Migration news roundup 12 November 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

People seeking asylum and living in Oxford will now receive six months of free bus travel. The pilot scheme aims to enable integration and support people to access necessary appointments. (Source: Oxfordshire County Council)

A group of men seeking asylum who are being housed at a former RAF base in Essex have formed a football team. Being a part of the team has helped the men to stay active and think positively. (Source: ITV News)

An ultramarathon runner, NHS nurse and refugee from Afghanistan wants to inspire women into sport, especially those from the Muslim community. Fatima Painda aims to raise awareness of Afghan women facing injustice through taking part in running challenges. (Source: BBC)

International news

Following the US election analysts are predicting a surge in the number of irregular migrants crossing the US border, due to concerns that borders will close under the new administration. Immigration support groups have raised concerns around proposed US government policies including mass deportation.

(Sources: Reuters, the Guardian)

A small number of undocumented Somali nationals will be repatriated from Germany to Somalia, after their respective leaders signed a deportation agreement. Deportations are expected to be mostly limited to those without legal status and convicted of serious crimes. (Source: InfoMigrants)

Thailand has announced an initiative to provide pathways to permanent residency and citizenship for stateless members of ethnic minority groups resident in the country. The initiative is anticipated to enfranchise and empower nearly 500,000 stateless people and children. (Source: UN News)

UK borders and migration policy

Funding for the new Border Security Command is to be doubled to £150 million over two years, following an announcement by Prime Minister Keir Starmer. He discussed employing counter-terrorism techniques to tackle people smugglers and he suggested the UK should be taking a leadership role in relation to gangs responsible for Channel crossings. (Sources: ITV, the Guardian)

In a shift of policy position, most of the Sri Lankan Tamils who have been stranded on a remote British island territory for three years are to be allowed to come to the UK on a temporary basis. (Source: BBC)

These legal briefings share guidance on skilled worker visa applications and employer right to work checks. (Source: Free Movement)

Specific migrant groups

On EU nationals, this story of a Greek Cypriot, forcibly removed from the UK while waiting to hear about the outcome of the review of his EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) application, illustrates remaining issues faced by some EU nationals following the end of free movement. Elsewhere, a legal challenge to EUSS processes has been dismissed by the court. This concerned changes the Home Office introduced to late applications last summer, removing the right to appeal where it is not accepted that the applicant had a good reason for applying late. (Sources: the Guardian, Free Movement)

The fishing industry is a less well-known sector for its risks of precarious employment for migrant workers. This briefing explains and makes recommendations to address the 'Seafarers Transit Loophole', which means employers are not required to use the usual sponsorship route for migrant fishing workers, labour market enforcement doesn't apply, and workers aren't protected by UK employment law. (Source: FLEX)

There are a number of stories on international students this week:

- Results of a new survey report largely favourable attitudes to international students in the UK, although less strongly than in previous polls. (Source: Kings College London)

- This article discusses the University of Glasgow's initiative for tracking attendance, linked to a Home Office mandated requirement for institutions to report on academic attendance of student visa holders. It raises concerns about potential impact on student wellbeing. (Source: The Glasgow Guardian)

- A Jordanian-Canadian citizen of Palestinian origin won a human rights appeal against the Home Office, after her UK student visa was revoked following statements she made at a university demonstration. The court found Home Office actions to be 'disproportionate interference with her protected right to free speech'. (Source: the Guardian)

Young refugees and asylum seekers had the chance to speak directly with MPs and Peers. At the event chaired by Afzal Khan MP and Lord Alf Dubs, young people shared their experiences and expressed their thoughts about the UK asylum system. (Source: Refugee Council)

On asylum:

- Accommodation providers came under attack after Clearsprings Ready Homes published profits of over £180 million in the past three years; Serco and Mears also reported profits on a range of government contracts, collectively described as ‘eye-watering’. (Source: the Guardian)

- This blogpost discusses an alternative model for asylum accommodation that argues that safe housing can be provided more effectively and at a lower cost (a longer report from Soha Housing Association was released in August). (Source: Chartered Institute for Housing)

- A briefing paper analyses the current condition of the asylum system and makes recommendations to the new government on how to make improvements. (Source: Refugee Council)

Local residents in Lincolnshire reported feeling ‘very happy’ after a meeting was held to provide details about Afghan refugees being temporarily housed in a nearby Ministry of Defence camp. (Source: BBC)

Cohesion and integration

This research report makes targeted policy recommendations to address the challenges faced by transnational families that impact on how they provide care for family members. Recommendations include investment in long term ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), digital literacy support and improving access to family reunion visas, including for those with care needs. (Source: Universities of Reading and Leeds)

A scheme in Northumberland is supporting refugees with healthcare experience into roles in the NHS and social care sectors. The scheme provides one to one coaching and specialised English teaching to prepare individuals for jobs in the health sector. (Source: Northumberland Gazette)

Refugees and asylum seekers supported by Bradford Refugee Action have enjoyed trips funded by the local Ilkley community. (Source: Ilkley Gazette)

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