

Migration news roundup 10 March 2025

Image

View of Houses of Parliament from bridge over river Thames

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

There are a number of stories relating to people crossing the Channel in small boats:

- An inquiry has begun into the tragic events of November 2021, when at least 27 people lost their lives while attempting to cross the Channel in a dinghy.
- Home Secretary Yvette Cooper and the French Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau, have agreed new measures to tackle smuggling gangs. This article considers the potential success of the tactics being deployed.
- A UK government advertising campaign in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq aims to warn potential migrants about people smugglers' lies.
- Former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has said he regrets the 'Stop the Boats' slogan.

(Sources: Sky News, Home Office, BBC)

The government has announced that a new 'immigration crack squad' will work with prisons to expedite the removal of foreign national offenders (FNOs) who currently make up around 12% of the prison population. (Source: Home Office)

EU visitors can now apply for the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) needed for the travel to the UK from 2 April. Meanwhile, the government confirmed the plans to exempt BN(O) passport holders from ETA requirements, initially introduced to this group in January. From now on, all people with a biometric-chipped passport or national identity card can update all their UKVI details, including name and nationality, online. (Sources: Home Office, Hong Kong Watch)

The government has also produced a series of guides in multiple languages to help ensure people receive reliable immigration advice. The guidebooks highlight risks posed by unregulated advisors and give details on how to report illegal activity. (Source: Immigration Advice Authority)

In an interview this week, the Director of the Migration Observatory at Oxford University noted that the net economic impact of immigration on Hull and East Yorkshire was 'surprisingly small'. (Source: BBC)

Specific migrant groups

A briefing on the use of the Overseas Development Fund on asylum costs has made five recommendations to reduce spending. There has also been renewed calls for the government to lift the ban on working for people seeking asylum in order to free up the international aid budget. In our own region, people seeking asylum in Leeds share how the ban has affected their ability to start a new life in the UK, with one person describing themselves as a 'wasted resource'. (Sources: IPPR, PoliticsHome, BBC)

The refusal rate for people seeking asylum from Afghanistan has seen a considerable increase with only a third of cases granted refugee status in the last quarter of 2024. Campaigners have questioned the wisdom of negative decision making when neither enforced nor voluntary removal to Afghanistan is currently possible. (Source: the Guardian)

On modern slavery, official data on referrals to the NRM (National Referral Mechanism) has been published for the last quarter of 2024. Referrals are at their highest quarterly level since the NRM began in 2009, with top nationalities being referred in 2024 being British, Albanian and Vietnamese. Analysis for the whole of 2024 indicates that over half of decisions (reasonable grounds and conclusive grounds) are positive, and the number of conclusive grounds decisions are notably high (highest since the NRM began and 78% higher than 2023). (Source: Home Office).

On migrant workers, this article suggests that recruitment is more difficult for some employers following government measures to reduce the numbers of people applying for certain visas. This analysis raises concerns of risks of overseas workers being exploited in sectors such as construction and hospitality. (Source: BBC Work Rights Centre)

Data from ApplyBoard suggests that international students' aspirations, as reflected by their field of study, align with the UK's and global long-term workforce demands. Following a fall in the number of international students in Sheffield, business owners in the city express their worries on the negative impact upon their business. (Sources: HEPI, BBC)

There are a number of stories on children and young people this week:

- A report by the Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium highlights flaws in the UK age assessment process.
- The Children Commissioner shares her view on the impact of the new immigration Bill on children seeking asylum and emphasises the need for safer routes to protect them.
- A new report outlines significant challenges for children and young people seeking asylum to access education, with cases of young people having to wait beyond eight weeks when placed in areas of high concentration of asylum accommodation.

(Sources: Refugee Council, X.com, Electronic Immigration Network)

Four Windrush projects in Yorkshire and Humber are being funded under the government Windrush Day Grant 2025, out of a total of 30 projects announced. (Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)

Cohesion and integration

BBC News has conducted a series of interviews with the public across the country to find out what 'Immigration' means to them. You can find the piece done for Yorkshire and the Humber here. (Source: BBC)

This blog post makes the case for tailored employment and integration support for new refugees . It shows that labour market access creates little 'pull factor' for new immigration, while employment support brings benefits for individuals and communities. (Source: ACH)

A scoping review of integration programs for refugees across the UK and Sweden. highlights the importance of investment in integration for social and health outcomes. (Source: Springer Nature)

International news

The European Union Agency for Asylum released their annual analysis of asylum applications in the EU for 2024. The data shows a slight decrease in applications compared to 2023. Syrians remains the largest group to make applications, despite a 17% decrease in comparison to 2023. Venezuelans are now the third biggest group. (Source: EUAA)

The European Commission is considering proposing new laws which would enforce deportations of people whose asylum claims got rejected. Additionally, they are considering sending those who entered the EU 'irregularly' to 'return hubs' located in third countries. On the topic of 'third countries', this article explores why some Central American countries are willing to take in migrants from elsewhere that are being deported from the United States. (Sources: Info Migrants; Al Jazeera)

Stories that inspired us this week

After receiving an Academy Award in Los Angeles, actress Zoe Saldña gave a touching speech expressing her pride in being a child of immigrants.(Source: The Hill)

Lyza, a 15-year-old from Ukraine, shares how joining Action Foundation's Young Lives project in Newcastle helps her feel supported and connect with people with similar experiences. (Source: BBC Sounds)

Contact us about research

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