Migration news roundup 19 June 2023



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Stories that inspired us this week

Refugee Week 2023 starts on Monday 19 June. It's the 25th anniversary since Refugee Week was founded in the UK and this year's theme is compassion. You can find out about events taking place across the UK. (Source: Refugee Week)

Cohesion and integration

Marking the anniversary of the arrival of HMT Empire Windrush in Britain, the 'Windrush 75 series' is set to explore the history, contribution, challenges, and opportunities for those who arrived to help rebuild Britain after the second world war. Find out about recommended literature, how cricket helped Windrush arrivals build a sense of home and the Windrush dance revolution from Birmingham basements to the Notting Hill Carnival. (Source: the Conversation)

Royal Mail have issued a special collection of stamps by Black British artists, specially commissioned for the Windrush anniversary. (Source: the Guardian)

International news

Poland and Hungary have announced their opposition to proposed changes to EU migration and asylum law. In other

news, the EU could give Tunisia over €900m to support its economy and for 'border management, search and rescue, and returns'. (Sources: Info Migrants, Aljazeera)

UK borders and migration policy

On small boat crossings:

- Last year the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) rescued 108 people crossing the Channel to the UK – nearly a third of the total number of people rescued by their lifeboats that year. Listen to an interview with the RNLI (from 1hr 35 mins).
- 616 people made the journey last Sunday, the highest daily total in 2023.
- This podcast considers small boat crossings in detail with input from politicians, individuals specialising in migration, and an Iranian man who made the dangerous journey. You can also listen to this report from northern France (from about 24 mins).

(Sources: the Guardian, BBC, Politico via Spotify)

Two relevant parliamentary reports were published this week:

- The House of Lords Joint Committee on Human Rights concluded that the Illegal Migration Bill 'breaches a number of the UK's international human rights obligations and risks breaching others'. There's a brief overview here.

- A Home Affairs Committee report states that Albania is generally a safe country, although it recognises problems for groups such as women and trafficking victims.

(Sources: UK Parliament, Free Movement)

This article argues that rather than problematising the recent high net migration figures, the government should recognise the benefits of migration, particularly in alleviating labour shortages in social care. (Source: the Conversation)

Here's an interesting listen about the history of migration to the UK. (Source: Unherd via Spotify)

Specific migrant groups

The National Audit Office (NAO) published a report on the Home Office's Asylum and Protection Transformation Programme, stating Home Office spending nearly doubled since 2021-22 and that objectives to reduce costs will not be met at the current pace. In other news, the Home Office is facing legal challenges against plans to remove protections from HMO licencing rules from asylum accommodation. (Sources: NAO, the Guardian)

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced new £150m funding for local authorities to support people from Ukraine to move on from the Homes for Ukraine scheme by assisting with access to the private rental market and employment. (Source: DLUHC)

On children and young people:

- ECPAT UK launched a legal challenge against Kent County Council and the Home Secretary over the issue of children going missing from Home Office run hotels. This comes as a senior family court judge ruled that unaccompanied children housed in Home Office hotels are ‘children in need’, protected under the Children’s Act 1989 and that local authorities should fulfil their statutory duties towards them.
- The issue of child detention has led to debates as the House of Lords examines the Illegal Migration Bill.
- Fact-checkers have revealed that claims made by the government that up to a fifth of adult male asylum seekers claim to be children upon arrival in the UK is false. Home Office data showed the actual figure was 1%.

(Sources: ECPAT UK, Article 39, the Conversation, the Guardian)

Many UK Universities are adopting new international recruitment practices to attract diverse talent to the UK education sector while maintaining confidence in immigration rules. (Source: Universities UK)

Police are investigating an incident of a Hong Kong BN(O) protester who was attacked by a Chinese activist. In more positive news, Migration Yorkshires Hong Kong Hub has produced new videos explaining the role of the Hub and sharing stories of Hongkongers who settled in the region. (Sources: the Guardian, Twitter, YouTube)

Changes are planned to amend the voting rights of EU citizens for elections, preserving the right to vote and stand in elections for those who've been living in the UK since before 31 December 2020. A new study explores the impact of the end of free movement on sectors which most relied on EU nationals. (Source: gov.uk)

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