Migration Yorkshire policy update May 2021

An overview of the latest statistics, policy and research on migration issues affecting partner organisations in Yorkshire and Humber.

Summary

- Improvements to estimating migration to the UK have resulted in an admission that EU net migration has been higher and non-EU lower than earlier official estimates. There are also new modelling estimates of net migration trends. (paras.1, 2)
- Government published and consulted on a New Plan for Immigration, with significant reforms to asylum and modern slavery systems, and additional support for refugee integration. (para.7)
- As of late March, migrants crossing the Channel using small boats this year reached over 1,000 individuals, more than double than this time last year. (para.10)
- Visa extensions continue for health workers but not social care workers. (para.12)
- The visa route for Hong Kong British National (Overseas) passport holders opened on 31 January with 35,000 people having applied for the visa so far. Funding and guidance has been confirmed to provide a welcome programme in the regions. (paras.14-15)
- The use of military barracks and hotels as asylum accommodation remains a charged issue; scrutiny continues. (paras.27, 28)
- The Home Secretary confirmed the continuation of refugee resettlement by launching the global UK resettlement scheme, and announced £14 million funding for pilot projects to support refugee integration. (para.32)
- Horticulture, agriculture and cleaning industries have been identified as areas where potential exploitation of workers is increasingly likely. (para.50)
- 3,300 children looked after and care leavers are eligible to apply for the EUSS; of 374 eligible children in Yorkshire and Humber, 251 (67%) are yet to apply. Concerns continue to be raised about the potential impacts for people who do not apply by the June 2021 deadline. (paras. 65, 70)
- There has been massive criticism of a government-commissioned report on racial disparities, set up after the Black Lives Matter protests last year. (para.74)
- International migration globally ‘slowed’ by 2million in 2020 due to COVID-19. (para.95)
- Plans to vaccinate asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants are progressing, for example, in Germany, Serbia, Greece and Jordan. (paras.91, 100)
- Local stories of support to refugees feature Hull, York, Bradford and Sheffield. (para.101)

UK migration trends

1. As suspected for a while - EU net migration has been higher and non-EU lower than earlier official estimates. ONS just revised its estimates of EU and non-EU migration for the 9 years between 2010 to March 2020. Rather than EU migration accounting for less than half (42%) of net migration during this period, the new estimates suggest it was almost two thirds (64%). Overall, the approximate net migration trends were unchanged. This comes as part of improving methods of estimating migration, using retrospective administrative datasets (known as RAPID) showing observed behaviour rather than the International Passenger Survey that measured intentions to stay. This method is expected to be more accurate but with a greater lag between real-time events and publication of trends. (Sources: ONS, Migration Observatory)

2. It is not yet possible to define with certainty how migration trends in the UK changed since the end of the transition from the EU or the pandemic; the usual Migration Statistics Quarterly Report due from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in February was cancelled. However, provisional, modelling estimates (not official statistics) of net migration data to June 2020, as per *Figure 1*, show the falling net migration trend after February 2020, with a net migration figure of 282,000 for the year ending June 2020. The narrative in the report gives monthly net migration estimates which show growing negative net migration from March 2020 i.e. more people left the UK than arrived at this time, the most recent monthly estimate being -21,700 in June 2020. (Source: ONS)

*Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1: Cumulative net international migration, July 2019 to June 2020, UK (Source: ONS)*

Image
Cumulative net international migrant line graph by month

3. This follows a commentary warning that the UK is embarking on a new migration system without reliable migration data, and a dispute in analysis of how the UK population has changed due to coronavirus. A government-funded study calculated over a million EU and non-EU nationals left the UK in the year ending Sept 2020, mostly from London, as a consequence of the coronavirus impacts upon sectors like hospitality, rather than Brexit. In contrast official calculations on population change show a much smaller fall. This Twitter thread has some of the key figures. (Sources: Financial Times, ESCoE, ONS, Migration Observatory)

4. Home Office data was published for the 2020 calendar year showing for the UK:

- Expected downward trends in non-EU migration between 2020 and 2019 (based on visas issued): work visas fell most by 35%, family visas by 28%, study visas by 18% and asylum applications fell 18%, or 21% if you include dependants). Most of this was a big fall in April-June, but numbers bouncing back afterwards. Resettlement fell by around 85% but that was due to the scheme halting rather than individuals choosing not to travel to the UK.
- EUSS applications jumped up again towards the end of the year as perhaps is expected with the UK exit from the EU.
- 40% fewer people entered immigration detention and there were 42% fewer forced removals. EU nationals account for over half of removals. A high proportion of those people who are removed from detention come from Romania, Poland, and Brazil compared with all

other nationalities.
- Citizenship statistics show 2% fewer applications and 18% fewer grants. Citizenship applications by EU nationals rose, now comprising 35% of the total.

5. The next quarterly update of Immigration Statistics from the Home Office is expected towards the end of May. For more analysis, there is a summary and commentary or more visual twitter threads from law and policy experts. (Sources: ONS, Home Office, Migration Observatory, Colin Yeo twitter thread)

6. Census day for England, Wales and Northern Ireland was 21 March, the first census to complete online, and by 7 April 90% of households had completed their return. Local authorities and community partners were asked to share information and encourage people to complete the Census – there are ready made resources to do this. Some households will receive follow up visit after Census day, either by field officers targeting those who haven't completed the Census, as well as a Census Coverage Survey 6-8 weeks later that is a repeat, voluntary survey with a selection of households to help with missing information and duplications. (Source: ONS)

UK borders and migration policy

Consultation on immigration policy proposals

7. Government published for consultation a lengthy New Plan for Immigration with an accompanying statement from the Home Secretary. The plan includes draconian measures and reforms to asylum and modern slavery processes but additional support for refugee resettlement (see summary overleaf and MY briefing paper). The consultation closed on 6 May. (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement, Migration Yorkshire)

