Migration news roundup 30 August 2022

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Stories that inspired us this week

Elias Chiguvi, a Leeds resident from Zimbabwe has successfully set up his own haulage company, aiming to rival well-known UK firm, 'Eddie Stobart'. (Source: Yorkshire Live)

A boy from Skipton is cycling along the Leeds-Liverpool canal to raise money for Bradford City of Sanctuary and Bradford African Community. (Source: Telegraph and Argus)

Sheffield taxi drivers in collaboration with other organisations arranged a day trip to the seaside for refugees from Ukraine, including a visit to a theme park. (Source: The Star)

International news

The Rwandan government and partners are putting measures in place to support refugees trapped in Libya through temporary evacuation to Rwanda. Over 400 refugees are currently housed at a centre near the capital Kigali. Denmark is also in talks with Rwanda about a UK-style transfer of people seeking asylum, which human rights campaigners say could violate international law. (Sources: Taarifa, Independent)

UNHCR has called the EU response to the Ukraine crisis 'exemplary' but challenged states over their response to other refugee groups. Meanwhile, the EU asylum agency is alerting EU

countries to increasing numbers of Georgians also seeking asylum due to the war. (Sources: The Times Hub, Schengen Visa Info)

UK borders and migration policy

The press reported record numbers of people crossing the Channel in small boats to claim asylum in the UK: 1,295 on a single day. Statistics released by the Home Office confirm Albania is now one of the top nationalities arriving via this route (with an initial asylum grant rate of 53%) and there is speculation that this could be linked to organised gang activity. The UK and Albanian governments announced plans for joint work to tackle the issue. (Sources: BBC, Home Office, the Guardian)

A new Scale-up visa will enable fast-growing businesses to recruit highly skilled workers. Individuals will be granted two years leave to remain and will not require sponsorship or permission after the first six months. The High Potential Individual visa for graduates from top global universities was announced earlier this year - this article provides an overview of the application process for a High Potential Individual Visa. (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)

The Home Secretary signed a returns agreement with Pakistan to facilitate returns of people who have committed crimes or are in the UK without immigration permission. (Source: Home Office)

Specific migrant groups

Following the publication of the latest quarterly immigration statistics until the end of June 2022, press coverage highlights some of the major findings regarding the asylum system such as asylum grant rates at a 32 year high (at 76%) and that just 21 asylum seekers have been removed to safe third countries under the Home Office's inadmissibility rules since January 2021. (Sources: Home Office, the Guardian, Independent)

The Home Office data release includes updated information on:

- Hong Kong nationals on a British National Overseas (BNO) visa - there were 18,100 applications for this route in between April and June 2022, making a total of 140,500 applications since 31 January 2021
- EU nationals applying for the EU Settlement Scheme at local authority level, revealing 370,000 EUSS applications in Yorkshire and Humber by the end of June
- New data on Afghan resettlement nationally, as of 12 August.

Two asylum seekers described their recent experience of staying in the Initial Accommodation centre in Wakefield as prison-like due to restricted freedoms such as curfews, access to healthcare and meals. Meanwhile, a joint letter from refugee charities has called on the government to abandon its plans to utilise reception centres as asylum accommodation, following the reversal of plans to use a former RAF site in North Yorkshire.

(Sources: BBC, Yorkshire Post)

Refugees minister Lord Harrington confirmed he asked the Treasury to double the thank you payment for hosts on the Homes for Ukraine scheme to £700 per month. This is linked to concerns over potential host drop-out due to the cost of living crisis, and the impact on homelessness support that would be needed. Harrington is also launching an appeal for more hosts for Ukrainians to come forward as he expects less than a quarter of people who signed up to actually become hosts. (Source: the Guardian)

The Home Office released new instructions to speed up the National Transfer Scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children; the operating threshold has increased to 0.1% of an area's child population, time for allocation of referrals has reduced to five days, and there is increased financial support for councils. (Source: Home Office)

Cohesion and integration

Government published evaluations of: the Integration Areas programme featuring Bradford, ESOL community projects mentioning Kirklees, and projects funded under the Controlling Migration Fund with projects in Bradford, Sheffield, Wakefield and Migration Yorkshire's Welcoming Young Refugees project. (Source: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities)

Research examines why British Muslims may face more disadvantages in the labour market than the white British population. (Source: The Conversation)

The cost of living crisis will not impact on everyone equally, with those from ethnic minorities more likely to be adversely affected according to research by People Like Us. (Source: the Guardian)

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