Migration news roundup 10 July 2023



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Stories that inspired us this week

On the 75th anniversary of the founding of the NHS, Gulzar Waljee tells her story of coming from Tanzania to be a midwife in the UK and how 'immigrants like me are the lifeblood of the NHS'. (Source: Metro)

Bristol's Dovetail orchestra, made up of refugees from all over the world, held their first public performance, providing a 'musical sanctuary', while the University of Reading was awarded University of Sanctuary status. (Sources: BBC, Wokingham Today)

International news

The Dutch coalition government collapsed following discord on asylum issues. The four governing parties disagreed on policy measures to reduce the number of asylum seekers pivoting on reducing options for refugee family reunion. (Source: Politico)

On EU border crossings:

- This article suggests figures on border crossings around the edges of the EU reported by border agency Frontex imply higher numbers of people than in reality, as it records entry attempts rather than individuals. (Source: InfoMigrants)

- Spanish police broke up a criminal gang smuggling people an unusual route from Syria. (Source: the Guardian)
- This article describes how smugglers provide children with sleeping tablets to keep them quiet during the crossing of the Croatia-Slovenia border. (Source: InfoMigrants)

UK borders and migration policy

On the Illegal Migration Bill:

- There were further defeats for the government in the House of Lords who voted for 11 amendments, including to retain detention limits for children and pregnant women, and to prevent trans and LGBT people from being removed to specified countries. (Source: BBC)
- The government published a Child's Rights impact assessment covering detention, removal, age assessment including scientific methods, modern slavery, confiscation of electronic devices and use of 'reasonable force' to facilitate removals of families with children. It states children will only be able to come to the UK via 'safe and legal routes' when there is appropriate housing and integration support available through a council. (Source: Home Office)
- Several councils wrote to the Home Secretary over the modern slavery implications of the Illegal Migration Bill, concerned that when they notify the Home Office of a potential modern slavery victim, this could result in individuals losing support and facing removal. (Source:

Human Trafficking Foundation)
- After the third reading in the House of Lords on 10 July the House of Commons will debate the amended Bill. (Source: UK Parliament)

Over 3,800 people crossed the Channel in small boats in June, a record number compared with the same period in previous years. The Border Force expects around 40,000 people to cross this year. (Sources: Home Office, The National)

The New Conservative group of 'red wall' MPs published proposals to reduce net migration including ending visa schemes for care workers, capping the number of resettled refugees, and increasing the skilled worker salary threshold. (Source: inews)

On detention and removals:

- Despite positive findings on accommodation standards and staff treatment of detainees, a monitoring report found the location of the Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre for women in County Durham makes it unsuitable due to its distance from other detention facilities and major airports. (Source: Independent Monitoring Board)
- An inspection identified problems in the Home Office's work to remove foreign national offenders, with case tracking and monitoring in particular. (Source: Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration)

Specific migrant groups

Eight democracy protesters from Hong Kong fear for their safety after the Chinese government offered rewards for information on their whereabouts. The UK was accused by China of protecting Hong Kong 'fugitives' after the foreign minister said the UK would not tolerate attempts by China to silence individuals here. Meanwhile, a charity that received government funding to support integration of Hongkongers was accused of links with the Chinese government. (Sources: BBC, the Guardian)

On children and young people:

- The Home Office briefly placed a nine year old unaccompanied asylum seeking child in a hotel citing shortages of council foster care placements. Brighton and Hove city council had an injunction application rejected to prevent the use of the hotel from which many children have gone missing, although the legal case continues. (Source: the Guardian)
- At the Kent asylum intake unit where unaccompanied children are received, Immigration Minister Robert Jenrick directed staff to paint over pictures featuring cartoons, animals and bright colours, wanting it to reflect a ‘law enforcement environment’ and ‘not a welcome centre’. (Source: Independent)
- This useful summary of the age assessment process highlights the importance of supporting young people through the process and that their date of birth determines the level of their financial support, accommodation and education. (Source: Free Movement)

The Home Office announced further funding to organisations offering support to people applying to the EU Settlement Scheme until spring 2025. The 17 funded organisations include Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre. (Source: Home Office)

Public recognition of the Windrush generation continues following the 75th anniversary:

- A Windrush briefing for peers preceded a House of Lords debate. (Source: UK Parliament)
- This article emphasises the Windrush generation's contribution to Britain before, during and after the arrival of the Empire Windrush ship. (Source: Mirror)
- As this month also marks 75 years of the NHS, here's the story of nurse Marjorie Brown who worked for 50 years in the NHS in Shropshire. (Source: BBC)

There are several modern slavery stories to update:

- Following a judicial review the government withdrew guidance requiring 'objective evidence' to support a positive reasonable grounds decision. Until new guidance is issued (expected 10 July) no negative reasonable grounds decisions will be issued. (Source: Duncan Lewis Solicitors)
- The High Court ruled the Home Office was wrong to deny trafficking support payments to potential victims awaiting a decision on asylum support during the first lockdown. (Source: Free Movement)

- At the Home Affairs select committee, the National Crime Agency defended its engagement with companies running adult service websites linked with trafficking concerns. (Source: the Guardian)

Cohesion and integration

A national touring exhibition 'Heart of the Nation: Migration and the Making of the NHS' to celebrate the 75th anniversary opened in Leicester. (Source: Museums Association)

The report 'Settling In' describes integration progress in a selection of Western countries including the UK based on monitoring of outcomes between new arrivals and native-born populations in employment, living conditions, and civic and social engagement. (Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)

A critical reflection on working with refugees in research by Dr Hyab Yohannes at Glasgow University reflects on how scholarship often renders individual refugees 'invisible, inaudible and unviable' and how new approaches can support them to reclaim their own stories. (Source: Access)

The Bishop of Dover said some British people are only concerned about the immigration of 'brown people' and that 'I love to remind the British that they were economic migrants' when they went to Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. (Source: BBC)

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