Migration news roundup 21 October 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

The first Ugandan refugee family to be granted sanctuary in Warrington in 1972 have now retired, after serving their community for 27 years running the local Post Office and convenience store. (Source: Warrington Guardian)

Latvia won the 2024 Unity Euro Cup in Nyon, Switzerland. The competition brings together refugees and asylum seekers who represent their host countries. (Source: UNHCR)

Henry, an asylum seeker in Scotland, talks about his volunteering experience supporting other people facing homelessness and destitution. (Source: Scottish Refugee Council)

A new art exhibition launched in Southampton traces the stories of Basque children, who were evacuated to the UK after the bombing of Guernica in 1937. (Source: BBC)

International news

Italy's two controversial asylum processing centres in Albania officially opened last week, reportedly initially receiving 16 single men who had been intercepted at sea. Only men from

countries Italy deems to be ‘safe’ will be dispatched to Albania, while women and children will be housed in Italy while their claims are reviewed. By Friday, it transpired that four of the group were children or vulnerable so were not to be detained in Albania, and a special immigration court in Rome ruled that the remaining 12 individuals should be brought back to Italy as they were from countries considered ‘unsafe’ to be returned to. (Sources: AP News, InfoMigrants, BBC)

Germany approved 30 measures designed to attract skilled workers from India to address significant labour shortages. (Source: InfoMigrants)

Poland has announced plans to temporarily suspend the right to seek asylum due to escalating tensions with Belarus, accused of encouraging migration across the border. (Source: Al Jazeera)

UK borders and migration policy

The UK government has ruled out establishing a separate Scottish visa system. The Scottish National Party is calling for the change to help address labour shortages in certain sectors and to offset future population decline. (Source: BBC)

On detention, an inquest jury has criticised the treatment of a Colombian man who committed suicide while held at the Harmondsworth immigration removal centre last year. (Source: BBC)

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has called on the government to review immigration policy, describing existing structures as a 'public mental health concern' that risks re-traumatisation. (Source: the Guardian)

Specific migrant groups

On children and young people:

- A new research report explores practice regarding age assessment and age disputed cases. The report was built upon age assessment reports and experiences from social workers involved in the process. (Source: Immigration Social Work Services)

- The Independent Monitoring Board for the family detention unit pre departure accommodation at Gatwick has called for the closure of the unit, citing the risk of re-traumatisation for families and children. (Source: BBC)

There are several stories relating to migrant workers this week:

- The authors of this briefing express concern that the new Employment Rights Bill will not protect migrant workers on restrictive work visas. You can read more here on some of the details of the proposed legislation specifically as it

relates to migrant workers. (Sources: Focus on Labour Exploitation, Free Movement)

- Delivery riders were arrested in an immigration enforcement raid on a Bristol caravan encampment, with some criticising the targeting of workers rather than the causes of exploitative working conditions. (Source: the Guardian)

- This new briefing provides information about work visa routes which can lead to permanent settlement. (Source: Free Movement)

A House of Lords Committee report says the UK has fallen behind in its response since the Modern Slavery Act was passed in 2015. It raises concerns about the impact of recent immigration legislation on the ability to identify and protect victims, and makes recommendations about the social care sector and supply chain issues. (Source: UK Parliament)

On asylum:

- A freedom of information request disclosed that last year, 1,500 complaints were made to the Home Office about sub-standard asylum hotel accommodation. Issues reported

included sexual harassment, racism and scabies outbreaks. (Source: Open Democracy)

- A refugee charity welcomed actions taken by the government to cut the asylum backlog which could make savings of over £240 million. However, there are concerns around homelessness during the move on period. (Source: Refugee Council)

On international students, new Home Office figures show a decline of 16% in study visas issued between January and September 2024 compared with the same period in 2023. The number of student dependent applications during the same period dropped by 85%. (Source: Home Office)

There was a debate in Parliament on visas, security and access to services for Hongkongers living in the UK. International student fees, lack of access to student finance and qualification conversion were mentioned as some of the remaining barriers for this group. (Source: House of Commons Library)

Cohesion and integration

A new report on attitudes of different ethnic minority populations in the UK examines political opinions, social values and economic preferences of the UK's diverse population between the 2019 and 2024 elections. It found that people from ethnic minorities tend to be more positive on issues including

immigration and multiculturalism, although it also highlights some prejudice against other minority groups. (Source: UK in a Changing Europe)

The General Medical Council has reported that doctors from minority groups and from overseas suffer discrimination throughout their careers. (Source: the Guardian)

A report on what it means to be a City of Sanctuary explores the effectiveness of support in key areas such as health, employability and housing, and shares success stories from the Sanctuary on Sea project. (Source: Brighton and Hove City Council)

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