Migration news roundup week commencing 01 Sept 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.

Content warning: this week's news roundup contains themes around the death of young people in care which some readers may find distressing.

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

UK borders and migration policy

The release of the immigration statistics for the year ending June 2026 shows that the figures are falling for Channel crossings, asylum hotels, asylum claims and initial decisions, as well as work, study and family visas. The Home Office said that changes to the asylum system, such as reducing hotel use, has resulted in almost £1 billion of savings. (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement, The London Economic)

Enforced and voluntary returns are at their highest levels for a decade with almost 80,000 removals since the Labour government took power. The Home Office has spent almost £40 million on the voluntary return scheme, which pays people up to £3,000 to return to their country of origin. (Sources: Electronic Immigration Unit, The Independent)

There has been an 8% rise in applications for settlement, most through the EU Settlement Scheme but also due to specific groups, such as BN(O) visa holders, becoming eligible. Meanwhile, 315,000 people applied for citizenship, the highest number on record. (Sources: Home Office, Migration Observatory)

Did you know that it costs £1,839 to become a British citizen? This briefing shows how costs have changed over the years, estimating that the fee in 1975 was the equivalent of £376 today, taking inflationary increases into account. (Source: UK Parliament)

There are several small boat stories relating to enforcement.

- The government announced that French police have prevented 185 Channel crossings (4,300 migrants) in a four

week period over the summer. (Source: BBC)

- Concurrently, an increase in the use of violence by French police has been reported when intercepting boats. (Source: the Guardian)

- The number of National Crime Agency officers focused on people smuggling has more than doubled to almost 800 since the start of last year. (Source: National Crime Agency)

- A 19 year old South Sudanese man has pleaded guilty to endangering others during a sea crossing, after piloting a dinghy in July carrying 165 people. (Source: BBC)

The government's decision to reduce refugee protection from 5 to 2.5 years is facing a legal challenge after concerns were raised about the policy's rushed introduction without an adequate impact assessment. (Source: Electronic Immigration Network)

Specific migrant groups

New country guidance on Albanian victims of trafficking has been published following a successful legal challenge from a

young man who was refused asylum on the ground that it was safe for him to return home. The legal ruling may affect future deportations to Albania, which currently has the highest number of forced removals from the UK. (Sources: UKVI, the Guardian)

A parliamentary report highlights that 40 unaccompanied asylum seeking children are still missing after disappearing from Home Office run hotels in 2023. Meanwhile, a second report investigating the deaths of young care leavers in England, including young people seeking asylum and refugees, found that the death rate among this group was three to four times higher than among the general population, with a drop off in support for post-18s leading to isolation and increased vulnerability. (Sources: the Guardian, Department for Education)

Since the introduction of the BN(O) visa in January 2021, almost 40,000 Hongkongers and their family members have now been granted settlement in the UK. However, despite achieving permanent residency, the Hong Kong authorities continue to block BN(O) visa holders from accessing their pension funds. (Sources: Home Office, Hong Kong Watch)

A woman with settled status in the UK was initially refused permission to board her flight home from Spain, due to a 'known issue' with the eVisa system whereby her digital status became confused with her twin sister's. (Source: the Guardian)

Falling student visa grants, down 11% on the previous year, led to continued concern from universities about reduced income from international student fees, with Universities UK highlighting the negative consequences for UK students, communities and the UK economy. China and India remain the top nationalities of study visas granted, but are both falling, while there was a noticeable reduction in visas for students from Pakistan. (Sources: Research Professional, Home Office)

Cohesion and integration

Residents living near Wethersfield, a former airbase in Essex have refuted claims made by a local Reform councillor that the site is a 'holiday camp' for people seeking asylum living there, with some complaining that the village had been weaponised by the far right. (Source: BBC)

Birmingham City Council is seeking an injunction to stop St George's flags and Union Jacks being erected on public

infrastructure. The council said it was pursuing legal action following incidents of harassment and obstruction of staff who were tasked with removing them. (Source: The Guardian)

Rights groups, particularly those supporting refugee women, have condemned the rhetoric used in the government's newly issued behavioural guides for people seeking asylum. They are concerned that the information characterises people seeking asylum as perpetrators while marginalising victims, and providing inadequate information around support services. (Source: Asylum Matters)

International news

Suad Mooge's selection as the Rose of Tralee prompted both widespread support and a surge of online criticism from people questioning whether someone of Somali heritage could represent modern Ireland. Despite this, she used the experience to celebrate her dual identity and advocate for a more inclusive vision of Ireland. (Source: the Guardian)

Mexicans deported from the US under the government's immigration crackdown are finding support and a sense of belonging in Mexico City's 'Little LA'

, a neighbourhood where many returnees are rebuilding lives in a country that can feel unfamiliar despite being their homeland. (Source: the Guardian)

Ahead of a state election in Magdeburg, Germany, around 150 immigrant-owned businesses temporarily closed in a 'Migra-Strike' protest to highlight the potential impact of the AfD party's proposed anti-immigration policies. (Source: InfoMigrants)

Stories that inspired us this week

Exhibitions around the country during September include 'Pieces of Me' which tells stories of members of Refugee Roots at the National Justice Museum in Nottingham, and Contemporary Ukrainian art from women in the North West on display in Kendal. (Sources: Left Lion, The Westmorland Gazette)

Lord Dubs' memoir, The Boy with the Knapsack, will be published this month. The title refers to everything he brought with him on the Kindertransport from Prague to safety in London in 1939. (Source: AOL)

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