Migration Yorkshire policy update August 2021

An overview of the latest statistics, policy and research on migration issues affecting partner organisations in Yorkshire and Humber.

Summary

- New immigration data covers visas for Hong Kong nationals, the new resettlement scheme and a better breakdown of data for the EU settlement scheme. (para.1)
- Record numbers of small boats crossing the Channel have been reported in 2021. (para. 4)
- The Queen’s Speech outlining government priorities included New Plan for Immigration legislation and measures to address racial and ethnic disparities. Campaigning against the New Plan continues. (paras. 8, 10)
- Falls in EU nationals in the UK are affecting the hospitality and food sectors. (para. 12)
- Official guidance clarifies the policy of rough sleeping as grounds for deportation, and government wants to see greater cooperation to tackle the issue. (para. 13)

- Relocation of Afghan interpreters to the UK will be accelerated. (para. 22)
- Housing eligibility regulations now allow Hong Kong British nationals to access social housing and homelessness assistance. (para. 23)
- The courts continue to consider aspects of the immigration system with recent rulings on asylum, on citizenship for children and in Windrush cases. (paras. 25, 26, 30, 36)
- The Home Office announced a new voluntary rota system and additional funding to encourage councils to ‘share the load’ in caring for unaccompanied children. (para. 29)
- International students need to transition to face-to-face learning this autumn. (para. 33)
- There has been much criticism of the Windrush compensation scheme. (para. 35)
- Hull, N Yorkshire, York, N Lincolnshire and NE Lincolnshire councils are participating in a pilot decision-making scheme regarding child victims of modern slavery. Independent Child Trafficking Guardians are now in place in West and North Yorkshire. (para. 40)
- Consequences of EU nationals not applying to the EU settlement scheme before the June deadline include effects on the right to work, rent, access the NHS, to access benefits and higher education, with different details and policies now in effect. (para.48)
- Numbers of migrants at the US/Mexico border reached a new high, and ‘pandemic refugees’ and ‘climate refugees’ are being discussed in the Americas. (para. 71)

- Local migration stories feature York, Craven, Bradford, Leeds and Sheffield. (para. 74)

UK migration trends

1. Home Office quarterly statistics now cover the year March 2020-2021, which means a full year of data showing the impact of the pandemic on migration trends as well as what has happened with the new points-based immigration system post-Brexit. It goes without saying that there were falls in almost all migration trends. One captivating headline was that there were far more visa applications from people from Hong Kong than from the EU in Q1 (Jan-Mar) 2021. Some highlights:

- New data released covers visas for Hong Kong nationals (34,000 BNO visas), EU nationals (5,000), health and care workers (14,000 issued); figures for the new resettlement scheme 'UKRS' (25 refugees were resettled in March); and, a better breakdown of data for the EU settlement scheme (EUSS) shows 5 million people have applied (and 5.3m applications) - far higher than government's original estimate of the eligible population - and numbers who have moved from pre-settled to settled status.
- Exceptions to the falling trends include: seasonal worker visas quadrupled to over 10,000, most of them issued to Ukrainian nationals, EEA/EUSS family permits increased, and citizenship applications by EU nationals rose by 45%.

- While Chinese students are still the top nationality for study visas, they fell disproportionately compared to other students, probably due to the fact that Covid restrictions first occurred in China. The biggest increase in study visas was to Nigerian students.
- Grants of protection (either through asylum or resettlement routes) were less than half the level of the previous year, the lowest level for nearly a decade. Much of that is down to fewer asylum applications (27,000, a fall by a quarter), fewer initial decisions on asylum applications (13,000 rather than nearly 21,000) and the temporary stop to resettlement for much of the year.

(Sources: Home Office, Migration Observatory)

2. The next quarterly data is expected to be published towards the end of August 2021.

UK borders and migration policy

Channel crossings

3. The National Strategic Assessment for serious crime in the UK identified a *decreased* threat of modern slavery, human trafficking and immigration crime in 2020 largely due to the pandemic, but recognises these may be underreported. It warns

of the adaptability of organised crime groups e.g. using small boats landing at small ports and use of fake Covid-negative certificates (paras. 67-74 of the full report). This commentary argues that with increased border security migrants can no longer make journeys themselves, while smuggling gangs have become more powerful and lucrative. (Sources: National Crime Agency, the Guardian)