8. Sheffield City of Sanctuary has already published a response and local press have described the reaction from members of Amnesty Wharfedale. NGOs have criticised the asylum proposals as inhumane as well as lacking detail on safe and legal routes, the UK has no bi-lateral agreements with any countries to facilitate returns and the proposals create a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' asylum seekers. Legal commentators raised concerns over the legality of some proposals. The phrase 'safe, legal routes' often used in discussions about the travel routes used by people arriving to claim asylum is explained in this Refugee Council briefing. (Sources: Sheffield City of Sanctuary, Ilkley Gazette, the Guardian, Independent, JCWI, IPPR/Wired.gov, JWCI podcast - start at 11mins - contains swearing, Refugee Council)

New Plan for Immigration: Key proposals

Asylum: new reception centres to accommodate people whilst claims are being considered (replacing hotels); arrangements to send asylum applicants to third countries to have their claims processed; providing asylum applicants with temporary leave to remain with no access to public funds and no family reunion rights where they have entered the UK illegally and the Home Office is unable to return them to another safe country, a tightening of definitions used by decision

makers about ‘persecution’. Further, it promises to consult councils about removing support from refused asylum seekers.

Unaccompanied children: age assessment to be taken out of the hands of social workers by a new Board, which will be able to use ‘latest technology’ (this might mean x-rays to determine age, which has been controversially proposed in the past), and immigration officers will be able to initially assess young people as adults if they appear to be significantly over 18 years (at the moment the threshold is 25 years).

Refugees: the provision of Indefinite Leave to Remain to all arrivals via the UK resettlement scheme, additional funding and resources to support integration, particularly on employability but also increased English language support.

Modern slavery and the NRM (for processing potential modern slavery victims): individuals awaiting an NRM decision who’ve had a prison sentence of a year won’t be protected from removal; a tighter legal test for a positive ‘reasonable grounds’ decision; the credibility of a claimant to consider contradictions and previous opportunities to claim modern slavery. Also, temporary leave to remain for confirmed victims with long-term recovery needs and improved access to mental health support, and funding to increase prosecutions and support victims to engage in the criminal justice system.

Channel crossings

9. A survey of migrants in Calais indicates more than half believe it will be easier get asylum in the UK following Brexit, although most thought it would be physically harder to reach the UK. (Source: Standard)

10. As of late March, the number of migrants crossing the Channel using small boats this year reached over 1,000 individuals, more than double than this time last year. A ‘command centre’ in Dover was set up at the start of the year to thwart smugglers, and in February the immigration minister stated that French authorities had stopped 70% of attempted migrant Channel crossings in 2021. Meanwhile, people are still making other desperate journeys; a 16-year-old survived a flight from London to the Netherlands hiding near the plane's landing gear. (Sources: BBC, Daily Mail, CNN)

Post-Brexit immigration

11. Post-Brexit challenges faced by UK citizens living in the EU include accessing bank accounts, healthcare and jobs, as well as time limits on stays and income requirements. (Sources: Express, BBC)

12. An ‘alarming shortfall’ of social care staff will be the result of the new points-based migration system, the NHS Confederation told a parliamentary Committee back in January. Despite visa extensions for health workers in April, again care workers were excluded. Several initiatives to secure indefinite leave to remain for migrant healthcare workers have been unsuccessful so far,

including a private members' bill and a nurse's petition. This article highlights the struggles of health and care workers subject to visa fees and complex application processes, including a migrant working in a Sheffield hospital kitchen. (Sources: Independent, Gov.UK, BBC, UK Parliament, Guardian, New Statesman)

13. In the budget the Chancellor announced changes to help UK businesses recruit internationally. These will include an elite points-based visa, within which there will be a 'scale-up' stream aimed mainly at tech companies. Moreover, the UK is widening the number of countries from which it can recruit health and social care staff. Finally, sheep shearers from abroad will be allowed to come to the UK this summer. (Sources: Free Movement, gov.uk, Work Permit)

Hong Kong

14. The new visa route for Hong Kong British National (Overseas) passport holders opened on 31 January, with huge volumes of enquiries being made to immigration firms, although some residents arrived prior to this date and press reports of a surge in Hong Kong residents buying UK property in anticipation. The Hong Kong government no longer recognises the BN(O) passport as a valid travel document, which might increase the pressure on citizens considering moving to the UK. The government estimated 322,000 of an eligible 5.4 million people will come to the UK over the next five years; at least 35,000 people were thought to have applied for the BNO visa by mid-April. The Prime Minister held a video call with families who recently arrived. (Sources: the Guardian, Telegraph, Independent, the Times, the Prime Minister's Office)

15. Government recently confirmed publicly it will provide £43 million to support people from Hong Kong with BNO status to settle in the UK. Guidance for local authorities and further information on the £37.3 million welcome programme explains that councils will be able to spend up to £800 per head on ESOL and up to £2,720 per household on destitution support. 12 welcome hubs will be established, one in each region, and Strategic Migration Partnerships will be funded 'to coordinate and manage the welcome.' Civil society initiatives are developing to support new arrivals including the Hong Kong Assistance and Resettlement Community, and a council in Northern Ireland is taking a proactive approach to facilitating settlement. (Sources: MHCLG, Hong Kong Watch, Twitter, Belfast Telegraph)

16. Changes to the immigration rules confirmed that BN(O) visa holders can have the NRPF condition lifted when destitute or at imminent risk of destitution, while some of those applying from within the UK are exempt from the maintenance requirements. Commentators have warned that government has underestimated the scale of the issue and the level of support needed. New arrivals may struggle to settle due to issues such as PTSD, and that they may face hostility in the context of a recent increase in xenophobia towards those of East Asian appearance. (Sources: Gov.uk, New Statesman, CNN)

