Migration news roundup 15 January 2024

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Stories that inspired us this week

Two boys from Afghanistan have settled into their new community with their foster carer in a rural part of Selby district, enjoying local cricket and ESOL classes at York College. The article encourages potential foster carers to get in touch with North Yorkshire Council. Outside of our region, due to a longstanding friendship, a local man in Somerset bought a house and then rented it to his former colleague who arrived under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). (Sources: The Scarborough News, Somerset Live)

This interview with author Omar Mohamed discusses his graphic novel, Children of the Stars, telling of his childhood in Somalia and a Kenyan refugee camp. (Source: Norwegian Refugee Council)

International news

Canada's government has limited its temporary visa program for Palestinians in Gaza with ties to Canadians at 1,000 applications. The new cap has created anxiety and uncertainty for Canadians hoping to help their relatives flee the conflict. (Source: The Global and Mail)

Here you can read about the challenges faced by families that have been displaced in countries where there is no refugee law, such as India. (Source: Al Jazeera)

The way that immigration is discussed in national elections around the world in 2024 could affect international students' decision-making, for example in terms of perceptions of safety in destination countries. (Source: The Pie News)

In Europe, the Danish Immigration Minister has asserted that Germany and many other European countries should emulate Denmark's strict immigration policies to manage their approach to applications for asylum. Elsewhere, the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, has stressed the importance of 'legal migration' for the EU economy. (Source: InfoMigrants)

UK borders and migration policy

The House of Commons voted against an opposition motion to disclose information about the cost of the Rwanda scheme, and about recent asylum decisions. The Safety of Rwanda Bill will begin committee stage next week. This briefing about the scheme has been updated in light of recent developments. (Sources: UK Parliament, the Guardian, Migration Observatory)

A care home operator in the north east of England has had its sponsor licence revoked due to a number of compliance failures, such as pay and duties not matching details on the Certificate of Sponsorship, sick pay not being awarded, and the £3,000 immigration skills charge (paid by employers) being recouped

from workers. (Source: Free Movement)

There’s an online event on 8 February looking at the issue of transnational marriage abandonment. This is ahead of new immigration rules which from 31 January will enable people to apply to return to the UK if they are abandoned abroad, following relationship breakdown related to domestic abuse. (Sources: Rights of Women, Electronic Immigration Network)

Specific migrant groups

The Home Office has published its report on safe and legal routes after this was mandated under the Illegal Migration Act. This article explores issues with processing the asylum backlog due to differing policies applying to third country cases coming from periods where different legislation applies (Illegal Migration Act, Nationality and Borders Act). (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)

Nearly 100 asylum seekers had to be moved from former RAF site in Essex after identified as victims of trafficking or victims of torture. Meanwhile, it has been revealed that Médecins Sans Frontières have been delivering health-related services outside the site due to concerns over the lack of available appropriate services. (Sources: Independent, BBC News)

On children and young people, the use of scientific age assessment has now become law. The Home Office will now be able to use teeth and bone X-rays as part of the age assessment process, with those who refuse potentially being penalised. The

British Dental Association has criticised the use of X-rays to determine age due to their inaccuracy. (Sources: Free Movement, inews)

This new briefing explains the rules about extended stays abroad for people with indefinite leave to remain (ILR) – people awarded settled status via the EU Settlement Scheme can stay out of the UK for up to five years, but the limit is two years for everyone else with ILR. Meanwhile, following reports of difficulties when travelling, including a story of a Spanish woman who has been denied entry to the UK after a Christmas holiday, the Independent Monitoring Authority (IMA) issued a reminder to EU citizens of what to expect at the UK border, including step-by-step videos. (Sources: Free Movement, the Guardian, IMA)

The first analysis of the Turing scheme has been published. This is a post-Brexit replacement for the Erasmus international exchange programme enabling students to take overseas opportunities. Commentators highlighted concerns about the scheme, particularly in higher education. In other news, this article discusses the value of the UK graduate visa that allows students to stay and work for two years after their course. The visa will be reviewed during 2024 by the Migration Advisory Committee, and some worry that the visa might be withdrawn. (Sources: Department for Education, The Pie News)

The latest data on Windrush compensation shows that by the end of November 2023 over £75 million had been paid out to individuals through the scheme, and over 78% of claims have

had a final decision. (Source: Home Office)

Cohesion and integration

It is predicted that parliamentary ethnic minority representation in the UK will go up from 10% to 12% at the next General Election, irrespective of which party wins. However, an opportunity for more significant change (at least 15% to accurately reflect society) may be missed. More on elections, recent academic research suggests that voters often turn away from centre-left parties when their leaders move to the right on immigration matters. (Sources: British Future, the Guardian)

In a sign of just how mainstream refugee and asylum issues have become in the UK in the last few years, the latest episode of BBC drama 'Casualty' features the story of an injured person who arrived to the UK shores seeking asylum. In the episode, Habid faces barriers to emergency healthcare including an angry mob outside the hospital and 'red tape' from within. (Source: The Sun)

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