Migration news roundup 1 October 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

Congratulations to Reading's Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) and Reading Museum, which have been recognised as Museums of Sanctuary, a national award celebrating museums that go above and beyond welcoming people seeking sanctuary. (Source: University of Reading)

More locally, the Growth Company, a social enterprise, has launched Conversation Clubs aiming to support refugees in Doncaster in gaining confidence speaking English and moving towards higher education and sustained employment. (Source: Doncaster Free Press)

Check out the programme for Black History Month Scotland, featuring a variety of events throughout October including some options to join in online. (Source: Black History Month Scotland)

International news

The number of people who crossed the United States' southern border has dropped significantly following policy changes including increased detention and transportation of migrants back south, making it more difficult for people to request asylum if they enter the US illegally, and implementing an online system

allowing asylum applicants to schedule appointments. (Source: Financial Times)

Closer to Europe, with the escalation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel, over 90,000 people in Lebanon have been displaced since 23 September, and the number is rising quickly. (Source: UN News)

Bosnia and Serbia, which offer visa-free travel to citizens of China, have seen rising numbers of Chinese migrants arriving in an attempt to enter the EU. This new pattern of Chinese migration is believed to be partially the result of increasing surveillance and a slowing economy in their home country. (Source: the Guardian)

A new report highlights the impact of conflict in Ukraine as one of the ‘systematic drivers’ of homelessness in that country. 3.5 million people have been forced to leave their homes following the Russian invasion. (Source: DePaul)

UK borders and migration policy

At the Labour Party conference, the Prime Minister promised to reduce net migration and address the UK’s dependency on overseas workers. The speech was followed by a Home Office announcement of further measures to tackle reliance on international recruitment in industries with skills shortages, and stricter action against employers who abuse the visa sponsorship system. Further, the government appears to be open to the possibility of an off-shore asylum processing system

similar to Italy's arrangement with Albania. There are reportedly three key tests under consideration: whether the scheme could be delivered on a large enough scale to impact Channel crossings; cost-effectiveness; and compliance with international law. (Sources: Electronic Immigration Network, Home Office, inews)

In the context of relatively low numbers of people arriving under the reciprocal UK Youth Mobility Scheme last year (mostly from Australia and New Zealand) there are hopes for a similar deal with the EU, even though the UK rejected EU proposals in April. (Source: the Guardian)

This article looks at the ten-year settlement route, used by those ineligible for other schemes, in light of claims that new data analysis reveals it to be racist, with 86% of applicants being from countries in Asia or Africa. The challenges faced by people on this route are well documented, with some struggling to pay £3,850 renewal fees every 30 months. (Source: the Guardian)

Specific migrant groups

Government oversight of asylum accommodation contracts has been criticised with concerns that the contract system is open to corruption. Elsewhere, the Home Office is consulting with the local community over plans to upgrade the Manston Reception Centre. The centre has been previously criticised for overcrowding and ill treatment of detainees. (Sources: the Guardian, Home Office, Kent News)

This article covers the story of Mateusz Kulik, an EU national who has lived in the UK since childhood but struggled to obtain status, and was refused entry to the UK following a holiday abroad. This is thought to be the effect of recent changes to the guidance for the UK border control officials, tightening the rules on treatment of different EU nationals, including those with pending EU Settlement Scheme applications, late applicants and joining family members. (Sources: the Guardian, Free Movement)

On young people:

- the deadline for submitting feedback on the Home Office's use of age assessment has been extended to 9 October. (Source: Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration)

- Refugee Education UK released a report highlighting some challenges faced by teenagers seeking asylum in accessing education. (Source: the Guardian)

A controversial report on the root causes of the Windrush scandal has been released. The Home Office had attempted to keep the report out of the public domain as it was expected to shed further light on how thousands of people were wrongfully classified as immigration offenders, potentially damaging trust in government and future policy design. (Sources: Home Office, the

Guardian)

Cohesion and integration

This Audio Long Read from Chinese born writer and film-maker Xiaolu Guo discusses her experience of becoming a British citizen through the country's history of settlement by different cultures. (Source: the Guardian)

Micro-Rainbow released a new report highlighting the challenges faced by LGBTQI refugees. The report looks at progress in social inclusion and access to employment, health services and the job market since their 2013 report. (Source: Electronic Immigration Network)

In case you missed it, the Yorkshire Integration Festival 2024 took place at The Piece Hall in Halifax featuring live musical acts, representatives of many local communities and a guest appearance from Little Amal. You can see some of the moments in this video. Little Amal went on to another appearance in Hull to further draw attention to the challenges faced around the world by child refugees. (Sources: Calderdale Council, Yorkshire Post, BBC)

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