Migration news roundup 11 July 2022

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Stories that inspired us this week

Two inspiring stories this week are related to refugees from Afghanistan. The first features a British orchestra playing Afghan music and featuring exiled Afghan musicians at a time when the Taliban has banned music. The second is a spotlight on the real 'Bookseller of Kabul' who is now seeking asylum in the UK and dreams of setting up an Afghan reading room in the British Library. (Sources: the Guardian)

The Deathless Woman, a film about important events in Roma history, has been touring cities and towns across the UK, including Sheffield and Leeds. The screening has been followed by discussions and Romani language workshops. (Source: Deathless Woman)

In Bradford Aldo's Italian restaurant hired a Ukrainian teenager as a waiter and the restaurant owner sees his new recruit as 'a great addition to the team'. (Source: Telegraph and Argus)

UK borders and migration policy

The government is planning for a second attempt to remove asylum seekers to Rwanda. The flight will potentially be scheduled to take off before 19 July when the high court will rule on the scheme's legality. Meanwhile the Home Affairs Committee has heard evidence from refugee charities and

former immigration bosses about the impact of the Rwanda policy. The first woman to receive a notice of intent is reportedly a trafficking survivor. There are further warnings of the potential danger for LGBTQI+ people if removed to Rwanda. Unaccompanied children may be among those detained for the next flight. (Sources: the Guardian, Times Series, Mirror, The Times)

More than 3,000 people crossed the Channel in small boats in June, the highest monthly total so far this year. A smuggling gang thought to be behind 10% of crossings has been uncovered following a criminal investigation across five European countries. (Sources: ITV, the Guardian)

There are apparently plans for a 'league table' with countries ranked according to their willingness to accept returns of refused asylum seekers and offenders. There could be visa penalties for nations that do not co-operate. Meanwhile, the Home Office has announced plans for more generous conditions for New Zealand Youth Mobility visas following a similar agreement in respect to Australia. (Sources: Telegraph and Argus, Free Movement)

Across the UK there has been community resistance to immigration raids. (Source: the Guardian)

Specific migrant groups

On modern slavery, there are concerns that due to labour shortages, student visas could become the gateway for human trafficking as investigation of low or non-existent attendance at

universities uncovered widespread labour exploitation across the country. (Source: the Guardian)

On EU nationals, the caseworker suitability guidance was amended to remove the requirement for an application to be put on hold for at least six months where there is a pending prosecution, if the likely conviction doesn't meet criteria for a deportation. This change could help with delays within the EU settlement scheme which continue to feature in the media. Elsewhere, the High Court allowed a judicial review related to the rights of people with pre-settled status who do not apply for settled status in time. (Sources: Home Office, Mirror, the Guardian)

On the Hong Kong British Nationals Overseas (BNO) visa, an extension of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) funding for integration support has been confirmed for another nine months, with further details to follow. Meanwhile, Welcoming Committee for Hongkongers, hosted by British Future, published a report on experiences of Hongkongers settling in the UK. While many Hongkongers are feeling welcome, there has been criticism about a lack of appropriate mental health support. The chair of the Welcoming Committee and the director of British Future reflect on the importance of providing the right support from the start. (Sources: Twitter, British Future, the Guardian, Cap X)

On children and young people, the Children's Commissioner highlighted the importance of listening to refugee and

unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to ensure they are heard and represented in policy design, delivery and implementation. The Home Office is recruiting up to 40 social workers to join the National Age Assessment Board to build capacity to take over the assessments currently carried out by local authorities. Meanwhile Kent County Council's children's services are marked by Ofsted as 'outstanding' meaning that the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children for which the Council takes responsibility are well cared for. (Sources: Children's Commissioner, Community Care, BBC)

Cohesion and integration

Lochardil Primary School in Inverness has been recognised as Scotland's first School of Sanctuary. The school is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for young people seeking sanctuary. It is expected to receive its first young people from Ukrainian families in the area. (Source: City of Sanctuary)

Researchers conducted an online survey to measure attitudes in the UK towards refugees from different backgrounds. Over 70% of respondents felt the UK should help refugees fleeing conflict areas. However, when asked a more specific question, support for Ukrainian refugees was about 70% compared to only 50% for Afghan refugees. (Source: The Conversation)

The House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee called for a radical overhaul of the Life in the UK test, as the content

seems 'a random selection of obscure facts and subjective assertions that most people would not know'. (Sources: UK Parliament, Free Movement)

International news

UNHCR, UNICEF, and IOM recommend European countries consider alternatives to detention for asylum seeking, refugee, and migrant children. (Source: UNICEF)

Following the international attention that Spain received after the Melilla tragedy, the Spanish Prime Minister urged NATO allies to consider a bigger role for the alliance in North Africa and the Sahel. (Source: VOA News)

In Germany, it is expected that 130,000 asylum seekers will benefit from an immigration amnesty. (Source: InfoMigrants)

In Belgium, the army will create 750 temporary places in barracks to house asylum seekers to ease the pressure on their reception system for asylum seekers. (Source: Europe Cities)

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