

Migration news roundup 17 October 2022



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Stories that inspired us this week

From the podcast 'I am not your refugee', Usman Khalid talks about his social enterprise café aiming to counter false narratives around migration. (Source: Open Democracy)

Led by a local councillor, on the outskirts of Bristol a project is fostering relationships between the local community and asylum seekers living in hotels. (Source: Somerset Live)

For World Mental Health Day Zain Hafeez from Citizens UK talks about his experiences growing up in the UK asylum system, the effect it had on his mental wellbeing and what he did to find support through difficult times. (Source: IMIX)

UK borders and migration policy

News is dominated by follow-up to the Home Secretary's comments on immigration policy:

- There are growing reports of division amongst the government regarding future immigration policy with the Home Secretary wanting to reduce immigration but Truss backing Nadim Zahawi's calls for an increase in visas to speed up growth, resolve labour shortages and increase student migration. This survey showed three quarters of businesses have been affected by labour shortages and

many firms support migration as a solution. (Sources: Independent, Evening Standard)

- The Home Secretary's assertions about people falsely claiming to have been subject to modern slavery have been refuted by the labour abuse watchdog, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority. (Source: the Guardian)
- The Home Secretary was criticised by India for suggesting that relaxing immigration as part of any trade deal with India might not be viable. (Source: National News)
- Nigerians have been identified as sponsoring the largest number of dependent family members to come to the UK, accounting for 40% of all student dependents. A cap on the number of child dependents a student can sponsor is being considered by government. (Source: The Times, inews)

Small boat arrivals continue to be a topical issue, with latest reports of over 1,000 people arriving via small boats in one day. Yet smugglers have said that a shortage of small boats is making it increasingly difficult to facilitate crossings. (Source: BBC)

The Border Force union said the situation is extremely tense at the initial asylum processing site in Manston with reports of conflict between residents and staff, while another report says the site has run out of food and water. (Sources: Kent Online, Express and Star)

On the Rwanda Scheme, hearings regarding a second challenge are underway and a decision is expected from the High Court in

late October on whether the scheme will go ahead though there might be further challenges. An Ipsos opinion poll shows strongly felt views for and against the Rwanda policy, a majority supporting it but feeling it will not succeed in deterring new arrivals and will not provide value for money. More generally the poll found declining support for anti-immigration policies and a preference for increasing immigration to fill staff shortfalls. (Sources: Free Movement, British Future)

Charities have criticised the removal of modern slavery from the safeguarding minister's portfolio. It is now the responsibility of the immigration minister Tom Pursglove, listed under 'illegal immigration and asylum' responsibilities. (Sources: the Guardian, Home Office)

The Home Office published new guidance on refusing entry and deportations. (Source: Home Office)

Specific migrant groups

Great Yarmouth Borough Council has obtained an order stopping the Home Office from housing asylum seekers in a local hotel on the basis it would counteract their economic plans due it being located in a tourist area. (Source: Local Government Chronicle)

Reports say government has shelved plans to double Homes for Ukraine host's thank you payment from £350 to £700 per month following Lord Harrington's departure from his role as Minister for Refugee. There's concern over the future of the scheme due to the lack of policy development amid rising living costs and a

potential housing crisis. (Sources: Politics Home, Independent)

Latest figures show that 116 asylum-seeking children disappeared between July 2021 and August 2022 after being temporarily housed in hotels and have not been found. Some are as young as 11 and are at risk of being exploited. The Home Office said it had 'no alternative' to using hotels before long-term accommodation is found. (Source: BBC)

Updated school placement data for children from outside the UK shows that since September 2021, 476 children from Afghanistan, 581 from Hong Kong and 1,087 from Ukraine have been offered school places in Yorkshire and Humber. (Source: Department for Education)

A second annual survey of Hongkongers showed the majority of respondents (86%) are confident about their integration into UK society, with some concerned about employment, financial management, language and housing issues. Elsewhere, a study on Chinese Christian churches in the UK examines opportunities and challenges associated with migration from Hong Kong. In Peterborough a local hub is encouraging more people from Hong Kong to come forward for support to settle into life in the UK. (Sources: Welcome Churches, Christianity Today, Peterborough Telegraph)

Cohesion and integration

The first Census 2021 topic summary about demography and migration will be released on 2 November. The data will cover

indicators such as country of birth, passports held, year of arrival, length of residence and age of arrival and will be made available at a small scale where possible ('output area' covering 625 people or 250 households). A topic summary about ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion is also expected by December. (Source: Office for National Statistics)

The government's annual Hate Crime statistics report shows a 26% increase in hate crimes reported between March 2021 and March 2022, the largest annual increase since 2017. The report acknowledges it's unclear whether this reflects a rise in incidents or improvements in recording and victims having confidence to report. (Source: Home Office)

International news

In Europe, EU leaders have extended the protection of Ukrainian refugees to at least March 2024 and launched an online job-search tool to support Ukrainian employment. Meanwhile, Austria reports almost reaching 'breaking point' as asylum claims from other nationalities soar. (Source: Info Migrants)

This piece argues that Russian draft evaders should qualify for protection under the Refugee Convention but political choices made by states (such as visa bans for Russians) limit the potential for them to seek refuge. (Source: the Guardian)

Launched weeks into taking office, the Biden administration's family reunification task force has reunited 500 children separated from their families under the 2018 Trump policy which

had seen more than 5,000 children separated from their parents.
(Source: The Hill)

The International Migration Outlook 2022 focuses on Ukraine and on international students but covers annual migration trends, policy and integration mainly in western countries. (Source: OECD)

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