Migration news roundup 25 July 2022



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Stories that inspired us this week

A school student was awarded Young Person of the Year at the Child Friendly Leeds Awards for supporting teachers with translation and providing a warm welcome for refugees. (Source: Leeds Council)

A Syrian refugee living in Austria has developed a video game to help school pupils understand the perilous journeys refugees often have to make. (Source: UNHCR)

Counterpoint Arts is leading a new project in Athens teaching migrants to perform standup comedy as way to challenge perceptions and to 'just be human'. (Source: the Guardian)

International news

A new report from the World Health Organisation (WHO) calls for urgent action to ensure travelling migrants can access appropriate health care services. (Sources: WHO, Reuters)

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the EU have launched a project offering mental health services to over 300,000 Ukrainians. One in five people affected by conflict is said to experience mental health disorders. (Source: IFRC)

UK borders and migration policy

The Border Force takes a ‘crisis management’ approach to small boat migrant Channel crossings and its actions have been ‘possibly counterproductive’ according to a government commissioned independent review. Recommendations included improved Home Office leadership and better workforce planning. Meanwhile, the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) has expressed frustration at the delay to the publication of his report on small boat crossings submitted to the Home Office in February. The report was subsequently published , and findings revealed security and administration issues as well as safeguarding failures in how vulnerable people including children and victims of trafficking were identified and treated. (Sources: BBC, Home Office, ICIBI)

The Home Affairs Committee published a parliamentary report on Channel crossings, migration and asylum. Among its recommendations, the committee said addressing the asylum backlog must be the Home Office’s priority and asked the Home Secretary to acknowledge that it was not small boats crossings that ‘broke’ the asylum system. (Source: UK Parliament)

On the Rwanda scheme:

- There are reportedly continued disagreements between the Home Office and UNHCR about the suitability of Rwanda as a destination for people seeking asylum. (Source: the Guardian)

- The High Court has considered the timescales for the full judicial review of the policy, and heard evidence that the government was advised against the scheme by internal officials. (Source: Independent)
- Several individuals due to be removed to Rwanda have been identified as potential victims of trafficking – their legal challenges against the Home Office are on hold until a final decision is made by the National Referral Mechanism which identifies and supports victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. (Source: Independent)
- The Irish Prime Minister appeared to blame the Rwanda policy for an increase in people seeking asylum in Ireland. (Source: Sky News)
- Protests against the Rwanda scheme were planned across the UK including in Leeds and Sheffield. (Source: the Guardian)

The government has published the results of surveys relating to three visa routes:

- The Graduate visa enables students to stay for at least a further two years after graduation. The survey looked at the rationale for selecting the UK as a destination for study and work. All survey respondents were either working or seeking work.
- Just over half of respondents to a survey about the Skilled Worker visa route said that the scheme influenced their decision to work in the UK, primarily due to the possibility of visa extension and the ability to settle with dependents

after five years.
- Another survey explored the experiences and intentions of Ukrainians who recently moved to the UK under humanitarian schemes. Nearly 3,500 people have arrived in Yorkshire and Humber through the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme. (Sources: Home Office, ONS, Migration Yorkshire).

The government's strategy for future border control include plans to pilot 'contactless' digital border crossings. The government is also consulting on tougher penalties for hauliers who fail to adequately secure their vehicles as well as for those found to be carrying undocumented migrants. (Source: Home Office)

Specific migrant groups

The Refugee Council published another report on people's experiences in asylum hotel accommodation. Nationally over 25,000 people were accommodated in hotels at the end of 2021 and over 2,500 of these were children. It says the Home Office should provide a cash allowance to residents and limit stays to 35 days. (Source: Refugee Council)

On the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), data from freedom of information (FOI) requests reveals how applicants make challenges to EUSS decisions and raises questions about the accuracy of initial decisions by the Home Office. Meanwhile, The 3milllion refreshed their website and it now offers a resources

hub for EU nationals covering a wider range of topics. (Sources: Free Movement, 3million)

Just 2% of child trafficking victims are given discretionary leave to remain, as Mo Farah's case highlights the fate of less famous victims of trafficking. Meanwhile, in response to the Home Office deciding not to take action against Farah, this article highlights that 'immigrants shouldn't need to be exceptional' to be welcome in the UK. (Sources: the Guardian, Metro)

Cohesion and integration

A recent report explores Brits' opinions on refugee-related issues such as the Rwanda plan, channel crossings, specific support for people fleeing Ukraine, and much more. A key finding included that community sponsorship of refugees has the potential to reduce opposition to refugees, and so the report recommends it should be the main way the UK resettles refugees. (Source: More in Common)

Find out more about South Asian Heritage Month which showcases the profile of people in the UK who themselves or their families have come from South Asia. (Source: South Asian Heritage)

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https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/news/migration-news-roundup-25-july-2022