free for all migrants, irrespective of status. (Sources: BBC Newsround, Independent, Manchester Evening News, GG2.net)

Cohesion and integration

A memorial is being erected in Essex to commemorate the Kindertransport. The monument will recognise the port of Harwich and its role in evacuating 10,000 children from Germany before the outbreak of war in 1939. (Source: BBC)

Research on the effects of certainty on the prospects of refugees and migrants found that giving immigrants options to stay for longer periods of time earlier in the process resulted in faster language learning, improved economic progress and a greater desire to integrate into the community. (Source: The Conversation)

A new briefing on English language provision in England finds while enthusiasm to learn is high among refugees and organisations are making English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision a priority, there are still significant barriers to accessing learning. The paper offers suggestions such as creating a strategy for ESOL with national targets and guaranteeing the right to access free English language learning during the asylum application. (Source: Refugee Action)

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