Migration news roundup 4 March 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

Asylum seekers and refugees living in Huddersfield braved howling winds to plant trees on Marsden Moor with the National Trust. (Source: Huddersfield Hub)

On the second anniversary of the start of the war in Ukraine a vigil was held in Keighley. In Edinburgh a Ukrainian refugee described how having a free leisure pass is helping her avoid depression. (Sources: BBC, North Edinburgh News)

Daphne Steele, the first black NHS matron and one of the Windrush generation, has been recognised for her achievements with the unveiling of the first Historic England blue plaque outside London, in Ilkley. (Source: BBC)

International news

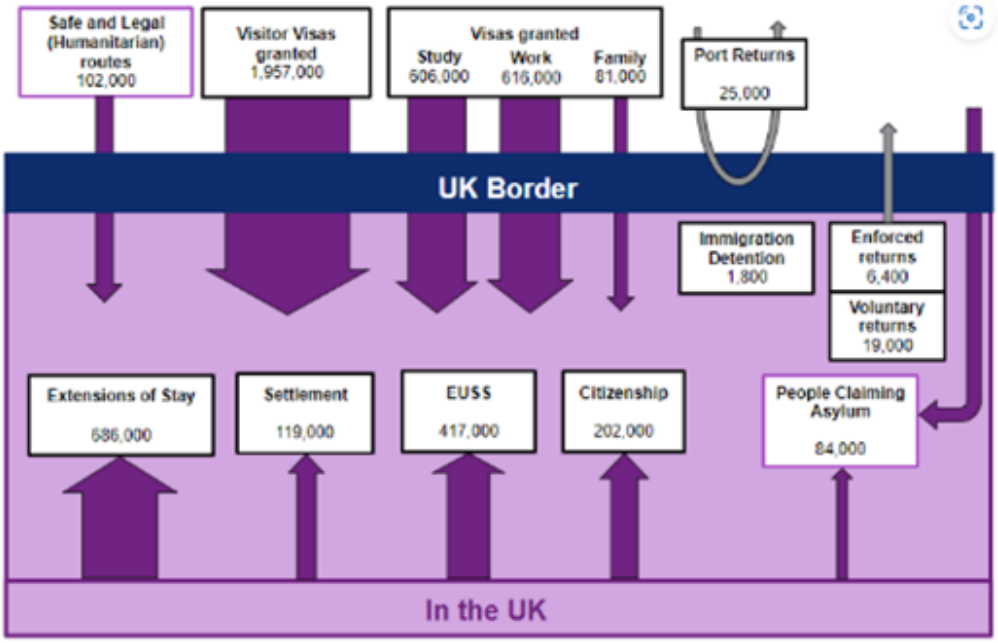
Over a million people applied for international protection in the EU in 2023, the highest number since 2016. Top nationalities were Syrian and Afghan, and the top country of refuge was Germany. (Source: EU Agency for Asylum)

Italy’s highest court ordered an end to the practice of returning people to Libya after being rescued at sea. In Libya, militias routinely detain thousands of people in order to extort ransom from their families. (Source: Al Jazeera)

The eight million Venezuelans displaced to other South American countries have been credited with economic contributions to their new communities, expanding host country economies by 0.1-0.25% per year. (Source: the Guardian)

UK borders and migration policy

The Home Office published its latest migration statistics to the end of 2023, including an updated, simplified illustration of the immigration system (see picture). Analysis shows three-quarters of skilled worker visas were in health and social care, and family visas increased significantly. (Sources: Home Office, Migration Observatory)



The Home Office published its latest migration statistics to the end oJust over 2,000 people crossed the Channel in small boats so far this year, a third fewer than the equivalent period last year (almost 3,000). The Migration Observatory notes the 2023 fall in crossings is partly attributable to fewer Albanian arrivals following cooperation between governments, which is unlikely to be replicated for other nationality groups. (Sources: The Standard, Migration Observatory)

This research report discusses the developments following the new offences of ‘illegal arrival’ and ‘facilitation’ created by the Nationality and Borders Act 2022. The Senegalese young man recently convicted for steering a boat during a crossing where at least four people died, was sentenced to nine and a half years' detention. At least one person died attempting the crossing in

the past week. (Sources: University of Oxford, the Guardian)

The UK is to increase collaboration with Frontex, the EU border agency, on operations to stop boats crossing the Channel. The UK regains access to Eurodac, a fingerprints database, but the arrangements don't include returns agreements. (Source: BBC)

A Palestinian refugee in the UK has brought a legal case against the Home Office who refused family reunion visas for his wife and children in Gaza. They can't apply for visas without supplying their fingerprints but there is no way for them to do this in Gaza currently. (Source: BBC)

A review of the Immigration Salary List (replacing the Shortage Occupation List) recommends reducing the number of roles but that care workers should remain on the list. (Source: Migration Advisory Committee)

Outstanding inspection reports from the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) have been released, including the 2022/23 annual report and Afghan resettlement schemes. (Source: ICIBI)

The Court of Appeal ruled the government's 2019 decision to strip Shamima Begum of her citizenship on national security grounds was lawful. Having travelled to Syria aged 15 to join Islamic State group, her lawyers argue the possibility of trafficking has not been properly considered. (Source: BBC)

Specific migrant groups

This article highlights the asylum data in the latest official statistics including decision making rates and the falling asylum backlog, while this more thorough examination of the backlog describes the background to the current situation and the composition of different cohorts, anticipating future challenges. (Sources: BBC, IPPR)

The Home Office use of large scale asylum accommodation sites is under scrutiny, following suicide attempts by service users. A new large scale accommodation site is set to open in Huddersfield, with details in a Home Office factsheet. (Sources: the Guardian, Home Office)

Following data showing that the number of study visas issued this year has fallen by a third, Universities UK warns of the negative impact on the local economy and higher education. (Source: the Guardian)

On children and young people:

- New good practice guidance on supporting unaccompanied children who are at risk of going missing cites fear of immigration procedures plus lack of support upon turning 18, as contributors to missing episodes. (Source: Missing People)
- In the recently published inspection report into the use of hotels to house unaccompanied children seeking asylum, staff were found to have played ‘games’ with children asking them to guess who would be allocated a foster placement next. The treatment was described as

‘insensitive’ and ‘upsetting’ to children. There was also no evidence that staff working in hotels had been given regular DBS clearance. (Source: the Guardian)

The latest immigration statistics show that in 2023 there were over 39,000 applications for the BN(O) visa of which nearly 38,000 were approved, a grant rate of 96%. The total number of the BN(O) visa applications is over 200,000, and in 2023 these applications accounted for 37% of all those made through the Safe and Legal (Humanitarian) routes. (Source: Home Office)

Charity Kalayaan calls again for more organisations to be supported to become ‘First Responders’ to identify and support survivors of modern slavery. (Source: Kalayaan)

Cohesion and integration

More than 40% of Conservative party members have a ‘negative view of immigrants’, according to a new poll. Over half of those polled said Islam is a threat to the British way of life. Further, this article contends that Britain has regressed on racial justice 25 years after the Lawrence inquiry. (Source: the Guardian)

For International Women’s Day, in this blog two women share their experiences of being refugees in Britain, how they navigated challenges, and used their experiences to support others. (Source: International Rescue Committee

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