17. Briefings are available from the House of Commons Library and the Home Office. This long read focuses on the experiences of pro-democracy activists arriving here. Some opinion pieces warns against seeing migrants arriving on the new visa scheme merely as economic assets, as the government risks encouraging the narrative that some groups of migrants are more

worthwhile than others. (Sources: UK Parliament, Home Office, Inews, the Guardian, Chatham House)

The hostile environment

18. The House of Lords proposed an amendment to the Domestic Abuse Bill to prevent police sharing data about victims with immigration enforcement and improve protection for migrant women. There's concern that victims are reluctant to report abuse due to fear of deportation and reports that migrant survivors of abuse have been turned away when seeking help during the pandemic due to NRPF conditions and in the context of the hostile environment. The Home Office instead wants to evaluate a pilot 'support for migrant victims scheme'. (Sources: Parliament, Law Society Gazette, Politics Home, Metro, the Independent, Voice Online)

19. Discussion continues on whether and how to support people with NRPF conditions, particularly during the pandemic. This overview of migrant homelessness during the pandemic demonstrates improvements in the homelessness sector, free school meal eligibility was temporarily extended to include children of some people with NRPF and government announced £10M additional funding for councils to accommodate rough sleepers and register them with a GP so they can get vaccinated. Numbers on the streets increased after June when guidance changed so people with NRPF couldn't access help. MHCLG says councils must consider the needs of those ineligible for support due to their immigration status. (Sources: Homeless Link, Gov.uk, the Guardian)

20. Despite these initiatives, stories warn of migrants who would feel unable to self-isolate due to their precarious work such as those working in quarantine hotels, and those in cleaning and hospitality work who have lost their job since the pandemic began. Many undocumented migrants in the UK are fearful of asking for a vaccine in case of arrest or deportation. (Sources: the Independent, JCWI, New York Times)

21. A High Court ruling established during the pandemic councils have the power to accommodate migrants with NRPF. There are calls for clearer guidance for councils. The LGA is urging government to lift the NRPF condition. MPs are calling for the 'Everyone In' programme to be restarted, which ensured support was available for all homeless people regardless of migration status. (Sources: BBC, Shelter, LGA, UK Parliament the Guardian)

22. An IPPR report explores policy options on the hostile environment and reforms to immigration enforcement, recommending a repeal of 'right to rent' checks and two routes for regularising migration status for long term residents and those in a vulnerable situation. (Sources: IPPR, Free Movement)

23. 8,000 judicial reviews were lodged against the Home Office last year; the government is consulting on reform. A report says ministers should review policy before trying to limit judicial scrutiny of its decisions – as per the New Plan for Immigration. (Sources: Gov.UK, Institute for Government, Free Movement)

24. On immigration enforcement, figures have been released on immigration raids in private homes and care homes and subsequent deportations. Harmondsworth becomes the third immigration removal centre to experience a Covid-19 outbreak. There are plans for a women's immigration removal centre in the north east, potentially with others to follow. The High Court ruled immigration detainees in prison must be able to access free legal advice, like those in immigration removal centres. Home Office guidance provides some clarification on the policy on rough sleeping as possible grounds for deportation. For example, it will only apply after repeated refusals of support and persistent anti-social behaviour, and will not be applicable to those without support due to NRPF, EU nationals or refugees. The Home Office is re-opening ways to deport rough sleepers, working with a small number of local authorities and charities to provide relevant data. EU nationals have recently been included in the Home Office's voluntary returns scheme; those who chose to return to their countries of origin voluntarily may qualify for financial assistance. The first deportation flight to Vietnam was chartered. (Sources: the Guardian, BBC, Free Movement, Home Office)

25. Migration Watch claims the number of visa overstayers has almost doubled in five years. There are reports of undocumented migrants unable to register with GPs to receive the Covid vaccination, and the Prime Minister mooted the prospect of an amnesty for undocumented migrants resident in the UK for a long time. (Sources: Telegraph, East London and West Essex Guardian, Bloomberg)

Specific migrant groups

Asylum seekers

26. New parliamentary briefing papers cover asylum statistics in the UK including a chart depicting asylum grants by refugees' country of origin since 1989 (p.12), and the impact of the UK asylum system on asylum seekers' mental health. (Source: House of Commons Library)

27. The use of military barracks at Napier and Penally as asylum accommodation continues to be a charged issue. Developments include continued placement of asylum seekers at Napier barracks despite recent COVID outbreaks, evidence of multiple suicide attempts at Napier military barracks in Kent (while coroners and the ONS are unable to properly record data on suicides by asylum seekers). Immigration Minister Chris Philp was criticised for suggesting asylum seeker residents were responsible for an outbreak at a site, reiterated by the Home Secretary, while residents were also blamed for a fire on site. The Penally army camp was due to close in March and the Home Office abandoned plans to set up a temporary accommodation site using portacabins next to immigration detention centre Yarlswood, following criticism that the site would not be Covid-secure. (Sources: Guardian, BBC, Metro, Independent)

Official scrutiny includes the Independent Chief Inspector's report into the use of hotels and army barracks, finding poor conditions, safeguarding issues and lack of COVID compliant conditions. The Home Affairs Committee heard oral evidence on Home Office preparedness for COVID-19 in asylum accommodation and revealed those with positive COVID tests are accommodated in large

dorms - leading to residents sleeping outside for fear of catching the virus. Legal proceedings involve whether this is unlawful practice, and whether asylum seekers have been subject to unlawful detention at these sites during lockdown. In addition, a Refugee Council report on hotel accommodation was informed by their work supporting people in Yorkshire and Humber, including Leeds, Hull and Rotherham. (Sources: ICIBI, Parliament, Independent, Refugee Council)

