Migration news roundup week commencing 09 March 2026

This Migration News Roundup presents a selection of news, policy, research and statistics from the previous week on migration-related topics. The contents of each story do not necessarily reflect the views of Migration Yorkshire.

- UK borders and migration policy
- Specific migrant groups
- Cohesion and integration
- International news
- Stories that inspired us this week

UK borders and migration policy

In a speech, the Home Secretary took the UK closer to a more restrictive asylum system similar to the Danish model, building on changes announced in November's 'Restoring Order and Control' policy paper by making updates to the Immigration Rules. Key measures include:

- The reduction in leave for newly granted refugees (from 5 years to 30 months) will apply to people who claim asylum from 2 March. The Law Society questioned whether this meets the UK's obligations as a Refugee Convention signatory.

- The pilot scheme was outlined where some families with a refused claim will be offered a more significant financial

incentive for voluntary removal.

- ‘New safe and legal routes’ including for work and study will begin with the student refugee route opening in autumn 2026 leading to arrivals in autumn 2027

- There will no longer be a statutory duty to provide asylum support, and it’ll be withdrawn from people working illegally or who break the law. Alongside this, there will be broader circumstances in which people in the asylum system are permitted to work.

- People from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar and Sudan won't be able to apply for study visas from 26 March, and Afghans will also be barred from sponsored work visas. Government says it wants to stop people arriving through legal routes then claiming asylum.

- Offenders from overseas will either be removed or not permitted to enter the UK (the threshold will be a suspended sentence of 12 months).

- Related to the earned settlement proposals rather than asylum, the requirement for a higher standard of English to qualify for indefinite leave to remain will come into force in March 2027.

- A useful explainer of the changes to the Immigration Rules has been published by Free Movement.

(Sources: Home Office, Law Society, BBC, Free Movement)

In news on Channel crossings, there's a reported increase in small boats launching from Belgium, thought to be in response to enforcement action on the French coast. Meanwhile, a campaign report blames the UK and French governments for the deaths of children attempting to cross the Channel. (Sources: BBC, Project Play)

Specific migrant groups

As a legal challenge to the decision to house asylum seekers at Crowborough camp has been refused by the High Court, government commitment to close all asylum hotels by the end of this parliament comes under scrutiny in an article which concludes current policies will only redistribute the cost of asylum accommodation, rather than reducing them.
(Sources: BBC, UK in a Changing Europe)

A young refugee who experienced homelessness and attacks following the Home Office's 28-day move-on period was part of a legal case that successfully challenged implementation of the policy, which should allow discretion where a person is at risk of homelessness. (Source: the Guardian)

On modern slavery:

- A report lays out the barriers for modern slavery victims within the immigration system which discourage disclosure. The evidence put forward contrasts with government claims that the route is abused to prevent deportations. (Source: FLEX)

- New research highlights the importance of trauma-informed maternity care for survivors, and offers resources for professionals and people with lived experience. (Source: University of Nottingham)

- The Anti-Slavery commissioner has reported on exploitation linked to adult services websites. (Source: Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner)

- Government published the responses to its call for evidence on the identification of victims. Key themes relate to the need for trauma-informed work, practitioner training, partnership working, and different approaches for children. (Source: Home Office)

Cohesion and integration

The State of Hate 2026 report looks at street protests, anti-immigration rhetoric and how both are being exploited by increasingly emboldened far right movements. (Source: Hope Not Hate)

An opinion piece on increasing intolerance in the UK reflects on the booing of players observing Ramadan at Elland Road stadium while a second article makes comparisons between attitudes towards immigrants today and 100 years ago. (Source: the Guardian)

A school in Chichester is helping address barriers to education faced by refugee children by piloting a supportive programme for Ukrainian pupils developed by the International Rescue Committee. (Source: Sussex World)

International news

As conflict escalated in Iran and neighbouring countries, the UN migration agency warned of increased displacement and

humanitarian needs. 19 million people are already internally displaced in the Middle East
region. (Source: International Organization for Migration)

Refugee family reunion policy is becoming more restrictive in Belgium; this article argues that family reunification is an EU policy because it's a stabilising mechanism with better societal outcomes, and notes that domestic migration
controls won't solve root causes of displacement. (Source: The Brussels Times)

This article reports on the dangers faced by migrants travelling through Libya to Europe and why they do so, despite knowing the risks ahead. (Source: Al Jazeera)

Stories that inspired us this week

Local performance poets raised funds for the Leeds based charity Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers
(PAFRAS) through a poetry event and sales of 'An Anthology Against Hate'. (Source: Yorkshire Bylines)

Oksana, who fled Mariupol, Ukraine during the Russian invasion, says she feels she has been given a 'second life' that she hopes to contribute to her new community in the North East. (Source: The Northern Echo)

In a story of resilience, chef Imad, who fled Syria in 2015 and arrived in the UK without even enough money to buy a meal, has built two successful London restaurants and even welcomed King Charles to one of them. (Source: FRANCE 24 English on

YouTube, two minutes)

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