Migration news roundup week commencing 23 February 2026

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 ‘earned settlement’:

- The government’s consultation closed with over 130,000 responses, while a new alliance of migrant skilled workers is preparing a legal challenge to proposed retrospective changes to policy, which could affect millions of people who relocated to the UK during the past five years. (Source: Electronic Immigration Network)

- This article highlights some worries people from Hong Kong living in the UK have in relation to proposed changes. (Source: BBC News)

- This briefing answers frequently asked questions on changes to immigration rules, explaining that revisions of visa and settlement regulations do not require a vote from MPs. (Source: UK Parliament)

- Analysis of the links between migration policy and skills identifies significant gaps in data and limited evidence to support government policy. (Source: Migration Observatory)

On small boats, campaigners from France and the UK urge the airlines believed to be involved in the 'one in, one out' scheme to stop facilitating the removals. Meanwhile, concerns over access to interpreters have been raised during an inspection of a flight to France, with the report noting that very few detainees understood what would happen to them on arrival in France. Those returned describe their experiences here, with one saying, 'they are playing a game of football with us – we are the ball.' Finally, migrants whose phones were confiscated after arriving in the UK via the English Channel will receive compensation after a high court ruling that the seizures were in violation of their human rights. (Sources: the Guardian, HM Chief Inspectorate of Prisons, Info Migrants)

In other news:

- New passport rules for British dual nationals have been introduced, sparking a debate on whether the policy discriminates against women from countries that require both maiden and married surnames as official ID. (Sources: BBC, the Guardian)

- This briefing on immigration fees shows that the Home Office made £3billion in 2024, up from £184million in 2003. The figure is based on fees alone and does not include NHS surcharge fees or employer levies, which take the figure to over £6billion. (Source: House of Commons Library)

Specific migrant groups

On modern slavery, three men were re-arrested in Liverpool on suspicion of human trafficking of Vietnamese nationals, while in London a woman from Brazil was sentenced to three years in prison for subjecting her compatriots to modern slavery abuses. Elsewhere, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ) has published an in-depth analysis of what it sees as government 'inaction' to protect migrants on seasonal worker visas from exploitation. (Sources: BBC, The Standard, TBIJ)

A partnership of universities urges exemptions from the international student levy for PhD students, fully funded scholars and short-term exchange visitors, arguing these measures are needed to protect research talent and minimise harm to

universities. (Source: Russell Group)

A coalition of refugee and children's organisations has called for the Home Office National Age Assessment Board (NAAB) to be disbanded. The group argues that the NAAB is traumatising young people who seek asylum, wrongly classifying many as adults, and putting children at serious risk.
(Source: the Guardian)

In case you missed it, the Independent Monitoring Authority (IMA) expressed concern about the risk of vulnerable people being left with no rights, in light of Home Office plans to stop funding organisations to support EU nationals with their EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) applications. (Source: IMA)

Cohesion and integration

BBC News uses the County Durham town of Horden as a case study for people feeling left behind by mainstream politics. The article also looks at how a sense of abandonment has created consequences for the Nigerian families who live in the town, who have experienced targeted harassment as a result. Relatedly, an opinion piece on the Labour Party's 'migration doom loop' examines the long term impact of reduced migration and warns against undeliverable policies that erode public services and the economy, leading to further social unease. (Sources: BBC News, Prospect)

According to predictions from the Office of National Statistics, net migration to the UK could be negative by the end of this year. The Guardian looks at the significant impacts this might have on the national economy and the political environment. (Source: The Guardian)

International news

The Trump administration is expanding the authority of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to detain legally admitted refugees, requiring them to be re-vetted and detained after one year in the US if their green card applications remain pending. (Source: Reuters)

The UN has warned that millions of Afghans forcibly returned from Pakistan and Iran are pushing Afghanistan toward humanitarian collapse, with 2.9 million returns recorded in 2025 alone. (Source: AP news)

In Europe, Greece is working with several other EU countries to establish deportation centres outside the EU for migrants whose asylum claims have been rejected. (Source: AP news)

Stories that inspired us this week

The King made an unannounced visit to a refugee jobs fair at St James's Palace, where hundreds of qualified refugee professionals met leading UK employers. The event was organised by the Refugee Employment Network with support from World Jewish Relief, where The King is

Patron. (Source: Jewish News)

The Yorkshire Evening Post has published a list of activities taking place in Leeds this month as part of the Lunar New Year celebrations. These activities include events at the University of Leeds, Merrion House, and the Leeds Chinese Community School. (Source: Yorkshire Evening Post)

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