Migration news roundup 20 November 2023



- Stories that inspired us this week
- UK borders and migration policy
- International news

- Specific migrant groups
- Cohesion and integration

Stories that inspired us this week

A primary school in County Durham teaches children from 28 countries including Ukraine, Syria, Iran and Iraq, and was rated ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted. As well as the curriculum, the school offers additional support such as English classes, a Community Hub and cut-price food distribution. Also in the North East, people seeking asylum are putting on a Stories of Sanctuary concert at Newcastle Cathedral, performing songs they have written about their experiences of seeking sanctuary. A Sanctuary Seekers Choir will also be starting up in Newcastle in the new year. (Sources: Chronicle Live, BBC)

It's important to take care of yourself when there is so much difficult news in the world and in the migration sector. This article explores ‘compassion fatigue’ and provides helpful steps we can all take. (Source: The Conversation)

UK borders and migration policy

It’s been an eventful week in politics, with Home Secretary Suella Braverman losing her position in a government reshuffle following her criticism of the police over their handling of pro-Palestinian protests. She was replaced by former foreign secretary James Cleverly, who has previously suggested the UK could press ahead with planned changes to the immigration

system without leaving the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), a move called for by Conservative MPs on the right. (Sources: BBC, the Guardian).

Amid the political reshuffle, the Supreme Court ruled the Rwanda policy unlawful on the grounds of the risk of refoulement (meaning that Rwanda could send people to a third country where they may come to harm), thereby breaching UK and international law. The Home Secretary reaffirmed the government's commitment to see through its Rwanda plan, while the Prime Minister stated that they will look to implement new legislation and are negotiating a new international treaty with Rwanda to resolve matters. The government hopes to begin sending people to Rwanda by Spring 2024. The Home Office also published a new factsheet on the Rwanda scheme in light of the latest developments. (Sources: BBC, Home Office, the Guardian)

At the end of 2022, 665,000 people of Indian nationality had the no recourse to public funds (NRPF) condition attached to their visa, higher than any other nationality. Meanwhile, charities called on the Education Secretary to allow parents with NRPF to access extended free childcare, warning that the current restrictions could lead to 'severe consequences' for their children. (Sources: Migration Observatory, Independent)

Here is a new briefing on a planned increase to the immigration health surcharge planned for the next year. (Source: House of Commons Library)

This new report reveals the challenges of applying for exceptional case funding for immigration cases for those that cannot access legal aid. (Source: BID UK)

International news

The Italian and Albanian governments agreed to accommodate migrants to Italy in reception centres in Albania by the end of next year. The plan has raised concerns, with the Council of Europe warning that outsourcing is not a viable solution. Meanwhile the heads of the German and Greek governments met and discussed ways to reduce the number of people seeking asylum in Germany via Greece. (Source: InfoMigrants)

In response to a growing number of migrants and people seeking asylum crossing the border from Russia to Finland, the Nordic country closed some of its border crossing points. (Source: the Guardian)

Outside of Europe, the human rights group Amnesty International called for Qatar and FIFA to improve the treatment of migrant workers who contributed to the 2022 World Cup. Meanwhile, flooding in Derna, a city in Libya, has led to thousands of people becoming climate refugees, though climate refugees are not recognised by international law. On Rwanda, over 30,000 Rwandan people have been granted refugee status abroad since 2010, while Rwanda itself hosts over 135,000 refugees and people seeking asylum. (Sources: Al Jazeera, AP News, InfoMigrants)

Specific migrant groups

The government is extending its Displaced Talent Mobility pilot, which encourages businesses to employ ‘skilled refugees’ for a further year. Government says that refugees contribute over £1 million to the economy each year through tax and national insurance contributions. Also on refugees, this article explains how Palestinian refugees may qualify for refugee protection under the UN Convention when protection from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians in the Near East (UNRWA) is no longer available to them. (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)

A new report raises concerns about exploitation in the context of the increasing number of work visas. It recommends that migrant workers should no longer be dependent on their employer sponsor. (Sources: Work Rights Centre, Free Movement)

The3million’s letter to the Home Office, signed by over 50 organisations working with EU citizens across the country, raised concerns about the impact of the rejections of late applications under the EU Settlement Scheme and called for an urgent change in approach. Meanwhile, the Upper Tribunal ruled that destitute EU nationals with pre-settled status should be eligible for Universal Credit based on the rights under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The impact of the judgement is unclear as the Secretary of State might seek permission to appeal to the Supreme Court. (Sources: The3million, Child Poverty Action

Group)

Foster Care Associates (FCA) Yorkshire and Lincolnshire's participation officer has been awarded the 'Children's Champion Award'. Nazma Liaqat was shortlisted for her work helping children that are unaccompanied and seeking asylum to adjust to foster care. (Source: FCA)

Cohesion and integration

Read an interesting perspective on the African Indian diaspora in the UK - including several of our current senior political leaders - and how an automatic affiliation with the past cannot be assumed, for example regarding attitudes towards immigration policy. (Source: The Conversation)

Find out how the Welsh government is viewing the Welsh language as a resource to facilitate the integration of new migrants. (Source: The Conversation)

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