Objections continue to be raised including by asylum seeker residents, councils in Yorkshire and Humber, Church of England bishops, plus broader negative coverage including the accusation that accommodation providers have threatened residents suggesting if they speak out their claims will be affected. (Sources: BBC, Independent, the Guardian)

28. Public Health England previously advised the barracks were unsuitable sites for accommodation, as did a surveyors report 7 years ago. Leaked Home Office internal documents suggested the decision to house asylum seekers in military accommodation was because of fears that better quality accommodation would undermine public confidence in the asylum system. (Source: Independent)

29. In other parts of the asylum system, issues include:

- Digital exclusion during the pandemic with many asylum seekers unable to maintain contact with family, access shopping or online learning for children. (Source: Independent)
- Reports of people seeking asylum living in London, including vulnerable modern slavery survivors, being moved accommodation with as little as a day's notice during the latest lockdown, sometimes into substandard housing. (Source: the Guardian)
- In response to a story about people seeking asylum being sexually harassed and intimidated in London hotel accommodation, Yvette Cooper MP called for an investigation. (Sources: the Guardian, Morning Star)
- Tabloid complaints about asylum seekers in hotels getting the Covid jab despite not being on the priority list, apparently a decision taken by local GPs, and a Conservative MP complained about disproportionate asylum dispersal to Stoke-on-Trent. (Sources: Daily Mail, Stoke Sentinel)

Refugees

30. The UK met its target of resettling 20,000 refugees from the Syrian conflict under the VPRS. The Home Secretary also confirmed the continuation of refugee resettlement by launching the global UK resettlement scheme, and announced £14million funding for pilot projects to support refugee integration that will include language learning, employment, housing and making links in the community. The Social Market Foundation suggests government should offer more opportunities for skilled refugees to come to the UK, with a system merging elements of resettlement and the points-based system. (Sources: Home Office, UK Parliament, Social Market Foundation)

31. Local media ran a story on the huge fall in resettlement of refugees to Leeds/ Yorkshire in the past year. Hull council has publicly pledged to resettle 60-90 refugees every year under the new global resettlement scheme, matching their previous commitment. A campaign from RESET to

increase community sponsorship programmes aims to recruit 5,000 people to sign up to sponsor refugees to be resettled to the UK. (Sources: YEP, Hull Daily Mail, Community Sponsorship)

32. A resettled refugee in Hull talked about her experience of poor housing conditions since 2012. A more positive piece covers an award-winning resettlement project delivered by Ashford council in Kent. (Sources: the Mirror, Local Government Chronicle)

33. UNHCR has been depicting stories behind the Refugee Olympic and Paralympic teams. Over 60 refugee athletes and para athletes are training in the hope of competing at the Tokyo Games. (Source: UNHCR)

Children and Young People

34. Directors of Children's Services published a 'safeguarding pressures' report which highlights the challenges faced by services when supporting unaccompanied children including age assessments, funding, and increase in numbers. (Source: ADCS)

35. Relatedly, national charities wrote to the children's minister urging reform to the national transfer scheme, arguing that a lack of funding and specialist services for lone children makes councils reluctant to engage in the scheme, while the passing of Prince Phillip, who arrived to the UK as a child refugee, generated a debate on the welcome he received and the current approach to children seeking asylum. (Sources: Refugee Council, the Independent, Mirror)

36. This article explores how unaccompanied asylum seeking children can be supported to thrive living in rural communities citing an example of Norfolk County Council setting up a specialist team to support young people transferred from Kent. (Source: Local Government Chronicle)

37. The Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit's publication on the impact of Covid-19 asylum decision delays for children in the North West of England showed detrimental effects of the delays on children's mental health and trust in the adults who support them. (Source: GMIAU)

38. Social work and children's rights charities raised alarm over age assessments to be reshaped as per the New Plan for Immigration policy paper. They argued that since the Home Office social workers have been established at Kent Intake Unit, the rate of age disputes rose from 49% to 64% and a number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children have been detained and threatened with deportation after incorrectly deemed to be over 18. This policy of 'short' age assessments has been a subject to a recent legal challenge. (Sources: Community Care, the Guardian, Duncan Lewis)

39. Locally, Hull City Council was told to improve support to care leavers, including access to mental health provision, following the tragic deaths of four young people in the last two years, one of whom was an unaccompanied asylum seeker. (Source: Hull Daily Mail)

40. The Home Office released a statement outlining the government's position on legal protection routes from the EU and the family reunion of unaccompanied asylum seeking children after Brexit. This briefing explains what the end of Dublin ? means for people trying to join family in the UK.

(Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)

41. A DfE research report on experiences of the Dublin ? among local authorities, young people and their families found that local authorities lacked clarity about suitability assessments they were required to do and family members had misconceptions about the level of support they would receive, leading to nearly a third of the family arrangements ending up breaking down. One of the successful placements was highlighted in news. (Sources: Department for Education, Metro)

42. The Court of Appeal confirmed that a fee for children to register as British citizens is unlawful as it does not consider their best interests and is a barrier to citizenship. While the Home Secretary is currently reviewing the judgement and the fees for all immigration and citizenship applications, the charges updated in March remain the same. (Sources: PRCBC, Free Movement, Parliament, Home Office)

International students

43. The government published a new international education strategy with the aim of helping the sector to recover after the pandemic and increasing the number of international students studying in the UK to 600,000 by 2030. Channel 4 news produced a podcast on the experiences of international students struggling in the UK in the covid-19 pandemic. (Sources: Gov.uk, Channel 4)

44. Some international students accused of cheating on TOEIC tests in 2014 still face a lack of status with no recourse to appeal, despite the previous Home Secretary committing to looking into the issue. (Source: Home Affairs Select Committee)

