

Migration news roundup 27 August 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

After hiding his origins for many years, Rustam Wahab, a 22-year-old student of philosophy, politics, and economics at Southampton University whose family fled Afghanistan to the UK in 2001, is now proud to talk about his story on Instagram, with his account having over 700,000 followers. (Source: BBC)

Two students from migrant background, Tienga Ngale and Vishal Udaya Kumar, have been shortlisted for the prestigious national award of Social Work student of the year 2024. More education related news, a group of 19 women who were studying for medical degrees in Afghanistan have been granted permission to continue their medical studies in Scotland, after being denied the right to pursue their studies in their home country by the Taliban. (Sources: Brunel University of London, the Guardian)

More on the 25-year-old boxer Cindy Ngamba, who competed as part of the Refugee Olympic team and won a bronze medal - she hopes that the first-ever medal won by the team is a source of hope and inspiration for other refugees to never give up on their own dreams for victory. (Source: The Independent)

International news

Net migration to Sweden has fallen below zero for the first time in 50 years, a result of recent government measures to restrict migration. (Source: the Guardian)

In Hungary, as a response to a €200 million fine by the European Union's top court from June for noncompliance with EU asylum law, the government representative threatened to abandon border enforcement altogether, welcome aspiring EU migrants with "transport to Brussels free of charge". Meanwhile, a new law came into force in Hungary restricting state support for Ukrainians from specific regions, with those from the Roma ethnic minority, expected to be most affected. (Sources: AP News, BBC News)

Beyond Europe, the United States has worked with several countries in attempting to curb migration into North America, including by paying Panama for equipment, transportation and logistics to repatriate 'undocumented' migrants; signing an agreement with the Philippines to host Afghan nationals as they process their applications for asylum in the United States; and by encouraging the Brazilian government to impose new entry restrictions on selected Asian nationalities suspected of arriving in Brazil to facilitate further travel to the United States. (Sources: BBC, Al Jazeera, AP News)

UK borders and migration policy

It is quarterly immigration stats publication week! All our data dashboards, including Refugee and Asylum seeker, Ukraine and

EU Settlement Scheme have been updated. Here are some good opinion pieces worth a read:

- Migration Observatory highlights that the Labour government have inherited falling immigration, but stresses that the asylum process has stagnated.
- Free Movement observes that only 4% of people who claimed asylum in the last 12 months have had their claims processed and dives into detail of some other cohorts including students and EUSS.
- BBC picks up on the point that fewer people are coming from abroad to work in the NHS and care sectors, and also reports on the asylum numbers and small boats. (Sources: Home Office, Migration Yorkshire, Migration Observatory, Free Movement, BBC)

In other news, as outlined in its pre-election manifesto, the government has announced a series of measures to reduce irregular migration and increase deportations. The actions, which include plans to reopen two detention centres, have been criticised by Amnesty International who accused the Labour Party of 'reheating the last Government's rhetoric.' Other suggested approaches include tacking migrant smugglers in their countries of origin, including Iraqi Kurdistan. (Sources: The

Labour Party, The Independent, Amnesty International, Express)

The interim ICIBI Chief Inspector has outlined his priorities for the coming months, including inspections into clandestine entry into the UK, and the Home Office process and practices regarding age assessments. Calls for evidence will follow soon. (Source: gov.uk)

Finally, the Department of Health and Social Care in collaboration with the Home Office published a help sheet to assist adult social care providers applying for a Certificate of Sponsorship to sponsor care workers overseas on the health and care visa route. It outlines the steps involved in the application process and includes tips on how to provide the appropriate evidence required by the Home Office to meet the genuine vacancy requirement. (Source: Skills for Care)

Specific migrant groups

A new report from British Red Cross on commissioning and provision of healthcare services for people seeking asylum highlights practical improvements needed to ensure that they receive the best care possible. It includes a standardised user journey, data collection and access to interpreters. Elsewhere, the Guardian reports that the number of people seeking asylum who have died in the care of the Home Office has more than doubled in the last year. (Sources: British Red Cross, the Guardian)

Few more reports published in the last two weeks focusing on different migrant groups:

- On people from Ukraine – investigates the closure of the Ukrainian family scheme and its impact on affected families and calls for the scheme to be reinstated.
- On Roma – the outcome of multi-method research involving universities, civil society organisations, social care practitioners, and legal professionals, examines Roma families' experiences with children's services in the UK, and identifies systemic barriers and opportunities for improvement.
- On BN(O) visa holders – explores the needs and challenges of BN(O) children with special educational needs and their parents in navigating the education system and support provision in the UK.
- Modern slavery – revealed barriers for survivors of modern slavery to access support, created by a lack of cultural and structural competency in the UK's response to modern slavery. The report calls for designing more culturally competent services and policies that are better adjusted to

survivors' individual and cultural challenges and needs. (Sources: Work Rights Centre, Law for Life, Hongkongers in Britain, Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre)

More on modern slavery, the government's Modern Slavery Training Resource page has been updated while an investigation by the BBC, which uncovered a trafficking ring within the Scottish fishing industry between 2012 and 2020, highlights concerns with the criminal investigation and justice system. (Sources: gov.uk, BBC)

Finally, this article explores how a decline in student visa applications from India and Nigeria deepens concerns about the financial impact this may have on UK universities. (Source: Research Professional news).

Cohesion and integration

'Who is Your Neighbour', a South Yorkshire charity promoting unity across communities, and 'IMIX' have announced they will be hosting an online event, 'Creating Spaces that Disrupt Division' in September to facilitate meaningful dialogue and bridge divides. Similarly, City of Sanctuary have launched a free pack encouraging us all to start having 'courageous conversations' about refugee rights with our friends, colleagues, neighbours and families. (Sources: IMIX, City of Sanctuary)

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