

Migration news roundup 28 October 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

'Sanctuary', a musical story of an Iranian who searches for safety in a northern English church, is touring with performances in Leeds and Sheffield during early November. (Source: Theatre Reviews North)

In Bristol, resources from a scheme to support new parents and children at a young age are being adjusted for refugee and displaced families. Resources are available through the NSPCC site. (Source: BBC)

International news

Italy's courts have ruled it is permitted to send adult males seeking asylum from only six countries to a new application processing centre in Albania: Bosnia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Cape Verde. (Source: EUobserver)

Over 1.5 million Syrian refugees sought shelter in Lebanon after the onset of the Syrian civil war in 2011. Due to Israeli strikes on Lebanon, an estimated 425,000 people have sought shelter back across the border in Syria, including Lebanese people. (Source: the Guardian)

In the first week of October around 25,000 Sudanese people fled to Chad, a record number for 2024. Chad already hosts nearly 700,000 people from Sudan. (Source: the Guardian)

UK borders and migration policy

A list of organisations providing support with the transition to e-visas has been updated with those providing help at regional and local level. They include Citizens Advice (in Rotherham, Grimsby/Cleethorpes, and North Yorkshire), Phoenix (Doncaster), RETAS (Leeds) and St Augustine's (Calderdale). A law firm has provided answers to frequently asked questions on eVisas along with a guide to applications. (Sources: Home Office, Lewis Silkin)

Government announced 43,000 Seasonal Worker visas will be available for horticulture and 2,000 for poultry next year. Relatedly, results of the latest official Seasonal Workers survey, completed mainly by people from Central Asian countries, found most respondents said their experience was positive, but concerns reported include the quality of accommodation. (Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)

A baby tragically died when a small boat carrying 65 people capsized off the French coast last week. Relatedly, in France a trial of members of a smuggling gang is underway, thought to be responsible for the majority of small boat Channel crossings between 2020 and 2022. (Sources: the Guardian, BBC)

Over 3,600 people have been removed from the UK since the new government formed in July, most recently 44 people were removed to Nigeria and Ghana on a single flight. The article also reports that before the Chagos islands are legally handed to Mauritius, people arriving on Diego Garcia and claiming asylum will be sent to the remote British territory of St Helena. (Source: the Guardian)

Specific migrant groups

On asylum:

- A thinktank report recommends decentralisation of asylum accommodation to regional bodies, closing large sites and integration support to new arrivals. The Home Office is considering the use of break clauses to revise or terminate contracts with outsourcers. (Sources: IPPR, Financial Times)
- An independent inspection of contingency asylum accommodation for asylum seekers emphasised a long term, systemic 'lack of meaningful engagement with stakeholders and poor communication from the Home Office.' Government has accepted the recommendations, some only partially. (Source: Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI))

On children and young people:

- A submission to the ICIBI inquiry on age assessments highlights data showing the increase in the number of children wrongly assessed as adults, five times higher than in 2019. (Source: The National News)
- A parliamentary debate heard that nearly 450 children have gone missing from asylum hotels over a three year period between 2021-2024, of which 130 children have not been located. (Source: The Standard)
- Singing is a therapeutic medium for refugee children and enhances language skills, wellbeing and social cohesion, according to research findings from the Sing Up Foundation. (Source: Arts Professional)

The Home Office has promised that within two years it will have made decisions on modern slavery cases for more than 23,000 people still awaiting an outcome. 200 additional staff are being recruited to help achieve this. Meanwhile, a campaigning charity released the first of five linked reports stating the case for people being allowed to work whilst waiting for a decision on their modern slavery case. (Sources: BBC, Kayalaan)

More than 100 Nigerian nurses have written to Health Secretary Wes Streeting in relation to allegations of cheating in tests required to work in the UK. Many are appealing their removal

from the nursing register. (Source: the Guardian)

Cohesion and integration

Employment initiatives for refugees include a scheme to support refugees into work in the health and social care sectors in the Northeast and North Cumbria, with coaching and specialised English language lessons to build understanding of the health and care systems in England and the NHS. In East Sussex the 'Support into Work' project provides tailored advice, language training and job placement services. (Sources: International Rescue Committee, More Radio)

An article on energy deprivation among refugee communities in the UK looks at how housing and asylum policies impact on the concept of the safe space of home, as well as access to adequate energy services. (Source: Housing, Theory and Society)

Highlights from the Bradford Intercultured Festival include poetry readings, cooking classes, and documentary screenings. (Source: hyphen)

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