Migration news roundup week commencing 02 February 2026



This Migration News Roundup presents a selection of news, policy, research and statistics from the previous week on migration-related topics. The contents of each story do not necessarily reflect the views of Migration Yorkshire.

- UK borders and migration policy
- Specific migrant groups
- Cohesion and integration
- International news
- Stories that inspired us this week

UK borders and migration policy

On small boat arrivals:

- 281 people have now been returned to France under the 'one in, one out' scheme, while 350 people have arrived in the UK. The difference between the numbers is attributed to French operational issues, and the numbers are expected to be balanced soon. (Source: BBC)

- The most senior human rights adviser to the French government, Claire Hédon, says officers should not be using riot control weapons such as tear gas, rubber bullets and stun grenades against people trying to board boats. (Source: Metro)

- New Channel arrivals will be processed in Ramsgate for the next few weeks while repairs take place at Western Jet Foil in Dover. This could mean longer journeys for Border Force vessels and greater use of lifeboats. (Source: BBC)

Five people were arrested when an investigation stopped a group of people leaving the UK in the back of a lorry at Dover. This unusual scenario is thought to be a smuggling network recruiting HGV drivers to transport people across borders. (Source: National Crime Agency)

A journalistic investigation into Brook House immigration removal centre near Gatwick describes the use of force and restraints at the site in some detail. The report uncovered data showing 165% more incidents than the next highest centre. (Source: Independent)

Specific migrant groups

On asylum and refugee systems:

- Research with people living in hotels in early 2025 concludes that the ‘for-profit model’ of asylum accommodation provision in the UK systematically harms the physical and mental health of people seeking protection, and advocates for the management of accommodation to be transferred to councils. (Source: Migrants Organise)

- As more people move in, protests over asylum accommodation at Crowborough barracks have continued. In contrast, people in North Devon are welcoming refugees into their villages through the government's Community Sponsorship Scheme, providing new arrivals with support from local groups. The article hints at how the scheme might roll out. (Source: BBC)

- In case you missed them, two recent articles look at the implications for councils and individuals of government proposals about earned settlement and asylum reforms, particularly in relation to people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Concerns include increased destitution and homelessness, and higher costs for councils. (Source: NRPF Network)

The Home Office has introduced a pilot allowing eligible 16- and 17-year-old asylum seekers to proceed to a substantive interview without submitting a Statement of Evidence (SEF) form , if they have legal representation and have consented to take part. (Source: UK Visas and Immigration)

On migrant workers:

- NHS workers in Manchester protested to the local healthcare trust over the new £25,000 salary threshold for

staff who are renewing visas, which some healthcare assistants will fail to meet by a tiny margin under existing NHS payscales. (Source: Socialist Worker)

- The Home Office is looking into reports of a growing underground market in fraudulent employer sponsorships for skilled workers. Companies were charging thousands of pounds for false Certificate of Sponsorship documents. (Source: Times Radio Live, 13 minutes)

A data briefing on EU migration to and from the UK highlights an 80% drop in EU immigration since 2016, most of which occurred before Brexit restrictions were introduced in 2021. (Source: Migration Observatory)

Seven years after thousands of people from the 'Windrush generation' were wrongly categorised as 'illegal migrants', stories of recent injustice are still emerging. George Campbell, who arrived from Jamaica in the 1960s, recounts how the uncertainly of his legal status has led to years of hardship. (Source: the Guardian)

Cohesion and integration

'Common ground: building cohesive communities' provides national guidance for councils on how to tackle misinformation and hate crime and embedding social cohesion as a priority. It includes examples from South-West Yorkshire NHS, North

Yorkshire, Doncaster and the Humber. Relatedly, this article considers how the decline of community institutions in neighbourhoods has led to the strengthening of the far-right, but with some pushback. (Sources: Belong, The Conversation)

Jane and Andrew, hosts from Refugees at Home, were featured alongside their guest Nadine on Songs of Praise. (Source: BBC iplayer, 34 minutes)

Arman talks about his experience of moving to the UK as a refugee and progressing from a volunteering role to gaining employment. (Source: Scottish Refugee Council)

International news

Spain plans to grant legal status to an estimated half a million undocumented migrants by offering one-year renewable residence permits to those with clean criminal records who arrived before summer 2025, marking its first large-scale regularisation in two decades. (Source: BBC)

After the largest human trafficking case in Dutch history, a court sentenced an Eritrean trafficker to 20 years in prison for torturing and extorting migrants in Libyan camps. (Source: InfoMigrants)

Stories that inspired us this week

Climate Action Ilkley, working with Solidaritech CIC, is requesting donations of unwanted but working IT items to support digital inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees in Yorkshire and Humber. (Source: Ilkley Gazette)

Kat, a Muay Thai boxing expert from Kent shares how her experience of teaching martial arts to women living in refugee camps in Greece has been empowering for both the participants and herself. (Source: BBC)

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