Modern slavery

45. National Referral Mechanism (NRM) statistics for October to December 2020 show a 22% increase in referrals from the previous quarter, reaching over 3,000. Labour exploitation is the most common among adults, while criminal exploitation among children. (Source: Home Office)

46. The NRN data for the whole of 2020 reveals a rise in child referrals, a significant increase in positive decisions (89% of all decisions) and a shift in the nationality profile: the top 3 nationalities are UK, Albania and Sudan, with Vietnam dropping to 4th place, while the delays in decision times continue. The annual assessment of the modern slavery helpline confirms an increase in exploitation in 2020, especially among children, with criminal exploitation rising by 42% and sexual exploitation by 25%. (Sources: Home Office, the Guardian)

47. Analysis of the latest statistics indicate that the pandemic reduced opportunities for first responders to build trust with potential victims and suggests new settings such as job centres, food banks and vaccination centres where victims could be identified and supported. (Source: Modern Slavery PEC)

48. Concerns continue to be raised about the impact of Brexit on a rise of modern slavery in the UK and one of the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority's deliverables is to identify new international risks. This includes an increased likelihood of exploitation of workers in horticulture and agriculture, especially since it was found that migrants in the Seasonal Workers Pilot (SWP), which started in 2019 with an annual quota of 2,500 and is expanding to 30,000 this year, are at risk of labour exploitation due to not being fully aware of the nature of the work beforehand, debts incurred to pay for the visa and travel to the UK, and unsafe housing. Cleaners have also been identified as facing higher risk of exploitation. (Sources: Unseen, gov.uk, Farmers Weekly, FLEX, Labour Exploitation)

49. Further concerns relate to the quality of asylum screening interviews potentially resulting in failure to recognise victims of trafficking, the Crown Prosecution Service for prosecuting trafficking victims and tackling perpetrators and enforcing the Modern Slavery Act's measures on supply chains. (Sources: Hartlepool Mail and Free Movement, gov.uk and Modern Slavery PEC)

50. Yvette Cooper MP and the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner are among those calling for the Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into modern slavery to be resumed in light of the impact of Brexit and the pandemic on victims. (Source: Yorkshire Evening Post)

51. Government rejected a proposal to grant automatic 12 month leave to remain for modern slavery victims called for in the Modern Slavery (Victim Support) Bill. Relatedly, a report on legal representation explored why it's an uphill struggle for modern slavery survivors to secure legal status. (Sources: Parliament, the Guardian, University of Liverpool)

52. On practice, a recent review of practice-based modern slavery research recommends that NGOs supporting modern slavery survivors should consider developing a trusted relationship with the police in order to help individuals understand the criminal justice process, and engage in police investigations. (Source: St Mary's University)

53. From January 2021, the new 'reach-in service' supports modern slavery survivors to move on from the main NRM support. In Yorkshire and the Humber the service is delivered by City Hearts and the Snowdrop Project. (Source: Salvation Army)

54. Nearly 3,000 potential modern slavery victims were detained in removal centres between Jan 2019-Sept 2020. New guidance suggests it will be more difficult for potential modern slavery victims to be released from detention from May as evidence needs to show detention would render individuals 'particularly vulnerable to harm'. (Sources: After Exploitation, Sky News, gov.uk)

55. 30% of financial services employees are unaware that modern slavery happens in the UK, while two-thirds of local authorities are reportedly using suppliers who are not compliant with the Modern Slavery Act due to not having modern slavery statements published. (Sources: Themis, Yorkshire Evening Post)

56. New initiatives aiming to tackle modern slavery include a 'Look Closer' campaign to raise awareness of the signs of child exploitation and a new qualification to equip workers to protect themselves from labour abuse launched by GLA. Some, such as apps designed to stop human

trafficking, are reportedly failing to do so. (Source: Children's Society, GLA and Wired)

57. Locally, the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership was awarded a Certificate of Excellence for working together in this year's iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards. Also, a number of useful resources has been developed in the region – Safer Leeds has a 'pocketbook' for professionals to help them identify possible victims, while Humber Modern Slavery Partnership (HMSP) produced useful summaries of government guidance, including for local authorities. (Sources: Humberside PCC, West Yorkshire PCC and HMSP)

Windrush generation

58. Data on the Windrush Scheme shows over 12,500 individuals have received documents that confirm their status or British citizenship. Since 2019 the compensation scheme has offered almost £18 million, of which £6 million has been paid. (Source: GOV.UK)

59. A Windrush group in Preston is taking legal action against Priti Patel on citizenship and compensation issues. Some Windrush claimants consider the Home Secretary's recently promised fast-tracked compensation of a minimum £10K to be a publicity stunt. (Sources: Lancashire Post; the Independent).

60. The Home Secretary has apologised after a 65-year-old who had lived in the UK for over 43 years was refused British citizenship because of prolonged absence from the UK. He spent 9 years outside the UK after he was refused re-entry following a trip to Jamaica for his mother's funeral. The matter cannot be resolved retrospectively due to UK immigration legislation. British nationality laws are to be reformed under the New Plan for Immigration to give the Home Secretary discretion to overrule the residency requirement. Proposed changes were welcomed by some directly affected. (Source: the Guardian)

61. This article provides the history of a housing association set up to accommodate Windrush migrants. (Source: Inside Housing)

EU nationals

62. Latest EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) statistics show:

- Over 5.3 million applications have been made to the scheme in total. The latest monthly statistics show just over 126,000 applications in March 2021. In 2021, an average monthly figure was 140,000, half the level of the end of 2020.
- At local authority level latest figures (to end December 2020) show close to 260,000 applications in Yorkshire and Humber in total.
- The top nationalities of applicants in our region changed slightly – Poland remains top (28%) but applications from Romanians increased (to 18%). Slovakia and Italy remain third and fourth respectively, while Lithuania was joined by Latvia in fifth. Polish remains the top nationality in most areas, but Romanian is now the dominant nationality in Doncaster and Scarborough (and continues to be in Barnsley) while Slovak continues to be a top nationality

in Sheffield and Rotherham, and became the most prevalent in Bradford.

