Migration news roundup 6 February



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Stories that inspired us this week

A Syrian doctor now based in the UK shares her story of migration, her return to Syria to set up hospitals during the war and the impact these experiences have had on her own wellbeing. Dr Hallam advises: ‘Look after your health: body, mind, heart and spirit. Only those alive and well can save lives.’ (Source: Metro)

Here’s a short clip of a 12 year old Ukrainian refugee playing the piano – Kateryna has been accepted into the Royal Academy of Music after her exceptional talent was discovered whilst living with her host family in Bristol. (Source: ITV News)

International news

In Italy the community of La Spezia demonstrated support for 237 migrants rescued by the Doctors Without Borders ship Geo Barents, whilst in Germany employers are urging their government to ease the process for employing migrants as many sectors of the economy are struggling to fill job vacancies. (Source: Info Migrants)

Outside Europe, this short video shows migrants in New York City protesting at being moved from a hotel to a shelter facility they describe as unsafe and cramped. (Source: BBC)

UK borders and migration policy

A report from the Refugee Council, The Truth about Channel Crossings, reveals over 60% of people arriving on small boats are likely to be recognised as refugees. It also calculates that recent proposals to detain and remove those who arrive illegally would have left over 45,000 asylum seekers in limbo in detention, unable to be returned due to a lack of returns agreements with third countries. Two reports on the UK-French border, focusing on policy and individual experiences, have been made available in English. (Sources: Refugee Council, the Guardian, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants)

An international report on human rights during 2022 criticises the UK government's approach to asylum and migration, specifically the Rwanda policy, the Nationality and Borders Act, and the absence of a time limit on immigration detention. Another article highlights that despite the government's criticism of human rights violations in Iran, nearly a fifth of asylum seekers facing possible removal to Rwanda are Iranian. (Sources: Human Rights Watch, Byline Times)

The independent body advising government on migration issues published its latest annual report, suggesting the government should not be too focused on the current high net migration figure which is likely to fall in the long-term. At the same time it warns of exploitation risks with opening low-paid visa routes to address labour shortages. (Source: Migration Advisory Committee)

Specific migrant groups

UK universities including Bradford have seen an increase in demand from international students following the pandemic, especially from India, Pakistan and Nigeria, leading to international applications for September 2023 closing early. Meanwhile, government is considering a proposal to increase international students' working hours to help tackle the worker shortage and boost the economy - even though the Home Secretary is looking at reducing the graduate route visa from two years to six months. (Source: The Pie News)

This article highlights the struggles of being on asylum support during the cost of living crisis. (Source: the Guardian)

An international non governmental organisation, the International Rescue Committee released a report with recommendations for the UK government on strengthening refugee resettlement and integration including scaling up safe routes, a national integration strategy and reinstating the post of Minister for Refugees at cabinet level. (Source: International Rescue Committee)

The Visa Application Centre in Kyiv has reopened meaning Ukrainians applying through the Ukraine Schemes will now be able to undertake biometrics in Ukraine rather than having to attend a centre in another country. (Source: UK Visas and Immigration)

Modern slavery provisions in the Nationality and Borders Act came into force and the national statutory guidance has been updated accordingly. The changes will make it more difficult to be recognised as a victim of modern slavery. (Source: Home Office)

The Home Secretary received a letter from a group of Hongkongers concerned about proposed measures limiting the right to protest. A survey conducted by Hongkonger-led organisations found that over 70% of BNO visa holders cited the political situation or safety as their main reasons for moving to the UK. Finally, we share the tragic story of a young Hongkonger recently settled in London who has taken her own life due to financial struggles. (Sources: the Guardian, Citizens of Our Time Learning Hub, My London)

An error in the digital register for the EU settlement scheme means some EU nationals who have been refused are still being shown as awaiting a decision. A summary of support available to EU nationals with pre-settled status is available in newsletter form. (Sources: the Guardian, Chartered Institute of Housing)

Cohesion and integration

The ‘Everyday Bordering in the UK’ project explored the relationship between migrants and social care workers and how migrant families might experience ‘everyday borders’ in the services they receive. Organisations from Hull and Sheffield collaborated on the three-year research project. A briefing note

and toolkit on Supporting Migrant Communities are available, aimed at social care practitioners. (Source: University of Sheffield)

A new public attitudes briefing suggests immigration as a priority issue for Conservative supporters (third) compared to Labour supporters (14th), and reports Labour doing better on immigration for ‘Red Wall’ voters. The briefing also shows public support for teaching about the arrival of the Windrush in schools as a key part of Britain’s history of migration. (Source: British Future)

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