4. Published figures show around 4,500 people have crossed the Channel in small boats this year to mid-June. Record numbers of small boats were reported across the first four months of 2021, with numbers of arrivals doubled in that period compared to 2020. It's thought that the rise in small boats being used by smugglers is shifting migration patterns. (Sources: BBC, the Guardian)

5. Media reports of channel crossings continue to be prevalent, including claims that smugglers are using 'poorer' migrants as 'decoys' to divert authorities' attention so those with more resources a better chance, and that Covid rates among migrants crossing the Channel are 20 times higher than among UK residents, denied by the Home Office. Rather confusingly, a Border Force vessel entered French waters taking people on board from a boat and bringing them to Dover. (Sources: Express, Daily Mail, Independent, Sky News,)

6. Charges have been dropped against 11 migrants for steering small boats, after an Iranian asylum seeker was cleared of similar charges. Successful prosecutions have led to a person

jailed for smuggling migrants to the UK hidden in furniture while a Salford man was imprisoned for providing false documentation for flights. The maritime industry is being asked to report suspicious purchases of boats and equipment, and licences may be required for purchases of engine-powered boats. (Sources: Independent, the Guardian, Gov.uk, National Crime Agency, the Times)

7. The Prime Minister apparently criticised Home Secretary for lack of progress on the issue of Channel crossings, and commentators have discussed why they think her asylum plan won't fix it. The Home Secretary accused social media companies such as TikTok and Facebook of 'glamourizing' Channel crossings. It has been speculated that the upcoming Online Safety Bill will censor conversations about migration. (Sources: Daily Mail, Freemovement, Sky News, Open Rights Group)

Post-Brexit immigration

8. The Queen's Speech outlining government priorities for the coming year included:

- 'Measures will be brought forward to establish a fairer immigration system that strengthens the United Kingdom's borders and deters criminals who facilitate dangerous and illegal journeys (New Plan for Immigration Legislation).'
- Measures to address racial and ethnic disparities
- ID required when voting

- British nationals living overseas for more than 15 years will be given the right to vote in elections under the electoral integrity bill.

9. The Home Secretary revealed further details about the New Plan for Immigration, and plans for border control changes (you can watch her speech here or read the full transcript) including plans for border digitisation – in future everyone except UK and Irish citizens will need Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) before coming here. She was unwilling to be drawn on whether the proposed changes would lead to a rise or fall in net migration . (Sources: gov.uk, Independent)

10. Examples of the criticism and campaigning against the New Plan include a public statement by nearly 200 organisations describing the Plan as 'vague, unworkable, cruel and potentially unlawful', the 'Together With Refugees' campaign launched by a coalition of organisations (including some from Yorkshire and Humber) and some famous faces, Yorkshire charities, housing charities, the Anti-Slavery Commissioner, and the European Network on Statelessness regarding stateless children. Lawyers are challenging the Home Office over the consultation process for the New Plan. Further, there is a collation of media and stakeholder responses to the New Plan to mid-April. (Sources: the Guardian, Together with Refugees, YouTube, Yorkshire Live, Inside Housing, IASC, European Network on Statelessness, the Independent, House of Commons Library)

11. Meanwhile France, Germany and Belgium ruled out bilateral agreements with the UK to return asylum seekers who passed through those countries, which will make it harder to implement some aspects of the New Plan. (Source: the Independent)

12. Also on post-Brexit immigration:

- There is a new overview of the post-Brexit points-based immigration system. (Source: Migration Observatory)
- Aiming to attract qualified professionals from abroad, government is proposing a new framework to recognise professional qualifications and regulate professions. An earlier consultation identified seven regulatory bodies with specific measures in place to support refugees (p.12) (Source: BEIS)
- A jobs website reported a 36% fall in EU nationals searching for UK work; the hospitality sector is reportedly struggling with recruitment as it prepares for the lifting of restrictions and EU 'waiters and baristas' are not returning to the UK after the lockdown, while British-produced meat could soon be in short supply. (Sources: the Guardian, Hospitality and Catering News, New European, BBC)
- A scheme similar to current Youth Mobility Schemes has been agreed with India, meaning 18-30 year olds in the UK and India will be able to live and work in the other country for up to two years. (Source: Gov.UK)
- The government is consulting on offering non-UK service personnel indefinite leave to remain with no visa fees. (Source: gov.uk)