- Grants of settled status have been decreasing, in March 2021 standing at 41%. Nationally, 53% of applicants have been given settled status, 44% pre-settled and 3% had other outcomes, whilst in Y&H 54% have been granted settled status, 41% pre-settled, with 4% receiving other outcomes.
- Since February 2020 there has been a noticeable increase in other outcomes, including refusals on eligibility grounds. So far, nearly 56,000 applications have been refused and in March 2021 refusals accounted for 10% of all decisions.

(Source: Home Office)

63. 3,300 children looked after and care leavers are eligible to apply for the EUSS, according to revised Home Office estimates. Of these, 46% have applied and 30% secured status. A local authority breakdown shows 374 eligible children in Yorkshire and Humber, of which 251 (67%) are yet to apply. The Children's Society wrote about the progress of the EUSS for looked after children while the LGA acknowledged the pandemic had impact on capacity across councils. (Sources: Home Office, The Children's Society, Local Government Association)

64. In February £4.85 million of grant funding was announced for organisations currently funded to support vulnerable people apply to the EUSS to continue this support until end of September 2021. A toolkit produced by Roma Support Group to ensure that the Roma community apply to the EUSS highlights good practice between councils and advice organisations. Sheffield and Leeds are mentioned as examples to follow and Migrant Info Hub features on a resource list. A new awareness campaign highlights the importance of registered legal advice for those applying to the EUSS. (Sources: gov.uk, Roma Support Group, OISC)

65. EUSS caseworker guidance includes valid reasons for late applications to the scheme, including for children, adults with mental and physical disabilities, victims of human trafficking and those in abusive relationships. Analysis is available on a legal blog. EUSS guidance on suitability requirements has also been updated in relation to individuals with pending prosecutions. (Source: Home Office)

66. Charities are bringing legal challenges against the Home Office over EUSS for failing to ensure that the rights of vulnerable EEA citizens living with mental health issues are protected and over their 'extremely restrictive' guidance related to absences caused by pandemic. The impact of absences from the UK for those with pre-settled status are explained in this blog. (Sources: Migrant Organise, Crown Justice, Free Movement)

67. Support organisations have seen an increase in older EU nationals reaching out for help in applying to the EUSS and more stories are emerging of individuals granted pre-settled status despite living in the UK for over 5 years. Worries about EU children missing the deadline and becoming a second Windrush continue. (Sources: Wales online, the Guardian)

68. Concerns continue to be put forward about the end of the grace period in June 2021. U pdated NHS guidance explains charging of EU nationals during and after the grace period. The a nti-slavery Commissioner identified risks of exploitation of EU nationals following the end of the

transition period. This includes modern slavery survivors not having documentation for a settled status application and increased use of the visitor route by people intending to work informally. Concerns have been raised about non-EEA nationals who are 'Zambrano carers' with British children, as they might face deportation after the end of the grace period. (Sources: Department of Health and Social Care, Antislavery Commissioner, Journalism.co.uk)

69. Back in December the Court of Appeal ruled it is unlawful for government to make regulations excluding EU nationals with pre-settled status from Universal Credit. The government received permission to appeal and there will be no legal effects of the judgement until the appeal is resolved. Official guidance for local authorities on the effects of the case is to put relevant cases on hold. (Sources: Free Movement and gov.uk)

70. Up to 4,000 homeless EU nationals were accommodated in March-October 2020 under the *Everyone In* scheme, with 10% opting for reconnection to home countries in the EU despite being eligible to apply to the EUSS. (Source: the Independent)

71. There have been reports of UK border officials asking for documents confirming status of entering individuals from the EU, despite the status not yet being required. (Source: Politico)

Cohesion and integration

72. There has been massive criticism of a report on racial disparities commissioned by the government after the Black Lives Matter protests last year. The report recognises that racism is a 'real force' but does not see the UK as having the system 'deliberately rigged against ethnic minorities' and warns against using 'institutional racism' too readily. The report finds factors such as social class are more significant in life chances and the focus should be more on individuals and communities to help themselves; it recommends dropping the term BAME and concentrate on specific groups, and that equality training should replace training on unconscious bias; it applauds the UK's success in education and that should be seen as 'a model for other white-majority countries'; it praises idealism of young people but claims they alienate the centre ground, and argues for a 'new story' to be told about the slave trade. (Sources: BBC, Guardian, MHFA England, Friends, Families and Travellers, Rethink Mental Illness, Women's Aid)

73. On Covid-19 and inequality, figures for the second wave show higher mortality rates among people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi background, perhaps due to differences in exposure and infection. Government measures to address Covid-19 inequalities include piloting community-led asymptomatic testing at places of worship in ethnically diverse areas, and funding for a Community Champion scheme to encourage vaccine update and counter misinformation. Government recognised that ethnic disparities may be more likely due to exposure to infection than to ethnicity itself being a risk factor (another recent study concluded migrants in high-income countries are at high risk of exposure and infection). The research found some were unhappy about the framing of ethnic minorities as a homogenous group vulnerable to Covid, and that some faced challenges navigating public health advice. Indeed, the role of policy and poor experiences of practice have also been highlighted in deterring access to healthcare by migrant and minority populations. (Sources: ONS, Gov.UK, Medrxiv, JCWI, Hope not Hate)

