Migration news roundup 29 April 2024



- Stories that inspired us this week

- International news
- UK borders and migration policy
- Specific migrant groups
- Cohesion and integration

Stories that inspired us this week

A new award has been launched in Scotland to reward responsible reporting on refugee and asylum issues, in partnership with the National Union of Journalists. (Source: Hold The Front Page)

Comedian Sara Pascoe headlined at the Soho Theatre's April edition of the Refugee Comedy Collective, 'No Direction Home', featuring standup comedians from migrant backgrounds. (Source: SWLondoner)

Enjoy this photo essay on 'Refuweegee' – a charity in Scotland providing a warm welcome to refugees - the name is a blend of 'refugee' and 'weegie', the local affectionate name for a Glaswegian. (Source: Guardian)

International news

A report on the phenomenon of 'brain waste' – the refusal by European states to recognise skills and qualifications acquired by migrants outside of the EU, which means they cannot utilise their full potential – calculates that the European economy would

grow by more than €30 billion Euros if skilled migrants worked the same jobs and earned the same salaries as ‘comparable natives’. (Source: LightHouse Reports)

Analysis reveals that, contrary to popular belief, migration in Africa takes place primarily within the African continent rather than to overseas destinations. (Source: Radio France Internationale)

The European Parliament has modified the rules governing the EU’s passport-free Schengen zone, enabling Schengen member-states to introduce border restrictions when other states are accused of ‘instrumentalisation’. 120 civil society organisations have condemned the new legislation, warning it violates the rights of people seeking asylum. (Source: Euractiv)

UK borders and migration policy

The ‘Safety of Rwanda Bill’ has passed the final stages of the parliamentary process, before quickly being granted Royal Assent, and the UK-Rwanda treaty receiving ratification. There is scepticism over how successful the legislation will be, with the Refugee Council publishing a report saying the implementation of the Illegal Migration Act and Rwanda scheme could lead to a ‘system meltdown'. (Sources: Home Office, the Guardian, Refugee Council, Independent)

Relatedly, this article considers how legal representatives can support people seeking asylum impacted by the Home Office’s pause on processing inadmissible claims. It says there are

grounds to argue the delay is unlawful. Meanwhile an FOI request has revealed that around three quarters of those served with a ‘Notice of Intent’ to remove them to Rwanda have subsequently been admitted into the UK asylum system. (Sources: Free Movement, the Guardian)

On small boats, a child was among a group of five who died attempting to cross the Channel. As part of measures to stop the crossings, the UK government has now signed an agreement with Vietnam, which will see the two nations work together on intelligence sharing, campaigning and facilitating returns. Vietnamese nationals are now the top nationality for Channel crossings, with this article analysing Home Office data and recent policy developments suggesting that they were likely to be the next government target. (Sources: BBC, Home Office, Free Movement)

There’s concern the new immigration visa rules could separate families, as the minimum salary has now risen to £29,000 and is likely to go up again to £38,700 by this time next year. (Source: BBC)

The UK has now rejected an offer from the EU to facilitate freedom of movement for young people aged 18-30. The deal would have been reciprocal and included more flexibility to work and domestic fees for students. (Source: BBC)

Specific migrant groups

On asylum, residents have been moved out of former RAF site Wethersfield due to concerns over radiation and the risk of an ‘unexploded ordnance’ on site. Meanwhile, this post examines the increase in homelessness of people leaving the asylum system. (Sources: BBC, The No Accommodation Network)

Three young people seeking asylum travelled from Sheffield to Parliament this week, to raise awareness of the risks to young people who are age disputed on arrival in the UK. They met with Andrew Western MP, who later raised the issue in the House of Commons. (Source: Refugee Council)

On Modern Slavery, training resources have been developed to equip staff in care homes recognise the signs of modern slavery. (Source: The Clewer Initiative)

On Windrush, Trevor Donald, one of many whose life was caught up in a ‘dystopian nightmare’ when he was stranded in Jamaica for 9 years, is bringing a legal claim against the Home Office for abandoning key reform pledges intended to transform how the Home Office operates and repair some of the harm caused to the ‘Windrush generation’. (Source: the Guardian)

On international students, the Education Committee has launched an inquiry into the reliance of some UK universities on overseas students for their funding and the impact recent changes to visa rules may have on this. Meanwhile, in partnership with the Oxford International Education Group (OIEG), the University of Kent has opened a new international

college in Canterbury designed specifically for international students (The UKIC), providing a variety of academic pathways including undergraduate and postgraduate options. (Sources: UK Parliament Committees, BBC)

Cohesion and integration

The Scottish Refugee Council's Refugee Support Service is receiving new funding to help people access health, housing, welfare, and employment support. The Scottish government is providing £3.6 million to ensure integration support is provided since EU funding ended in 2023. (Source: Scottish Government)

The British Association of Social Workers has called for a national support programme for the growing number of overseas social workers. The group has advised that, despite the increase in social work staff vacancies being filled by overseas applicants, there is a lack of support to manage the costs of relocation, insufficient training to adjust to UK practice and a lack of career progression. (Source: Community Care)

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