Migration news roundup 21 July 2025

This Migration News Roundup presents a selection of news, policy, research and statistics from the previous week on migration-related topics. The contents of each story do not necessarily reflect the views of Migration Yorkshire.

- UK borders and migration policy
- Cohesion and integration
- Specific migrant groups
- International news
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UK borders and migration policy

It was revealed that the Conservative government ran a secret Afghan relocation scheme called the Afghan Response Route, following a data breach in 2022 that put tens of thousands of people at risk from the Taliban. A legal ban on reporting the leak was lifted after an independent review concluded there's little evidence of any reprisals. The government issued an apology and advice to those who may be affected. (Sources: the Guardian, Ministry of Defence)

As the Home Secretary gave a statement in parliament on the UK-France migrant return deal there is still lack of clarity on many details such as how people will apply or be selected for the scheme. The agreement has drawn a mixed response from charities, officials and EU states. (Sources: UK Parliament, C4News, the Guardian)

For the first time, the government published the immigration status of people receiving Universal Credit showing that just under 17% of claimants are non-UK or non-Irish nationals, the largest group (9.7%) being EU citizens with settled status (1.5% are refugees, 1% have limited leave, 0.7% are in a 'humanitarian' group including Ukraine and Afghan schemes) nearly half of whom are also in employment. (Source: Department for Work and Pensions)

Cohesion and integration

British Future and the Belong Network published 'The State of Us', national research into community cohesion and held a webinar to mark the launch, a year after the summer 2024 riots. Despite the report identifying a 'powderkeg' of tensions (key concerns of people as the cost of living, public services, social media, immigration and asylum, and trust in politicians and institutions) and a 'doom loop' of ineffective responses, it advises possibilities for change can be found in local communities. The research is based on views from across the country, including Yorkshire and Humber, and provides the evidence base for the Independent Commission on Community and Cohesion as it prepares for a 'national conversation'. (Sources: British Future, You Tube, 1hr)

There were clashes outside a hotel in Essex accommodating asylum seekers following the arrest of an individual for the alleged sexual assault of a local girl. The police are analysing footage showing criminal damage to police vehicles and assault

of police officers. (Sources: GB News on Youtube, BBC)

Specific migrant groups

On the asylum system:

- After updated country information on Syria was published for decision makers, the Home Office announced it will begin to process Syrian asylum claims after a long hiatus. (Sources: UK Visas and Immigration, BBC)

- Analysis of the reduced overseas aid budget by the aid watchdog has found asylum support costs will continue to take up one fifth of spending despite government efforts. (Source: Independent Commission for Aid Impact)

Research concludes the government's response to care worker exploitation, the International Recruitment Hubs, has been ineffective and that vacancies in the care sector are incompatible with skilled visa restrictions. Meanwhile, in a somewhat surprising intervention, a Reform councillor has urged the Home Secretary to reconsider the decision to end this Social Care Worker Visa migration route. (Sources: Work Rights Centre, LocalGov)

A one year pilot project, to reduce homelessness and access the private rented sector among people recently granted refugee

status, published its findings and made recommendations including making permanent the move-on period being 56 days, standard financial practices across councils, and the same financial support for people with refugee status as others leaving institutional care. (Source: Boas Trust)

This updated guide aims to help councillors understand how they can address modern slavery as part of their role. It includes case studies on the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership and on Rotherham council. (Source: Local Government Association)

The Windrush commissioner said he'll work on making the compensation scheme fair, accessible and trauma-informed with quicker outcomes. He seemed less keen on suggestions to move the scheme out of the Home Office to another department, fearing it would slow down processes further. (Source: ITV)

International news

The UK and Germany signed a ‘Friendship treaty’ on defence and migration that means by the end of 2025 it will become a crime in Germany to facilitate smuggling of people to the UK. This is about supply lines, allowing German authorities to prosecute people storing equipment such as dinghies in warehouses. Relatedly, Germany approved a two-year suspension of family reunification for refugees with subsidiary protection, mainly affecting Syrian families. (Sources: C4News, InfoMigrants)

A set of research commentaries consider EU-Africa migration and why EU migration strategies keep falling short while this systematic review of migration research in West Africa highlights a dominance of economic and social studies compared to those covering gender and youth. (Sources: Italian Institute for International Political Studies, Comparative Migration Studies)

Stories that inspired us this week

Mustafa Mohammadi and Kawita Sarwari, PhD students from Afghanistan at Leeds University, share their stories as the university is granted sanctuary status. (Source: University of Leeds)

Leila Aboulela, a writer who migrated to the UK from Sudan, won the prestigious PEN Pinter Prize for her writing on immigration and religion. (Source: Publishing Perspectives)

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