The hostile environment

13. Government wants greater multi-agency cooperation to tackle rough sleeping, with councils asked to consider all legal options to support people not eligible for homelessness assistance due to their immigration status, including working with the voluntary and community sector and with the Home Office. Government guidance clarifies that the policy of rough sleeping as grounds for deportation will only apply after repeated refusals of support and persistent anti-social behaviour and is not applicable to those without support due to NRPF, EU nationals or refugees. Concerns are that the policy will lead to mistrust of services and be open to interpretation (e.g. what constitutes an offer of support). Legal critique considers that the policy will be difficult to implement if councils do not provide evidence when they have refused support. (Sources: Gov.uk, Homeless Link, Free Movement)

14. An Early Day Motion calling for the regularisation of undocumented migrants was signed by MPs including Sheffield's Olivia Blake MP. This was based on research and the 'We Are Here' campaign. (Sources: UK Parliament, JCWI)

15. Three reports cover immigration status: impact upon people's lives and families and impact of the pandemic on migrants with insecure status. (Sources: University of Bristol, Migrant Voice, GMIAU)

16. The High Court criticised aspects of the 'no recourse to public funds' policy for failing to protect the rights of children. (Source: Free Movement)

17. A court ruling means it will be easier for migrants to access personal data from the Home Office, including information about their case. (Source: Free Movement)

18. There was a lot of media coverage of scenes in Glasgow where people from the community surrounded an immigration van to prevent two men being taken away. (Source: BBC)

19. There are proposals to change how people on immigration bail are monitored, meaning that an individual's every move would be tracked. Campaigners have asked the government to rethink. (Source: Bail for Immigration Detainees)

20. On detention:

- Psychiatrists warn of suicide risk when detaining individuals who are mentally unwell, and the courts ruled that the lack of procedure for prison doctors to notify concerns about vulnerable immigration detainees is unlawful. (Sources: Guardian, Independent, Free Movement)
- Some immigration detainees held in prison, including torture and trafficking victims, have reportedly spent more than 23 hours a day in solitary confinement, for periods of up to a year. (Source: the Guardian)
- The Home Office faces a legal challenge relating to equality rules, on its plans for a women's detention centre in the

north-east. (Source: the Guardian)

21. On forced removals:

- An investigative piece describes the experiences of asylum seekers removed on a flight last summer, some of whom may have been modern slavery victims. (Source: the Guardian)
- A deportation flight to Vietnam was chartered for the first time. The Home Office was accused of holding people in facilities where access to legal advice may have been more difficult. (Source: Guardian)
- There's criticism of the Judicial Review Bill which would prevent tribunal decisions on deportation from going to judicial review. It is claimed that up to 1 in 11 such reviews are successful. (Source: Independent)

Specific migrant groups

22. The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy, which enables Afghan interpreters and other staff who supported British troops to be relocated to the UK with their families, is to be accelerated due to the withdrawal of military forces in Afghanistan. (Source: Ministry of Defence)

23. On Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders:

- BN(O) visa holders fear being prevented from leaving the Hong Kong by a new immigration bill passed by China.

(Source: the Standard)

- A House of Commons briefing gives an overview of the Hong Kong visa scheme, while some reflections focus on the absence of a political backlash. (Sources: House of Commons Library, Conservative Home)
- Housing eligibility regulations have been amended to allow Hong Kong BN(O)s to access social housing and homelessness assistance, effective from 29 June. (Source: gov.uk)
- There is a trend in Hong Kong nationals buying houses in London. (Source: Yahoo Finance)
- Some Hongkongers are struggling with culture shock and fear of retaliation from China as they settle in London. (Source: Evening Standard)
- Pro-Hong Kong marches commemorating first protests have taken place across the UK and incidents of hate crime experienced by Hongkongers have been reported. (Sources: LBC, Hong Kong Free Press)

24. UNHCR report 'I am human' looks at the experiences of stateless people in the UK, including participants in Bradford. It says statelessness should be considered a protection matter, calls for legal aid for statelessness cases, and for applicants to receive support and accommodation whilst awaiting a decision. (Source: UNHCR)

Asylum seekers and refugees

25. Asylum accommodation issues during the pandemic continue to be investigated in the courts. The latest development at the time of writing (last week of June) was that the Home Office succeeded in a judicial review in overturning a tribunal decision that had prevented the eviction of some asylum seekers whilst Covid-19 restrictions remain. The judge determined that asylum seekers' human rights would not be breached if they were not provided with accommodation if they weren't already in the system. Previously the High Court had ruled that the Home Secretary may have used public funds unlawfully by changing accommodation policy during the pandemic to evict refused asylum seekers, due to the health risks associated with pandemic, and that support must be provided until Step 4 of the Roadmap for lifting lockdown restrictions (the lifting of all curtailment on social contact). This is not the end of this case; the judge sent the case back to the immigration tribunal to be reconsidered. (Source: the Guardian, Freemovement)

