Migration news roundup 28 May 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

Nelson Shardey, a 74 year-old Liverpool ‘local legend’, was moved to tears when strangers fundraised over £30,000 to cover his legal fees against the Home Office for refusing his indefinite leave to remain, after living in the UK for over 50 years. (Source: the Guardian)

Journalist Nicola Kelly has a new podcast on reporters who risk everything to report the truth including in Gaza, Hong Kong and Afghanistan. (Source: Spotify)

Little Amal has been visiting Northern Ireland, spending time in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry and moving on to Dublin. We wonder where she might go next. (Source: BBC)

International news

Austria's Chancellor, Karl Nehammer, has praised the UK’s plan to send people to Rwanda and is interested in developing a Rwanda-style approach for the EU bloc, as immigration remains a hot topic in the run-up to Austrian elections. Meanwhile, Cyprus has joined seven other EU countries to consider repatriating Syrian refugees. (Source: InfoMigrants)

The state of Oklahoma has been sued by the US Department of Justice over a new law that would imprison anyone found living in Oklahoma without legal immigration status, for up to two years. The justice department argues the law violates the US Constitution. (Source: the Guardian)

UK borders and migration policy

The news of a summer general election has cast doubt over the future of the Rwanda scheme, with the Prime Minister confirming that no removals will take place before 4th July. Meanwhile, a legal challenge led by Asylum Aid regarding the risk of onward removals from Rwanda could delay further the scheme's operation. (Sources: BBC, Free Movement)

The latest migration statistics have been published, revealing that net migration for the year ending 2023 was 685,000, down 10% from 764,000 in 2022. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) say it's too early to know if this is the start of a downward trend. The Home Office quarterly statistics reveal a 75% decrease in grants of Health and Care Worker visas in the first quarter of 2024 compared to the previous year. The Home Secretary released a press statement celebrating the impact of recent measures to cut net migration through changes to key routes. This article warns there could be negative impacts on the economy and on public services should this trend continue. (Sources: ONS, Home Office, UK in a Changing EU)

Record numbers of arrivals crossed the Channel in small boats in the first 5 months of 2024. As of 1 May, over 9,800 people arrived in small boats, that's nearly 36% higher than the previous year. (Source: BBC)

Concerns have been raised over the transition to eVisas for migrants by the end of 2024, with the risk of another Windrush like disaster. Campaign groups have warned of a 'cliff edge', as people try to complete the online registration in time. (Source: the Guardian)

The Prime Minister is expected to backtrack on plans to shelve the graduate visa route, following pressure from cabinet ministers after the Migration Advisory Committee recommended the route was retained. (Source: the Guardian)

Specific migrant groups

A new briefing looks at the effects of income on asylum support. The issue has become more prominent since more people seeking asylum with permission to work have been able to benefit from the expansion of the Shortage Occupation List in 2022 to include health and care workers. (Source: Asylum Support Appeals Project)

As the number of applications under the EU Settlement Scheme reaches 7.9 million, including 1.9 million of pre-settled status grants, the Home Office has announced significant changes affecting pre-settled status holders, extending it for five years

instead of two, to allow conversion to settled status. The Independent Monitoring Authority (IMA), which had raised concerns, has welcomed the new approach. (Sources: Home Office, IMA)

On Hong Kong, the latest data release shows over 210,000 BN(O) applications have been made since the visa scheme opened in January 2021, with approximately 13,000 applications received last quarter. Many Hongkongers have settled well in the UK, with some becoming councillors in the latest local elections and others organising football competitions in the community. However, a small minority are leaving the UK due to difficulties in finding jobs to sustain their new lives. (Sources: Home Office, South China Morning Post, Ejinsight)

Following the economic crisis in Nigeria students at Teesside University who missed fee instalment payments were devastated to learn the University had withdrawn them from their courses and notified the Home Office. (Source: the Guardian)

Following last week's release of the latest modern slavery statistics, here is some commentary and analysis, which includes the relatively low proportion (21%) of positive conclusive grounds decisions made by the immigration enforcement competent authority. (Source: Free Movement)

Cohesion and integration

Two articles exploring the psychological and health impacts of fleeing one's country and seeking asylum in the UK have been released:

- One examines the psychological and social challenges faced by people seeking asylum in Wales. (Source: Journal of Health Psychology)

- Another article looks at the health inclusion and the effects of post-migration stress on people seeking asylum and refugees in the UK. (Source: Perspectives in Public Health)

The Scottish Refugee Council has released the programme for their upcoming Refugee Festival Scotland in June. Over 10 days, more than 130 events will bring people together from different backgrounds in friendship and solidarity. (Source: Scottish Refugee Council)

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