Migration news roundup 27 November 2023



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Stories that inspired us this week

Three Ukrainian teenagers won this year's International Children's Peace Prize for developing two apps to support young refugees: 'Refee' supports young children fleeing on their own and 'Svity' connects teenage refugees with peers from host communities to help them settle in. (Source: Kids Rights)

'Mother Tongue Other Tongue' is an anthology of poems written by children and young people in Leeds. The young poets could write in a language they already speak or have a go at writing in a language they are learning. (Source: Storyblok)

A festive date for your diary: you can join the first women's Football Club of Sanctuary in the UK in Leeds celebrating on 3 December, with entertainment from 'Britain's Sanctuary Got Talent'. (Source: LinkedIn)

International news

Outside the EU:

- Over 500 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar arrived in Indonesia on a single day, having travelled by boat. (Source: Reuters)
- At least 300,000 Afghans have left Pakistan since 1 November, the deadline imposed on 1.7 million

undocumented people to leave, in a policy widely supported by locals. (Source: Al Jazeera)

In Europe:

- Local authorities in the Italian Emilia Romagna region agreed to host and support unaccompanied migrant minors through a distribution mechanism. However, this five minute video about young migrants in Sicily describes how Italy issued a new decree with tougher measures on unaccompanied minors including housing in adult accommodation and use of x-rays to assess their age. (Source: InfoMigrants)
- Estonia blamed Russia for record numbers of migrants at its borders which it considers ‘a hybrid attack operation’ on European borders, after 75 people attempted crossing in few days. (Source: the Guardian)

UK borders and migration policy

Net migration was estimated at 672,000 for the year ending June 2023 indicating slowing immigration and rising emigration. While the main driver of non-EU immigration is study, immigration for work increased and people arriving through humanitarian routes decreased. Higher revised estimates of 745,000 for 2022 mean a new record high in net migration, with associated commentary about whether there's been a subsequent downward trend. The Prime Minister is reportedly considering measures to curb the numbers such as restricting the number of relatives that health

and care visa holders can bring with them. (Sources: Office for National Statistics, Migration Observatory, Independent)

Key points from the Home Office quarterly migration statistics for the year ending September 2023, with a separate publication on ‘irregular’ arrivals, include:

- Over twice as many health and care skilled worker visas were issued (compared to the previous 12 months) with India, Nigeria and Zimbabwe the top nationalities.
- Family-related visas issued more than doubled, but family migration remains a much smaller group compared to workers and students.
- The number of people arriving via small boats so far this year is lower than the equivalent period in 2022 - commentators noted this is due to a major fall in Albanian arrivals rather than other nationalities.
- Little change in the number of asylum claims at just over 75,000. Top nationalities are Afghan, Iranian, Albanian and Indian. An increase in decisions means the ‘legacy backlog’ (pre-28 June 2022) has fallen but ‘flow asylum cases’ have increased, with over 125,000 cases awaiting an initial decision. There has been a fourfold increase in applications treated as withdrawn.
- The number of forced removals was just over 5,500, an increase of 54%, with Albanians accounting for about half of the additional numbers. There were over 17,300 voluntary returns.

(Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)

Following the Supreme Court ruling the Rwanda plan is unlawful, the Prime Minister is apparently exploring the possibility of blocking the Human Rights Act in new legislation to enable the scheme to go ahead. (Source: the Guardian)

This article recommends the introduction of a 'Single Enforcement Body' to address labour exploitation. (Source: Free Movement)

Specific migrant groups

As latest statistics confirm the highest number of people since 2002 were granted refugee status through the asylum system (over 38,000 in the year ending September 2023) there's continuing reporting about subsequent homelessness and this eight minute video shows what's happening in a refugee support charity in Liverpool. (Sources: Home Office, Sky News, the Guardian)

New research says Ukrainians are four times more likely than UK nationals to become homeless due to factors including host-guest relationship breakdowns under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and a lack of rental deposits and guarantors. (Source: Herriot Watt University)

New research found that Hongkongers are settling in well overall but some need further support to improve their English and access meaningful employment matching their skills. The latest

statistics show a steady rate of British National Overseas (BNO) visa applications at around 10,000 per quarter. (Sources: British Future, Home Office)

On children and young people:

- Parliament is in the legal process of approving the use of x-rays and MRI scans to assess the age of young people whose age is disputed. (Source: Free Movement)
- Following publication of annual data on looked after children, this article provides a breakdown of key changes with unaccompanied children in care over the last two years. It shows a 110% increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children accommodated in unregulated settings. (Source: Community Care)

Research with over 2,000 international students suggests how the UK higher education sector could support international students to understand how technology is used in their course in order to avoid 'digital shock' and isolation. (Source: The Pie News)

Cohesion and integration

Unite Through Football, a project by the Surrey Football Association to enable refugees to play football across south-east England, has been relaunched. Over 200 players from 35 countries took part last year. (Source: BBC)

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