26. While the High Court also found in April the Home Office acted unlawfully in deciding to house asylum seekers at Napier barracks (Kent) which didn't meet minimum standards, the Home Office countered that this judgement didn't take recent improvements into consideration and re-opened the barracks as asylum accommodation for several hundred residents. Subsequently, over 40 asylum seekers were placed in the barracks only to be transferred out again due to their vulnerabilities making the housing unsuitable. There are plans to increase capacity of the barracks. (Source: the Independent)

27. Further news on asylum seekers and refugees includes:

- The report 'Far from home' describes asylum housing as often inadequate, unsafe and unsanitary. It calls for government to take a more compassionate approach and for a formal independent inspection regime to monitor conditions. (Source: British Red Cross)
- Problems with the changes to payment cards issued to asylum seekers (known as ASPEN) were highlighted to the Home Secretary in parliament. (Sources: the Independent, Hansard)
- The impact of the UK asylum system on asylum seekers' mental health was debated in parliament and explored in a parliamentary research briefing. (Source: Hansard, House of Commons Library)
- Home Office attempts to fast-track removal of asylum seekers who had arrived on small boats in the run up to Brexit has been described as 'inhumane' by the Independent Monitoring Board for a removal centre. (Source: Independent)
- A new Home Office factsheet on safe and legal routes to the UK for refugees covers resettlement and family reunion visas. (Source: Home Office)
- Reading University relaunched their sanctuary scholarship scheme, with up to 12 scholarships a year. (Source: Greatest Hits Radio)

Children, young people and students

28. On children in Europe:

- Over 18,000 unaccompanied children went missing, including trafficked children, in Europe between 2018 and 2020. Save the Children have also reported unaccompanied children are facing abuse, violence and illegal pushbacks at borders. (Sources: Lost in Europe, Guardian, Save the Children)
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and other vulnerable adults with a right to join family in the UK before Brexit are stranded in Greece and Italy. This is thought to be because the cases have been delayed by Covid-19 for over 6 months, and thus the UK is no longer obliged to act – despite the Home Office previously promising to process any family reunion transfer requests submitted before the UK left the EU. (Source: the Guardian)

29. Regarding unaccompanied children arriving in the South East:

- There has been much media coverage on migrant children arriving by boat across the Channel. A young refugee in Kent spoke about why it is important to give young refugees support when they arrive, whilst Kent Refugee Action Network raised concerns that children will be held for long periods of time in an unsuitable intake centre. (Sources: Daily Mail, BBC Newsnight from 28:30)
- After Kent county council issued legal proceedings against the Home Office over the numbers of unaccompanied

asylum seeking children it cares for, the Home Office announced a new voluntary rota system and additional funding as part of an update to the national transfer scheme (NTS). The changes aim to encourage councils to ‘ share the load’ supporting young people who arrive on the south coast. As of 11 June, Kent refused to accept any more children after warning its services were at breaking point for the second time in a year. Renfrewshire council agreed to take part in the National Transfer Scheme. (Sources: the Guardian, ITV, Community Care, the Times, Daily Record)

30. The Home Office settled a judicial review of five children who had grown up in the UK and were seeking to register as British citizens but their applications during their teenage years were refused. As a result, the Home Office will be reviewing the policy on registering children as British Citizens by discretion. Relatedly, Panorama investigated the experiences of young people who’ve grown up or were born in the UK but don’t have the right to apply for British citizenship. (Sources: PRCBC, BBC)

31. This story, covering advertisements placed during the Second World War by Jewish families in Vienna seeking to send their children to safety, tracks down descendants to find out what happened to some of the children. (Source: the Guardian)

32. New research outlines the barriers to accessing higher education facing young people with insecure immigration status and calls on education institutions to train staff to understand these issues and provide better support. (Source: The Centre for

Education & Youth)

33. The distance learning concession for international students will end on 27 September 2021, meaning students will be required to transition to face-to-face learning. (Source: Free Movement)

Windrush generation

34. 22 June was Windrush day, celebrating and commemorating the arrival of people from the Caribbean after WWII with various events, exhibitions and a memorial plaque honouring campaigner Paulette Wilson. (Sources: BBC, the Independent)

