Migration news roundup 16 September 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

A new blue plaque is to be unveiled in Barnsley in October to commemorate the arrival of 200 Hungarian refugees to the town in 1956. (Source: Barnsley Chronicle).

In the north east, Sarah Ahmadi, a Sunderland-based project leader and Afghan refugee, has been named as one of the top 20 trailblazing refugee women in Europe for her work supporting people seeking refuge. Whilst in London, a collaboration between artist Es Devlin and the UN high commissioner for refugees will showcase 50 portraits of refugees. (Sources: Sunderland Echo, the Guardian)

International news

The German government has put forward a policy to extend tightened border controls to all of the country's land borders in order to curb irregular migration. Also in Germany, the Office for Refugee Affairs has responded to housing shortages by announcing plans to convert a large office complex into accommodation for 1,500 refugees. Residents say they will welcome their new neighbours but have expressed concern about housing so many people in one location. (Sources: the

Guardian, InfoMigrants)

A growing number of people fleeing Sudan have arrived in Libya, contributing to the estimated 760,000 refugees in the country. 38% of migrant respondents in a recent IOM survey expressed their intent to remain in Libya permanently. (Source: InfoMigrants)

Bangladesh has increased border security as increasing numbers of Rohingya civilians enter the country due to escalating violence in Myanmar. (Source: Reuters)

UK borders and migration policy

The government has reiterated its intention to tackle smuggling gangs in order to prevent Channel crossings, while some call for more safe and legal routes, and express concern that the government's approach may increase the risk of further fatalities. It has also been reported that the average number of people travelling in each boat has now increased to over 60, from about 40 in 2021. (Sources: BBC, the Guardian, The National)

This analysis considers how available data could be used to assess progress against the new government's pledges relating to migration. (Source: Migration Observatory)

A review of the previous government's work to assess Rwanda as a suitable country to send some people seeking asylum, has criticised various aspects of the process, noting that most of the

Rwandan stakeholders consulted were linked with the country's government. (Source: Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration).

From October, bereaved partners on family visas will be able to apply for a waiver of the £2,885 settlement fee if they are facing destitution. (Source: Home Office)

The Home Secretary has asked the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to review the financial requirements for family visas. The previous government had intended to increase the minimum income requirement to £38,700. (Source: MAC)

The government has published a new factsheet on eVisas, explaining the process Biometric Residents Permit (BRP) holders should use to create a UKVI account and access their eVisa. This new briefing explains section 3C leave, which is temporary leave granted to someone whose visa has expired but is awaiting a decision on an extension application. (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)

Specific migrant groups

Figures from the Home Office show that 19 asylum seekers have been waiting for over 10 years for a decision on their application, with one person waiting for 16 years. In a new survey, councils have called for an extension of the 28-day move on period from asylum accommodation. 89% of respondents reported increased homelessness in their local authority due to lack of central government support. (Sources: Big Issue, Local Government

Association)

The latest statement of changes to immigration rules contains a few provisions related to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), including the upgrade of pre-settled to settled status without the need for further applications. Other changes include cancellation of pre-settled status for people who helped someone to obtain, or attempt to obtain, EUSS leave fraudulently, and tightening the rules for family members in relation to late applications. (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)

There are several stories covering conditions for migrant workers. Organisations supporting seasonal workers in the agricultural sector have reported a 100% increase in dismissals compared to the same period last year. Farms must now guarantee at least 32 hours a week to migrant workers, which may have led to increased productivity targets. Relatedly, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority is investigating recruitment processes at a farm in Hereford where five Indonesian workers were dismissed for failing to reach fruit picking targets. Meanwhile, a tribunal has ruled that an Indian nurse claiming unfair dismissal should be given backpay from the dismissal date, as well as a monthly payment, until the case concludes. The nurse paid a £22,000 fee to an agent in India, but upon arrival in the UK his employer sponsor failed to provide the promised work. (Sources: the Guardian, HortiDaily, Indian Express)

The children's commissioner has expressed concern after a freedom of information request revealed some failings in the National Referral Mechanism which expose victims of trafficking, including children in care, to the risk of being exploited again by their perpetrators. Also on children, the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration plans to examine age assessments carried out by the National Age Assessment Board and is calling for people with firsthand experience to provide evidence. (Sources: the Guardian, Community Care)

The Home Office has increased the financial savings, or maintenance funds, required for international students applying to study in the UK. Meanwhile, admissions officers from UK universities have welcomed an increase in course inquiries from overseas recruitment agents, attributing this to the messaging coming from the new government. (Sources: The Pie News, the Guardian)

A new report by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman finds that the Windrush compensation scheme is wrongfully denying people recompense. (Source: Free Movement)

Cohesion and integration

A new report, 'After the riots', highlights policy priorities for resilience and social cohesion. The report calls for greater efforts in bringing together people from different backgrounds and provides 12 policy proposals to address the factors that

contributed to the unrest, including a national social cohesion strategy. (Source: British Future).

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