Migration news roundup 10 December 2024

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Stories that inspired us this week

Barnsley Refugee Council’s new Bike Project workshop was officially opened by triple Olympic gold medallist, Ed Clancy OBE . The workshop repairs pre-loved bicycles to bring them back into community use. (Source: Barnsley Borough City of Sanctuary)

Cindy Ngamba has become the first Refugee Olympic Team medallist to be inducted into the Wall of Fame at the English Institute of Sport. The UK based Cameroon-born boxer, was the first refugee to win an Olympic medal. (Source: Olympics.com)

International news

UK Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, welcomed the sudden fall of the 'barbaric regime' in Syria and called for peace and stability. (Source: BBC)

The Australian parliament has approved a series of measures designed to further discourage migration, including expanding Australia’s offshore detention system and prison sentences for those who resist deportation orders. (Source: Human Rights Watch)

A record number of migrants have arrived in Spain's Canary Islands in 2024, with 41,425 individuals recorded so far, mostly from Mali, Morocco and Senegal. The Spanish government plans to offer 900,000 visas to undocumented migrants already in Spain, whilst also pledging to reduce the number of new arrivals. (Source: Voice of America)

UK borders and migration policy

Amid concerns, the government has postponed the full rollout to eVisas. Expired biometric residence permits can now be used for travel until the end of March 2025, with further detail provided in this new Home Office factsheet. Also on visas, this article considers the impact on people's lives of delays to renewal decisions. (Sources: The Standard, Home Office, Sky News)

47 Sri Lankan Tamils arrived in the UK this week following a three-year camp stay on the island of Diego Garcia, part of a British overseas territory soon to be handed to Mauritius. They have been granted leave in the UK for six months, but their longer-term options are unclear. (Source: the Guardian)

Small boat Channel crossings made the headlines again with reports that more than 20,000 people have arrived via this route since July. The Home Office has blamed an unusual number of calm crossing days in the autumn. Meanwhile, there is news of detentions of people attempting to enter the UK via the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, with the border being reportedly used as a safer alternative to crossing the Channel in

a small boat. (Source: the Guardian)

The regulatory body for immigration advisers, the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) is to be replaced by the 'Immigration Advice Authority' from 2025. (Source: Free Movement)

Specific migrant groups

There are a number of recent stories on asylum:

- The 'Move on period', within which newly granted refugees are required to leave government supported asylum accommodation and transition to mainstream housing, will temporarily increase from 28 to 56 days from 9 December. This move has been welcomed by the Local Government Association, homelessness charities and many others.

- Home Secretary Yvette Cooper announced a review to explore the increase in asylum applications from people already in the UK.

- Figures released show that spend on the asylum system reached a record £5.38 billion last year.

(Sources: BBC, Local Government Association, The Standard, The Independent, Sky News)

On refugees, the situation for Afghans awaiting resettlement and family reunion in the UK was raised in the House of Lords, drawing attention to a recent report highlighting problems relating to decision-making, variation within relevant policies and delays. It has also been announced that the Refugee Employability Programme, which provides support with finding work, will end in June 2025. (Sources: They Work For You, Refugee Legal Support, Home Office)

Hampshire Country Council has highlighted the benefits of creating specialist teams for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and care leavers within children's services. Staff develop knowledge of the asylum process and legislative changes, are trained in trauma informed practice and often come with language skills and cultural awareness. (Source: Community Care)

A recent judgement related to an EEA national confirms that a period of imprisonment in the UK breaks the period of lawful residence making some ineligible for status under the EU Settlement Scheme. (Source: Free Movement)

On migrant workers, the government is to strengthen action against employer sponsors who break visa rules or breach employment law. It is hoped the measures will help address the exploitation of overseas care workers. There has also been an

increase in arrests related to illegal working. (Source: Home Office)

Cohesion and integration

A new research report has found that engaging with nature has an important role to play in integration. The research highlights its importance in promoting health and wellbeing for migrants, as well as how nature-based activities can create opportunities for social interaction within communities. (Source: Cambridge Network)

A new data report on migration and housing in the UK shows how home ownership increases over time among people born abroad, but they are still at greater risk of living in overcrowded conditions. The report also shows rising homelessness trends among people leaving asylum accommodation. (Source: The Migration Observatory)

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