35. The main developments regarding the Windrush generation concern criticism of the processing times and payments under the compensation scheme (few payouts and small payment amounts). The June Windrush Compensation Scheme factsheet confirms 732 people have received payment, but there were over 2,000 applications in mid-May. The National Audit Office found applications were accepted before it was ready to compensate and has subsequently made progress, and a judicial review has been lodged regarding the pace of payouts. 21 people have passed away while awaiting compensation. Campaigners argue the scheme should not be run by the Home Office. (Sources: Sunday Post, BBC, the Negotiator, the Guardian, Channel 4)

36. Other Windrush developments include:

- The High Court ruled ‘the 'good character’ requirement for receiving citizenship is unlawful in Windrush cases. This has a direct impact for members of the Windrush generation refused naturalisation on good character grounds. The court also ruled that charging family members to come to the UK is unlawfully discriminatory. (Source: Freemovement, Northern Farmer)
- Engagement meetings with government are described as a ‘waste of time’ by activists and those affected directly by the Windrush scandal, who also reported a lack of empathy from case workers. (Source: the Independent)
- Stories about individuals caught up in the Windrush scandal include Richard Black, a British citizen stranded in Trinidad and Tobago since 1983 who is about to return to the UK, while Rupert Everett passed away in 2019 before his rights were reinstated. (Sources: the Independent, ITV)
- A monument honouring the Windrush Generation designed by four artists of Caribbean descent will be installed at Waterloo Station. (Source: BBC)

Modern slavery

37. The latest National Referral Mechanism (NRM) statistics show:

- 2,945 potential modern slavery victims were referred to the NRM between January - March, a 3% decrease on the previous quarter but 3% higher than the equivalent quarter

last year.

- Labour exploitation remains the most common exploitation type for adults and the top 3 nationalities were UK, Albania and Vietnam.
- Responsibility (for crime investigation) for 216 of the referrals was allocated to Yorkshire and Humber police forces - an indication of the number of potential victims exploited here. (Source: Home Office)
- There are media claims of migrants claiming to be modern slavery victims in order to avoid deportation (Source: Daily Mail)

38. The Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre released their strategy (one aim is ensuring the voice of people with lived experience informs research and policy) and a report on the top 20 non-UK source countries for modern slavery in the UK highlighting differences in the profile of victims from the different countries, along with differences in the NRM decision outcomes based on nationality. Recommendations include a focus on support towards recovery and reintegration, more informative data by the Home Office, and strengthening of support infrastructure for victims. Another briefing looking at links between modern slavery and international development policies recommends that modern slavery considerations become part of mainstream international development policy. (Source: MSPEC)

39. Ten migrants were rescued from a refrigerated lorry in Worthing, and Hampshire police are carrying out lorry spot

checks due to concerns about possible trafficking. (Source: the Sun, Portsmouth News)

40. Local authorities will be making decisions on child victims of modern slavery, as part of a pilot scheme – Hull, N Yorkshire, York, N Lincolnshire and NE Lincolnshire are participating. Those involved in a child's care will be part of the decision-making process at a more localised level. Rollout of Independent Child Trafficking Guardians continues – in our region they have now been launched in W and N Yorkshire. (Sources: Gov.uk, ECPAT)

41. The New Plan for Immigration has been criticised for not including a survivor perspective. (Source: Anti-Slavery International)

42. New guidance may make it harder for modern slavery victims to avoid detention – evidence that it would make individuals 'particularly vulnerable to harm' is now needed. (Source: gov.uk)

43. In terms of support provision, latest research and practice includes:

- Barriers to legal advice for victims include confusion among lawyers and practitioners about legal aid entitlement, and the fixed fee structure acting as a disincentive to take on complex cases. (Source: Nottingham Rights Lab)
- In a report outlining the benefits of employment and barriers to work for modern slavery victims, the anti-Slavery Commissioner recommends the development of an

accredited work preparation curriculum, and a reintegration strategy. (Source: Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner)
- Access to mobile technology is beneficial for survivors' wellbeing. (Source: Unseen)
- The situation where asylum seeking trafficking victims with children receive lower financial support than victims of slavery entitled to mainstream benefits has been ruled unlawful by the High Court. (Source: Free Movement)
- Investigation of a police super-complaint concluded the police response to modern slavery has improved but victims aren't always well supported. (Sources: gov.uk, the Independent)
- EU citizens are less likely to seek support from the NRM than people seeking asylum, claims a report on homelessness and modern slavery. (Source: Crisis)
- Sheffield-based Snowdrop Project was recognised at the annual Centre for Social Justice Awards. (Source: The Star)

