

Migration news roundup 18 March 2024



- 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

To mark International Women's day, a photography exhibition opened in London, celebrating women refugees from across the world. (Source: Stylist)

Ghani shares his experience of rebuilding his life in Kirklees, training to be a barber and becoming a barbering lecturer at Kirklees College. (Source: Kirklees College via Facebook – 2min video)

Ripon Grammar School in North Yorkshire has become a 'School of Sanctuary'. (Source: Your Harrogate)

International news

Palestinian Canadians have expressed disappointment with Canada's family reunification programme for people in Gaza to join their relatives in the country. Only 12 people have had applications approved, and there have not yet been any arrivals under the scheme. (Source: the Guardian)

At least 60 people died attempting to cross the central Mediterranean Sea, after their boat was left adrift following an engine failure. The International Organization for Migration has called for measures to prevent similar tragedies in future. (Source: Al Jazeera)

UK borders and migration policy

The government proceeded with its plans to cut net migration, laying new immigration rules. Joining dependants are no longer permitted on the health and social care visa, while from 4 April the minimum salary threshold for the skilled worker route increases to £29,000, and the Shortage Occupation List is replaced by an Immigration Salary List. A new parliamentary briefing summarises these changes. The Home Secretary also confirmed the Migration Advisory Committee has been commissioned to review the graduate visa route. (Sources: Home Office, UK Parliament)

Concerns have been raised within the care sector that the new rules, alongside a reported tightening of checks, will make it too difficult for companies to sponsor enough staff. Meanwhile, new research on exploitation and visa routes has found that some migrant care workers are earning as little as £5 a day. (Sources: the Guardian, Independent)

A union representing civil servants has threatened legal action against the Home Office if it continues to implement the Safety of Rwanda Bill, as they believe this could be a breach of

international law and so enacting provisions would contravene the civil service code. Meanwhile, following a recent National Audit Office report, the Public Accounts Committee has opened call for evidence from senior Home Office officials on the Rwanda scheme and the costs of asylum accommodation in the UK. Also on Rwanda, the government is exploring setting up a scheme in which asylum seekers could be paid to voluntarily relocate to Rwanda. (Sources: the Guardian, UK Parliament, BBC)

The Home Office was criticised after a data breach affecting over 76,000 people, with errors recording names, photos and immigration status. (Source: the Guardian)

The public inquiry about the Manston asylum processing site could be launched soon, following reports of mistreatment and abuse. (Source: the Guardian)

36 MPs have signed a joint letter calling for the government to implement an emergency scheme for Palestinian people in Gaza, similar to the Ukraine and Afghan schemes. Meanwhile a Palestinian refugee in the UK has won a legal challenge, after visa rules prevented his family from proceeding with a refugee family reunion application without undertaking biometrics enrolment. (Source: BBC)

Specific migrant groups

There are a number of items on asylum:

- The Home Office updated its policy to implement a stricter approach to accommodation requests around room sharing and location. Some individuals previously deemed unsuitable for room sharing or being accommodated in large sites like Napier and the Bibby Stockholm, could now be accommodated in these settings. (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)
- Far-right protests are on the increase, particularly at large asylum accommodation sites like Scampton in Lincolnshire. (Source: Sky News)
- Charities are calling for a doubling of the grace period for refugees moving on from asylum accommodation. This is following a 965% increase in homelessness among this group in recent months. (Source: the Guardian)

The children's commissioner has criticised reported Home Office plans to use shipping containers to house unaccompanied children infected with diphtheria. (Source: The Times)

A new report highlights vulnerability to exploitation for migrants working in the care and agriculture sectors, making a number of recommendations to mitigate the risk. (Source: Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre)

Cohesion and integration

This new report on the use and proficiency of English Language among migrants looks at the percentage of migrants speaking English, the take-up of ESOL resources and how levels of English

affect quality of life. (Source: The Migration Observatory)

As the government announced a new anti-extremism strategy, three former home secretaries came forward to warn against 'politicising' definitions of extremism. Meanwhile UK terror attack survivors have written an open letter asking politicians not to equate being Muslim with extremism. Finally, Hope Not Hate expresses concerns about far-right extremism and a growth in anti-migrant activity. (Source: the Guardian)

A new display celebrating the trailblazing contributions of Muslims living and working in the north of England can be seen at Leeds City Museum's Voices of Asia Gallery. (Source: Leeds City Council)

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