Migration news roundup 31 March 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
- Specific migrant groups
- Cohesion and integration
- International news
- Stories that inspired us this week

UK borders and migration policy

On returns:

- Government is considering creating ‘return hubs’ in Balkan countries to remove people whose asylum claims are refused. The hubs would take those waiting to be transferred home and whose country of origin is considered unsafe, but would not include children. (Source: BBC)

- This analysis of removals from the UK over the past two decades explores the decrease in removals in the 2010s and the subsequent increase. (Source: Migration Observatory)

Despite government focus on preventing small boat crossings, people travelling concealed in vehicles through juxtaposed controls in northern France remains highly likely. The inspection report of operations to prevent clandestine vehicle entry criticises under-investment. Relatedly, several men were arrested after an Albanian woman and child were smuggled to the UK on a lorry and ferry and arriving in North Lincolnshire. Meanwhile, over 5,500 people have arrived in the UK on small boats this year, the highest number for this point in the year since recent records started. (Sources: Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, Independent, BBC)

In relation to official arrival routes:

- In light of imminent expansion of the Electronic Travel Authorisation scheme to European nationals, this article provides key information. (Source: Sky)

- This article provides an employer perspective on challenges and complexities of the Skilled Worker visa. (Source: People Management)

- 9% of NHS doctors are from 'red list' countries that the World Health Organization recommends not recruiting from due to shortages in their own health systems, according to a report examining the impact of Brexit on health. (Source:

Nuffield Trust)

- This analysis suggests recent growth in the economy is due to migration. (Source: UK in a Changing Europe)

Specific migrant groups

On asylum support:

- A company that manages over 50 hotels accommodating asylum seekers, mostly in London, had its contract terminated by the Home Office. The contract has been transferred to Corporate Travel Management who faced considerable criticism over management of the Bibby Stockholm barge. (Source: the Guardian)

- An investigation reports of sexual assault and harassment in mixed sex hotel accommodation sites. (Source: the Guardian)

Uncertainty over visa extensions is having a negative impact on Ukrainians in the UK, such as in relation to jobs and renting homes, when they near the end of their visa or are waiting for a decision on their application to extend it. (Source: BBC)

This factsheet looks at modern slavery reconsiderations, where individuals ask for their case to be reconsidered after a negative national referral mechanism (NRM) decision. It recommends changes to the reconsideration process and the repeal of a higher evidence threshold introduced by 2022 legislation. Meanwhile here's some analysis and critique of recently published NRM statistics, looking at changes in decision-making over time. (Sources: After Exploitation, Free Movement)

Raymond Lee was wrongly denied Windrush compensation, despite turmoil he and his family experienced in the late 1990s when he was denied re-entry to the UK. The refusal of compensation, now acknowledged as a 'legal error', means others could have their cases reconsidered. (Source: the Guardian)

Cohesion and integration

This practical blogpost looks at how sport can support community-building, inclusion and anti-discrimination in relation to refugees recommending, for example, that sports infrastructure is made accessible to refugees and positive stories are shared to counter misinformation. It lists resources about how sport has supported integration of refugee communities around the world. (Source: International Platform on Sport and Development)

In this article, people reflect on living in or near the Wethersfield asylum centre that opened in 2023. It features interviews with

refugees who live on site and local residents of Finchingfield. The article suggests initial concerns by all groups have not lasted. (Source: BBC)

International news

‘After a decade in exile, how do you uproot yourself and your family yet again?’ This article looks in-depth at the complexities Syrians face in deciding to return home, affected by a lack of infrastructure, economic stability and security, costs of returning and rebuilding, and political uncertainty. (Source: The Conversation)

The Irish government published a plan to implement the EU Migration and Asylum Pact. Effects on asylum seekers will include movement restrictions, potential detention, and one appeal opportunity. (Source: The Irish Times)

Stories that inspired us this week

This is the story of Gurinder, an older refugee from India with serious health problems who faced homelessness. He found a place to call home after getting support from a refugee support service. (Source: Scottish Refugee Council)

The local community in Dorset will welcome two Afghan families through the Communities for Afghans scheme, with support from the local council. (Source: Dorset Echo)

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