EU nationals

44. Latest national EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) statistics show:

- Over 5.6 million applications have been made to the scheme so far. The most recent monthly statistics show just over 182,500 applications in May 2021.
- For over a year there has been a noticeable increase in 'other' outcomes. Over 240,000 applications have been

either refused, invalidated, withdrawn or voided and in May 2021, other outcomes account for nearly a quarter of all decisions. Over 300,000 applications are outstanding.
- A parliamentary briefing provides an overview of the EUSS numbers in the final month. (Sources: Home Office, House of Commons Library)

45. Breakdown of local data:

- Latest local authority level statistics (to the end of March 2021) show over 282,000 applications to the scheme in Yorkshire and the Humber.
- **Nationality**: the top nationalities of applicants in our region remain Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Italy, Latvia and Lithuania. Polish remains top in most places, but Romanian is top in Barnsley, Doncaster, Ryedale, Scarborough and NE Lincolnshire (jointly with Poland), while Slovak remains top in Bradford, Sheffield and Rotherham.
- **Age**: applications from under 18s account for 19% of applications in the region, compared to 14% nationally. In areas like Bradford, Rotherham and Kirklees this rate is between 22-24%. Older applicants (65+) account for 2% of applications in Yorkshire and Humber, same as nationally, though some North Yorkshire districts like Richmondshire and Craven have a higher rate at 5%.
- **Delays**: there are 20,000+ outstanding applications in the region, 7% of all applications. Leeds has the highest number, Bradford the highest rate (9%).

- **Outcomes**: 54% have been granted settled status, 42% pre-settled, with 5% receiving other outcomes, in line with national trends.

(Source: Home Office)

46. The estimated number of children looked after and care leavers eligible to apply for the EUSS has been revised to 3,660. Of these, 67% have made an application and 48% secured status. It identified 465 eligible children in Yorkshire and Humber, of which 136 (29%) are yet to apply. (Source: Home Office)

47. Experiences of the Windrush generation led to more naturalisation applications by EU nationals in the last quarter of 2020. (Source: Byline Times)

48. Consequences of not having EUSS status after the 30 June deadline include effects on the right to work, rent, access the NHS, to access benefits and higher education, with different details and policies in effect. A Commons' briefing and IPPR report provide a useful overview. (Sources: House of Commons Library, IIPR).

49. Advisers accredited at OISC Level 1 limited to EUSS can support late applicants. Organisations funded by the Home Office can continue to work with vulnerable individuals beyond the deadline. Zambrano carers – non-EU carers of British children – can now apply to the EUSS, even if they had another type of leave to remain. A judicial challenge to digital-only status

has been judged as premature. Another challenge in regards to adults lacking mental capacity has been withdrawn following the EUSS caseworker guidance being updated to account for this cohort. (Sources: OISC, Free Movement, Migrants Organise)

50. The Independent Monitoring Authority (IMA), set up to uphold the rights of EU citizens residing in the UK before Brexit, published its first annual plan. (Source: IMA)

51. New and updated guidance includes:

- EUSS guidance on absences due to Covid-19 which now allows a break in continuous residence for a period of over 12 months, if related to the pandemic. (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)
- A guide to immigration status for EU nationals which explains public services such as DWP, HMRC and NHS can now access EUSS status automatically (without a share code). It is not clear when this will be expanded to include councils. (Source: gov.uk)
- Guidance for employers and landlords which confirm that no retrospective checks are required for those employed or having tenancies signed before the EUSS deadline. (Sources: Home Office, London Business Hub)

52. Press reports cover EU nationals held in detention and fingerprinted at the UK border; the EU called for government to respect the rights of their citizens. Locally, some EU residents in York were sent 'go home' letters. (Sources: the Guardian, the

London Economic)

Cohesion and integration

53. For the first time on 6 May all refugees and migrants 16+ and resident in Scotland had the right to vote. EU nationals retained their rights to vote and stand in this year's local elections, with the first Romanian county councillor in Cambridgeshire and the first Roma councillor in Newcastle. Their future voting rights will depend on agreements reached with separate EU countries. (Sources: BBC, Parliament, London Economic, gov.uk)

54. Recent anti-migrant activism included members of far-right groups visiting hotels again, including those in York and Sheffield, and have asked the public to submit details of 'migrant hotels'. Apparently many pro-migration activists provided names of decoy hotels, sending them on a 'wild goose chase'. (Source: the Guardian).

