Migration news roundup 17 April 2023



- Stories that inspired us this week
- International news
- UK borders and migration policy

- Specific migrant groups
- Cohesion and integration

Stories that inspired us this week

A Ukrainian LGBT couple have married in the UK, something that would not have been possible in Ukraine where same sex marriage and civil partnership is not recognised. (Source: BBC)

'That's all asylum seekers like me really want – to feel safe'. Read about the experiences that led a Sudanese woman to claim asylum in the UK and her hopes for her future. (Source: Metro)

A drama school has been set up in Glasgow by a Sri Lankan born actor who fled war as child, to address underrepresentation in the performing arts. (Source: Glasgow Live)

International news

In Europe, Italy announced a state of emergency following the growing number of migrants arriving on its coast - this will enable more funding for shelter, processing and returns. Malta apparently ignored hundreds of migrants on a fishing boat in its waters, claiming no rescue request was made. (Sources: InfoMigrants, EUobserver)

Outside Europe:

- Ethiopia offered 400 hectares for the settlement of newly arrived Somali refugees who will be given essential items to

set up home. (Source: UNHCR)
- In Mexico an investigation was launched against the head of the immigration agency and National Migration Institute officials following a fire at a detention centre that claimed the lives of 40 male migrants. (Source: Reuters)

UK borders and migration policy

The Home Office published an addendum to the memorandum of understanding for the Rwanda partnership which reveals Rwanda could receive non asylum-seeking migrants (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)

On people crossing the Channel in small boats:

- Scientific researchers revealed that diphtheria cases have risen in the UK in the past year, linking this to small boats arrivals; cases rose from 12 to 73 between 2021 and 2022. Relatedly, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) updated the Migrant Health Guide with guidance on responding to diphtheria for healthcare practitioners. (Sources: Metro, OHID)
- Some media are focussing on national security risks and small boats arrivals after a story highlighted that some people arriving this way have been designated as terrorist suspects. (Source: Telegraph)
- Government efforts on deterrence were criticised by opposition parties after arrivals topped 1,000 in a week. However, official statistics show the number of arrivals via

small boats was 16% lower in the quarter from January to March 2023 than the previous year. (Source: Financial Times)

The Home Office announced measures to prevent undocumented migrants obtaining access to bank accounts by introducing a new third party checking service for banks to run data checks. (Source: Home Office)

French school trips to the UK have decreased due to visa complications resulting from Brexit, making Ireland a preferred destination. (Source: Independent)

There are reports that government is preparing new visa restrictions after being warned Chinese spies were entering the UK after obtaining citizenship in third countries with no visa requirements to enter the UK as a visitor. (Source: Daily Mail)

Specific migrant groups

Over 170 organisations - including ones from Yorkshire and Humber - signed a letter calling on government to halt plans to house people seeking asylum in large-scale accommodation centres, warning of the negative impacts of segregation and how these measures could inflame community tensions and divisions. Also on this topic, Butlins attempted to reassure its customers it doesn’t intend allow the Home Office to use its Skegness site for asylum accommodation. (Sources: Asylum Matters, Lincolnshire Live)

This legal blog considers how best to clear the asylum backlog, suggesting modernisation of processes and faster processing for claims from countries with a high grant rate. (Source: Free Movement)

In a blogpost, the Children's Commissioner for England raised concerns about the impact the Illegal Migration Bill will have on children and families seeking asylum including changes to accommodation, detention and inadmissibility rules for children, new powers to remove children, and the end of protections for some child victims of trafficking and modern slavery. This comes as the UN called for the government to protect unaccompanied children from going missing and becoming victims of trafficking; it highlighted the need for unaccompanied children to be looked after by the local authorities, not within hotels - a practice it calls 'discriminatory'. (Sources: Children's Commissioner, UN News)

A teaching union called for additional funding for schools to support young refugees and asylum seekers and highlighted issues accessing Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services support. (Source: NASUWT)

There's a new bursary for postgraduate study of artificial intelligence and data science in Hull – refugees are eligible to apply. (Source: University of Hull)

The Independent Monitoring Authority (IMA) launched its annual survey asking EU nationals and their family members to share their experiences of interacting with public bodies and knowledge of their rights post-Brexit. (Source: IMA)

March’s research update from the Welcoming Committee for Hong Kongers (WK4HK) focuses on cultural identity and integration in schools. (Source: WK4HK)

Cohesion and integration

This article looks at how migrant communities have developed in Belfast following the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, following the experiences of individuals as the city has become more diverse and tolerant. (Source: the Guardian)

‘Offline and isolated’ is a report on the effects of digital exclusion on people seeking asylum accessing healthcare, with most fieldwork having taken place in Yorkshire. The report found participants’ access to internet or digital devices varied greatly based on their accommodation, and that lack of access meant delays in seeking medical help as well as increasing loneliness. (Source: British Red Cross)

The new Informer digital platform enables settled female migrants to mentor other refugee, asylum seeking and vulnerable migrant women on social integration and participation. The project partners include a social enterprise in Bradford. The platform offers online courses on becoming a mentor, a best practice guide and a Community of Practice. (Source: Informer Integration)

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