74. More specifically on vaccination hesitancy, ONS released findings on COVID-19 vaccination rates by age, ethnic group and religious affiliation. Amid concern the hostile environment will deter people from vaccination, campaigns are underway to address misinformation causing vaccination hesitancy among people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Polling shows people from ethnic minority groups are more likely to receive messages or emails discouraging or warning against Covid-19 vaccines. Many organisations in Yorkshire and Humber signed up to the Vaccines for All campaign calling for access to the Covid-19 vaccine regardless of immigration status. There are fears that Covid vaccination passports could result in further exclusion of undocumented migrants . (Sources: ONS, the Guardian, Huffington Post, BMJ, Independent, British Future, Vaccines for All, Metro, Left Foot Forward)

75. The Yorkshire and Humber Public Health Network's website has new content on migrant health. (Source: Yorkshire and Humber Public Health Network)

76. Loneliness continues to be a consequence of Covid-19, particularly for those from ethnic minority groups. Leeds City Council is using the Careview app which identifies loneliness hotspots on a heat map. (Sources: National Lottery Community Fund, Red Cross, Leeds City Council)

77. On English language learning, concerns are being raised over Ofsted's abolition of the role of National Lead for EAL, ESOL and Gypsy, Roma and Travellers (EAL: English as an Additional Language, in schools). This short podcast gives an insight into the life of a Leeds ESOL student. A toolkit filled with case studies of providing ESOL for refugees aimed at commissioners and practitioners was released by Migration Yorkshire. (Sources: NALDIC, English for Action on Soundcloud, Migration Yorkshire)

78. £19 million in new funding was distributed to refugee and migration charities between March-Nov 2020, according to a review of emergency funding to this sector, a significant addition to its combined annual income of approximately £117 million. An earlier review found that charities should work more collaboratively and strategically, and do more to include people with lived experience. (Source: Migration Exchange)

79. Prevent, which aims to stop individuals being drawn into terrorism - and has been accused of being anti-Muslim - is to be independently reviewed, while government has also asked a former Labour MP to review the activities of political extremists. An inspection report on police stop and search reiterates that using these powers disproportionately on different ethnic groups reinforces community suspicion of unfair targeting. There's a relationship between pub closures and support for the radical right: towns where the number of pubs is falling fastest also tend to be those where hostility to migration and multiculturalism is strongest. The LSE study findings are consistent with this towns report last summer, whose authors Hope not Hate also reflect on how the far-right movement has changed during the pandemic, and warn Instagram is being used to recruit young neo-Nazis. (Sources: Gov.uk, BBC, the Guardian, HMICFRS, Sage Journals, Hope not Hate, Huffington Post)

80. Following the decision on Shamina Begum's citizenship, one blog argues the government's approach to deprivation of citizenship discriminates against migrants, while another focuses on the cost of becoming British. (Sources: The Law and Policy Blog, Capx)

81. On broader migrant integration issues,

- polling shows the continuing decline in the perception of immigration as an important issue. (Source: Ipsos MORI)
- there is a link between an increase in the non-UK born population and rising prosperity, according to research looking at economic and population change in places across the UK. The report recommends targeted funding to support communities experiencing demographic change. (Sources: Hope not Hate, Independent)
- according to the Minority Businesses Matter report, ethnic minority entrepreneurs are succeeding against the odds but facing challenges when establishing and scaling up their companies. (Source: MSD)
- a thinktank advises that regional mayors can promote integration by addressing language provision, economic exclusion and safe services for people with insecure immigration status. (Source: IPPR)
- a synthesis of the work on integration data covers the use of English language, discrimination and social participation, and a short piece looks at the impact of the new immigration system on integration. (Source: Migration Observatory)
- finally, the Yorkshire Post shared the headlines from a recent Refugee Integration Yorkshire and Humber (RIYH) opinion poll on refugee issues. (Sources: Yorkshire Post, Migration Yorkshire)

82. Local areas that invested in cohesion have coped better with the challenges of Covid-19, according to interim findings from longitudinal research exploring cohesion during the pandemic. Six local authority areas (including Bradford and Calderdale) that had implemented programmes to improve cohesion and integration prior to 2020 were compared with other areas in the UK. (Source: Belong Network)

83. A follow up report on the UK's 'fraying social fabric' recommends handing power to communities to 'repair' this fabric in the wake of the pandemic, such as giving every area the right to self-govern through a town or parish council. (Source: Onward)

84. Towns continue to be a hot topic, with a new survey finding that town residents are divided over whether they want change, with 52% concerned about newcomers moving to their area. The Hopeful Towns project has focused on factors linked to towns' resilience, and a recent blog ponders on the movement of young people away from some towns, with residents of towns that are shrinking and ageing more likely to be hostile to migration. (Sources: Demos, Hope not Hate)

85. The final report from the Talk together consultation (p.151 has responses from Y&H) finds that nearly half thinks Covid has made their local community more united. While immigration was not a prominent issue of concern, there are concerns of criticism of certain ethnic groups and increase in hate crime. (Sources: British Future, the Guardian)

International news

EU

86. There has been much criticism of EU countries for conducting pushbacks at sea and land borders.

- **Libyan** coastguards, financed and trained by the EU, have intercepted and returned over 4,000 migrants to Libya this year. (Source: Irish Times)
- Since the beginning of the year, nearly 1,000 people crossed the Mediterranean from Tunisia to Italy. UNHCR and IOM reiterate that saving lives in distress in the Mediterranean must become a priority. (Source: UNHCR)
- Despite recriminations by the Council of Europe, UNHCR and IOM, reports of pushbacks and violence against refugees at Europe's borders continue, including in the Balkans, at the **Bosnia-Croatia** border, in **Maltese** waters (denied by the Maltese government) and by **Greek, French** and **Croatian** authorities. **Greece** accused Turkey of provocation by pushing migrant boats into their waters. (Sources: COE, UNHCR, IOM, Border Violence Monitoring Network, Times of Malta, Maltese Government, Info Migrants, Balkan Insight, the Guardian, Reuters)
- Members of the European Parliament formed a Frontex Scrutiny Working group to investigate. Meanwhile, Vice says private firms have profited from the refugee crisis, in an article looking at security measures on the French coast. (Sources: Europost, Vice)
- In contrast, there are reports of **French** authorities rescuing 72 migrants in the Channel. In 2020 there were 9,500 attempted crossings, over four times more than in 2019. (Source: Deutsche Welle)