55. More insights into the differential impact of Covid-19: disproportionate impacts are felt by women and lowest earners, and by minority ethnic groups and refugees as they are more likely to live in overcrowded and inadequate housing, and how national, regional and local policymakers can address the unequal impacts of Covid on UK society. (Sources: IPPR, Housing Evidence, The Conversation)

56. Syrian Voices is a community history and documentary film project recording the experiences of Syrians forced to seek refuge in the UK. (Source: The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities)

57. A joint event of the APPGs on Migration and Social Integration discussed overcoming barriers to Britishness. Relatedly, Am I British panorama programme looked at the effects of the immigration system on young people who spent most of their lives in the UK, but are not British by law. (Sources: YouTube, BBC)

58. According to a 'global attitudes towards refugees' survey 73% people in the UK agree someone should be able to seek refuge in another country but there is widespread scepticism in relation to how 'genuinely' those coming to their countries need refuge (in Great Britain 56% believe that people seeking refuge are not genuine refugees). Only 48% think that most refugees who come here will successfully integrate into UK communities. (Source: IPSOS)

59. While British community groups 'help refugees integrate' government is making it harder according to the University of Huddersfield; people with refugee protection will be socially excluded for as long as policymakers consider them to be 'taking from a society'. They suggest policy considerations need to be around ideas of 'what they can bring'. (Source: The Conversation).

60. Research reveals 66% of people identifying as white and 65% of those identifying as ethnic minority agree the England football team belongs to people of every ethnic background in England. The report says sport plays a crucial role in debates about whether you can be from an ethnic minority background and be English. (Source: British Future)

61. A photo essay on anti-Asian racism and crimes suggests that while racism against people from Asian background has been around for a long time, the pandemic has become an excuse for people to be more open about their views, both in the UK and more globally (Source: Guardian)

62. Discrimination, unaffordability, instability and unsuitability of the housing system has generated a housing emergency where 6% live in homes that harm their physical health, and where people that identify as ‘Black’ or ‘Asian’ are more likely to experience discrimination. (Source: Shelter)

International news

Europe

63. Despite decline in travel due to the pandemic, migrant arrivals into Europe continue via the Mediterranean and the Balkans (often with the assistance of smugglers) as do counter-efforts by states to stop people from travelling across land and sea, leading to thousands of deaths. Accusations by the UN and

human rights organisations include state violence, pushbacks, unanswered distress calls from boats, obstruction of NGOs, and calls for European governments and Libya to act. (Sources: Infomigrants, the Guardian, Euractiv, Politico, EU Observer)

64. The European Commission adopted a strategy on voluntary return and reintegration of migrants and asylum seekers. The EU and Afghanistan signed a declaration to facilitate deportation of Afghans who came to Europe to seek protection. (Sources: Eureporter, European External Action Service)

65. Four young Afghans were jailed for 10 years for starting a fire at the **Greek** Moria refugee camp last year, despite much criticism of the legal process. Greece defended its use of sound canons to stop migrants crossing the Turkish border. Systemic overcrowding has eased in Greece's island migrant camps, and there has been mass vaccination for refugees still living in them. (Sources: Civil Fleet, the Guardian, Greek Reporter, Reuters, Ekathimerini, Al Jazeera)

66. In contrast, 700,000+ third country nationals in **Italy** can't book vaccinations because they lack health insurance cards or other documents. Investigators suggest Italian authorities know that Libya is unwilling or incapable of looking after migrant boats at sea, and UNHCR appealed to Italy to not impede NGO ships rescuing boats from Libya. Lampedusa is struggling to cope with arrivals, with around 700 migrants arrived on Lampedusa on a single day in June, Italy asking for help from other EU countries and a warning that more than 70,000 migrants are waiting in

Libya to make the crossing to Europe. The Times reported on the parallel lives of holidaymakers and asylum seekers. (Sources: Info Migrants, the Guardian, the Independent, BBC, Info Migrants, the Times)

67. Denmark's anti-immigration government passed a law enabling deportation of asylum seekers to a third country. They have also been condemned for insisting that Syrian refugees can return to Syria, and far-right activists have been attacked for their 'go back to sunny Syria' posters. (Sources: Al Jazeera, the Guardian, the Telegraph)

