

Migration news roundup 30 October 2023



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Stories that inspired us this week

Enjoy beautiful pictures and discover the inspiring story of a Ghanaian photographer 'Lucky Jim' who documented Ghanaian everyday life over many decades as the country freed itself from colonial rule. (Source: the Guardian)

An art project between the University of Oxford (COMPAS) and 'Cities and Memory' is creating a sound map of migration stories with recordings of everyday sounds. (Source: The Art Newspaper)

Families in Bradford have been enjoying days out in Ilkley as part of a local community initiative to 'extend the hand of friendship to those fleeing war and persecution'. In Preston, Adnan, a young Afghan cricketer, has won a Fostering Excellence Award. (Sources: Ilkley Gazette, Lancashire Post)

International news

The Italian prime minister acknowledges the efforts to stop unauthorised crossings as the number of migrants reaching Lampedusa falls for the first time this year. Germany approves the immigration bill extending detention time and allowing swift removal of people's who's asylum claim was unsuccessful as Germans' opinions on migration remain divided. (Sources: Info Migrants, AP News)

Outside Europe, Pakistan calls unregistered migrants, including Afghans, to voluntarily leave before November or face forceful removal. (Source: Reuters)

UK borders and migration policy

Following recent calls for a refugee scheme for Palestinian people, Financial Secretary to the Treasury said this would not be the 'right response' at this point. This is while the government is consulting local authorities on their capacity to support resettled refugees in light of plans for an annual cap on people arriving via 'safe and legal routes'. (Sources: Independent, Home Office)

The government published an equality impact assessment related to the planned further increase in the Immigration Health Surcharge, with this new briefing on UK immigration fees explaining the context. Elsewhere, there are reports that some Home Office staff have voiced criticism of the Illegal Migration Bill expressing concerns about the practicalities of implementing the legislation. (Sources: Home Office, House of Commons Library, inews)

A new report on destitution in the UK recommends local authorities should be resourced to ensure people with no recourse to public funds can access emergency help when needed. Relatedly, this briefing covers the subject of free childcare and the no recourse to public funds condition. (Sources: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Praxis)

Specific migrant groups

The government announced the closure of up to 50 asylum hotels by January 2024 as the Home Office works its way through cutting down the asylum backlog. The Local Government Association (LGA) issued a statement in response to the news highlighting the impact on local authorities and expressing concern that local authorities will ultimately end up paying to keep people who are seeking asylum in the same hotels due the demand for housing being exacerbated by the increase in asylum decision-making. This article fact-checks recent claims by Immigration Minister Robert Jenrick related to the backlog, while the Public Accounts Committee has raised concerns about the Home Office's plans about the whole Asylum Transformation Programme stating that the approach doesn't seem to have been 'thought through'. Meanwhile, a charity has instigated legal action against the Home Office in relation to delays in asylum decision-making. (Sources: Home Office, LGA, Telegraph, BBC, UK Parliament, Asylum Aid via Twitter)

Also on asylum, the Home Office paid over £15 million to purchase a disused prison site that was sold for £6m last year. The Home Office is said to be considering the site for immigration detention for people who are seeking asylum and facing removal to Rwanda. (Source: Times)

On resettlement, due to the pressure from Pakistan and several legal challenges, the government has changed its position to enable the resettlement of hundreds of Afghans stranded in

Pakistan despite not yet having accommodation in place for the prospective arrivals. (Source: Independent)

On children and young people, the government's plan to use MRI scans to assess the age of children who are seeking asylum has been criticised by the Scottish Government as being 'incompatible with the progressive, inclusive values of people in Scotland'. Meanwhile in Northern Ireland, young people seeking asylum share their struggle to access post-16 education and are asking for more educational support. (Sources: The Herald, BBC)

Modern slavery stories this week:

- There are disturbing reports of exploitative conditions experienced by people working on UK farms as part of the Seasonal Worker scheme. (Source: Independent)
- According to a new report analysing data from the Modern Slavery Helpline cases of exploitation in the care sector are on the rise. (Source: Unseen)
- This podcast shines a light on the experiences of domestic workers in the UK while this article highlights their vulnerability to exploitation. (Sources: the Guardian, BBC)

International students from across Africa felt intimidated by the UK border force's new approach in which knowledge of the university course content seems to be an entry requirement. (Sources: Pie News)

Cohesion and integration

A landfill site in Northern Ireland was transformed into a colourful community flower garden by a group of Syrian men wanting to give something back to their local community, which has helped them with studying English and settling into the community. (Source: BBC)

Approximately 4,000 Hongkongers who have moved to Sutton feel integrated and have contributed significantly to the local economy. (Source: Telegraph)

A Faith Museum, the first of its kind in Britain, has recently opened with around 300 objects and hopes to challenge assumptions about religion, suggesting that faith is about people, connectivity and community. (Source: The Conversation)

A recent survey showed that the majority of British adults have little knowledge of Black British History. The Nigerian-born children's author Atinuke has called for the government to include more integration of Black British history in the education system. (Source: the Guardian)

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