87. In Europe, the dramatic decrease in migration during 2020 as a result of coronavirus meant asylum applications fell by around a third. The fall was not uniform; officials in the **Canary Islands** , for example, say they face a humanitarian crisis due to the large number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children on the islands, and are appealing to the EU to increase transfers of children to mainland Europe. (Sources: Wired, The New Humanitarian, ECRE)

88. Criticism also continues of conditions where new arrivals are placed in camps across Europe, detailing impacts of 'gruesome conditions' on migrants' mental health in **Greece** and **Malta**, and overcrowding, poor camp conditions and food shortages in the camps in the Canaries (Las Canteras, Arguineguín pier and Las Raíces camp). The government says it's working on improvements to food and water supply. In **France** around 300 migrants were affected by camp closures in Calais in one day with no alternative shelter as temperatures fell below 3°C. After mounting criticism, **Bosnian** officials started moving migrants into heated tents after a snowstorm hit the burned down Lipa camp. The EU will provide €250m for five new refugee camps on the **Greek islands**. (Sources: InfoMigrants, Times of Malta, El Diario, EFE, Deutsche Welle, the Guardian)

89. Plans to vaccinate asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants are progressing in **Germany , Serbia** and **Greece** although the latter has been accused of discriminatory vaccination practices leaving asylum seekers vulnerable. (Sources: InfoMigrants Reuters, Euromedmonitor)

90. Scandanavian governments have been announcing restrictive policies. **Denmark** will revoke residence permits for Syrian refugees (citing a 'safe' situation around Damascus) and announced a goal of having 'zero' asylum seekers; UNHCR warns this will create serious problems for integration. In **Sweden**, the government proposed making the country's tougher immigration laws permanent to limit the intake of refugees, such as through issuing three-year residence permits to refugees with tougher requirements for permanent residence. (Sources: the Guardian, Daily Mail, Infomigrants, Euronews)

91. In contrast, in **Ireland** there are proposals to regularise the status of undocumented migrants. (Sources: Irish Times)

92. In relation to migration for work, a shifting economy and changing work patterns are bringing many **Eastern Europeans** home and the pandemic has reversed some of the old migration patterns in Europe. (Source: the Economist)

Beyond the EU

93. International migration globally 'slowed' by 2 million in 2020 due to COVID-19, as borders closed and travel inhibited. Refugees accounted for 12% of migration. (Source: UNDESA)

94. Developing conflicts include the **Central African Republic**, where after the December general election over 30,000 people fled to neighbouring countries. (Source: the Guardian)

95. **Bangladesh** moved at least 7,000 Rohingya refugees from the Myanmar border to Bhasan Char, a remote island, despite concerns about the risk of storms and floods. It's unclear if this is forced or voluntary, but people can't leave and UNHCR hasn't been allowed in to assess it. A huge fire in Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar forced 50,000 to flee and 11 people were confirmed to have died. (Sources: Reuters, the Guardian, Dhaka Tribune)

96. In the **US**, the Biden administration quickly started to reverse many immigration policies of former President Donald Trump, including ending the 'Muslim travel ban', halting border wall construction and ending the 'zero-tolerance' policy that separated families at the Mexican border. If passed, the US Citizenship Act will give a pathway to citizenship for undocumented migrants, and there are plans to admit 25,000 asylum seekers waiting in Mexico while their cases are processed. In March, conditions at shelters at the US-Mexico border were criticised as they struggle to cope with the number of migrants arriving, including unaccompanied migrant children. (Sources: CNN, BBC, USA Today, Al Jazeera, the Guardian)

97. **Colombia** granted legal status to 1.7 million Venezuelan migrants, a move welcomed by UNHCR and IOM. (Source: Guardian)

98. Poorer countries are being supported to vaccinate refugee populations. Over half of the 90 countries with national vaccination plans have included refugees in them. Vaccinations have begun in **Jordan**, including at the huge Zaatari refugee camp. (Sources: UNHCR, Arab News).

Local stories

99. Community stories about asylum seekers and refugees in Yorkshire and Humber include:

- A Hull organisation produced songs in different languages to share Covid messaging. (Source: Hull Ethnic Minorities – Youtube channel)
- The men living in the temporary asylum hotel in York created this online exhibition. (Source: Haxby & Wigginton Methodist Church)
- A Bradford charity reached new migrant communities through its Valentine-themed food parcels for vulnerable residents. (Source: Telegraph and Argus)
- This is a story from Deen, who was resettled to Bradford in 2010 from a refugee camp in Bangladesh, and set up Rohingya charity the AROUK. (Source: BradfordforEveryone)
- Women Centre's Digital Gallery showcases poems, photos, and drawings by participants on the Connecting Opportunities project. (Source: WomenCentre)
- A student who studied law at college in Sheffield features in this report on the experiences of people studying at Bristol University with a sanctuary scholarship. (Source: BBC)
- Short film United We Wait was created by Hearts Youth Group for young people seeking asylum, with The Children's Society and West Yorkshire Playhouse. (Source: YouTube)

About this issue of the policy bulletin

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