68. Spain deployed troops after record numbers of migrants entered Ceuta, one of its enclaves bordered by Morocco. 8,000 migrants, including 1,500 children, swam or waded around the border fences. This inflamed tensions between Morocco and Spain, the latter considering ending the deal that allows visa-free crossing into Ceuta and Melilla. Morocco agreed to readmit unaccompanied Moroccan minors who recently entered Ceuta, while many migrants have been attempting to enter the port at the other Spanish enclave in Morocco, Melilla, to board ferries to mainland Europe. (Sources: BBC News, Reuters, Info Migrants)

69. This year's Eurovision contest included three performers from refugee backgrounds representing **Russia**, **Sweden** and **the Netherlands**. (Source: UNHCR)

Beyond Europe

70. UNHCR and OECD have documented refugee admissions from 2010-2019 through resettlement and other safe pathways like family reunion. They applaud countries for hosting 1.5 million refugees this way, but warn about the impact of COVID-19, saying this should not lead to longer term reductions. (Source: UNHCR)

71. In the **US**, President Biden increased the cap on the number of refugees the US will take. The number of migrants reaching the US-Mexico border hit the highest level in more than 20 years with over 180,000 migrants, mostly single adults, arriving in May. US VP Kamala Harris offered a stern message to Central American migrants to 'not come' to the US, to much criticism. Recent months have brought a new type of migrant arrivals - pandemic refugees - while the Biden Administration is looking at how to identify 'climate refugees'. Brexit has reportedly 'fuelled' the migrant crisis in the US as central and eastern Europeans who can no longer come to the UK instead head to the US through Mexico. (Sources: CNN, BBC, Common Dreams New York Times, Clean Technica, the Mirror)

72. Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala deployed troops to try to slow the progress of large numbers of migrants making for the US. Apparently the Biden administration is investing in Central American countries to address the reasons why people migrate. (Source: Aljazeera)

73. Over a million people have been internally displaced in **Ethiopia's** Tigray region, with concerns about children being out

of school and at risk of exploitation, the sites where people are living are overcrowded, unsanitary, unsafe, and Covid-19 measures are impossible. As fighting began during harvest time, now there is widespread malnutrition. (Source: Infomigrants)

Local stories

74. Community stories about asylum seekers and refugees in Yorkshire and Humber include:

- An allotment project in **York** won funding for transport to enable refugees to get to their plots, visit garden centres and share food. (Source: Yorkshire Post)
- GPs in **York** have been ensuring people seeking asylum being accommodated in hotels get vaccinated and receive health care. (Source: York Press)
- A story about BIASAN with links in **Craven**, North Yorkshire, recognises their work with asylum seekers and refugees. (Source: Craven Herald)
- The **Bradford** Literature Festival (25 June – 4 July) offered free tickets for its live events to people who are refugees or seeking asylum. There are pre-event videos about Roma heritage and music. (Source: the Bookseller)
- A photography project for refugees in **Bradford** using smartphones was to be shown during Refugee Week. (Source: Telegraph and Argus)
- In **Bradford**, people were encouraged to join in a fast for Ramadan to raise funds for and awareness of care leavers

and unaccompanied asylum seeking children. (Source: Telegraph and Argus)

- **Bradford** Schools of Sanctuary produced an Art Exhibition on this year's Refugee Week 2021 theme 'We cannot walk alone', while Leeds United did a feature highlighting their Premier League Kicks programme working alongside the Syrian Refugee Centre. (Sources: Bradford for Everyone and Leeds
- Alford Gardner from **Leeds**, a RAF veteran and original Windrush passenger, featured on the Antiques Roadshow filmed at Newby Hall, Ripon. (Source: LeedsLive or watch the episode at 41-42:30)
- Some things still available from Refugee Week: a video with **Leeds** United footballer Nohan Kenneh talking to his former primary school in Leeds about what it was like to move here from Liberia, and an art installation created by a group of women from Leeds, including refugees and asylum seekers. (Source: Leeds United, Mafwa Theatre)
- From laptops for pupils to phone support for those feeling isolated, people seeking asylum in **Sheffield** have been supported in many ways in the pandemic. (Source: The Star)

About this issue of the policy bulletin

This update was prepared in July 2021 by a team at Migration Yorkshire: Pip Tyler, Kate James, Vanja Čelebičić, Ewa Jamróz, Rosie Cooke, Stefan Robert, Vicky Ledwidge, Alex Fox, Laura-Maria Ruiz Duarte, Sarah Botterill, Caris Etherington and Sophie Tong.

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