Migration news roundup 20 January 2025

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Stories that inspired us this week

A young man who escaped the Taliban and travelled across Europe to seek sanctuary in the UK, and is now studying at Warwick University, recounts his experience of that journey. (Source: the Guardian)

Sam Abbas, an Egyptian and American film producer, has released a new film, 'Europe's New Faces,' highlighting the Médecins Sans Frontiers rescue ship, Geo Barents, and the experiences of migrants who crossed the Mediterranean Sea from Libya to settle in Paris. (Source: Deadline)

International news

In Europe, there was a 24% decrease between October 2023 and October 2024 in first-time asylum applicants applying for international protection in EU countries. Meanwhile, with a month until Germany’s general election the AfD party is being investigated on suspicion of incitement to hatred’ after

publishing an election campaign flyer shaped like a boarding pass calling for the deportation of ‘illegal immigrants’. In Calais, a protest involving 73 organisations was planned to call for the UK government to provide safe and legal routes for migrants trying to cross the Channel and for the French government to end its own hostile policies towards migrants. (Sources: Eurostat, Independent, the Guardian)

It's been reported that a record number of 31,000 migrants were deported from Algeria to the Niger border during 2024, with frequent mass arrests in places where migrants live and work, as well as an increase in chain deportations from Tunisia to Algeria and then on to Niger. (Source: InfoMigrants)

UK borders and migration policy

The regulatory body for immigration advisers, the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) has been rebranded as the ‘Immigration Advice Authority’ (IAA). The service will have an expanded role, aiming to be more accessible, and with a ‘more robust approach to regulation and enforcement.’ (Source: IAA)

This article describes the challenges faced by people seeking asylum who are LGBTQI+ due to being required to provide a higher standard of proof of their sexual orientation or gender identity since the Nationality and Borders Act 2022. (Source:

Open Democracy)

An independent report by Stephen Shaw evaluating immigration detention reform has been published (completed in 2022, it relates to people detained between 2016 and 2020). The author concluded the Home Office had strengthened its focus on vulnerability, but that there was further progress to be made in addressing the aims of the reform programme. (Source: Home Office)

Talks have begun between the UK and Iraq on a possible returns agreement. (Source: Prime Minister's Office)

Specific migrant groups

On asylum:

- Government reiterated its commitment to reduce the use of hotels for asylum accommodation with an announcement that nine hotels are scheduled to close by April. Meanwhile, Angela Rayner, the Deputy Prime Minister, is advocating for a return to local authority control of asylum housing. (Sources: Independent, Express)

- A government report has concluded the Home Office pilot scheme that used GPS tags to monitor asylum seekers was ineffective and did not improve compliance with bail conditions. The pilot ended in December 2023, following a legal challenge. (Sources: Home Office, Independent)

The most recent report on safeguarding pressures from the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) highlights how a lack of safe and legal routes, delays in the asylum system and funding pressures are resulting in significant safeguarding risks for unaccompanied children. (Source: ADCS)

In case you missed it, guidance for local authorities, in relation to their responsibilities for looked after children and the EU Settlement Scheme, has been updated to include: information on the relevant High Court judgements relating to joining family members arriving in the UK from 1 January 2021; reasonable grounds for late applications and British citizenship registration; fees and fee waivers. The guidance on managing applications for homelessness assistance for EU nationals with pre-settled status was revised following a court judgement addressing these rights under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. (Sources: Home Office, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)

A recent freedom of information request has revealed that Hongkongers arriving to the UK under the BN(O) visa route are experiencing higher levels of destitution than was anticipated,

with approximately 4 per cent of applicants applying to remove the NRPF condition from their visa. (Source: COMPAS)

Cohesion and integration

In response to recent social media attention on grooming gangs, comments by Nigel Farage and Elon Musk's attempts to intervene in British politics, More in Common has run a number of polls to establish what the British public think about these issues. (Source: More in Common)

Two reports have been published on the impact of refugee and asylum accommodation on individuals: a review of the effects of temporary housing on mental health in several countries and a report from the Welcoming Mayors project 'Treat us Like Humans', looking at the lived experience of those in the asylum system and focusing on how current housing provision isolates service users from important services and the local community. (Sources: King's College London, NACCOM)

Six British people with different views on immigration in the UK, including a haulage business owner from Barnsley, are taking part in a new Channel 4 show. They will follow the dangerous journeys made by asylum seekers to try to reach the UK, starting in the cities of Mogadishu and Raqqa. (Source: The Irish News)

Trinh Tu, Managing Director of Public Affairs at IPSOS and UK UNHCR trustee, shares her story of coming to the UK as a Vietnamese refugee, her struggles with finding an established

community, and how her experiences help guide her actions now in supporting refugees into valuable work and research positions. (Source: UNHCR)

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