

Migration news roundup 19 August 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

Hear from Sam, a young man from Afghanistan, now studying politics and international studies at the University of Warwick and recognised for his volunteering work, on the recent riots in the country, saying he 'never felt more welcome', after seeing communities coming together to stand up for people they do not know and large numbers of counter-protesters. (Source: Independent)

Following the Paris Olympics the UNHCR reflects on the contribution of the Refugee Olympic team, making history this year with the largest team they have ever entered, individual personal bests and their first Olympic medal. (Source: UNHCR)

International news

A useful briefing has been published on the EU's New Pact on Migration and Asylum, which is currently being developed with the aim of supporting members to manage migration at EU borders, address smuggling and promote legal pathways. Until the new pact comes into force in 2026, Germany has pledged to continue enforcing border controls with Poland, Czechia and Switzerland. (Sources: Eucrim, Reuters)

Meanwhile, in Sweden, a proposal which requires public sector staff to report undocumented migrants they encounter has generated considerable criticism. Were it to become law, millions of civil servants would be liable for keeping authorities informed of their clients' immigration status. (Source: the Guardian)

A new report looking into 'brain waste', a phenomenon where migrants are overqualified for their jobs in the new country, recommends policy reforms to better recognise migrant qualifications and prioritise language training, professional mentoring and providing work placements. Only then can European countries address labour shortages by utilising migrants' skills. (Source: InfoMigrants)

UK borders and migration policy

This brief analysis of net migration highlights that it will inevitably fall. It uses polling data about the falling applications for the health and care worker visa as an example. (Source: Financial Times)

This article advises what the new government can do to support councils in relation to NRPF cases. This includes grant funding to councils, considerations how immigration policy affects cross-government initiatives such as ending homelessness and child poverty, as well as ensuring the Home Office implements specific solutions such as granting leave to households on long term support. Relatedly, data for councils' spending on NRPF cases in 2023-2024 financial year was published. National data shows that £82 million was spent by 85 councils across England and Scotland supporting NRPF households, a 5% increase in expenditure from the previous year. £4.6 million was spent in Yorkshire and Humber by 4 local authorities – Bradford, Kirklees, Leeds and Sheffield. (Source: NRPF Network)

An investigation report on the sinking of an inflatable small boat in the Channel in December 2022 shows that while 39 people were rescued, at least eight died in the accident. (Source: Marine Accident Investigation Branch)

The latest weekly data on small boat arrivals and on Ukraine visa schemes has been published, along with quarterly data on modern slavery referrals. (Source: Home Office)

Home Office guidance for immigration staff about inadmissibility has been updated to remove references to the Illegal Migration Act 2023 and removals to Rwanda. (Source: Home Office)

Proposals by the previous government to restrict social housing to long term UK residents have been dropped. The plans would have introduced a 10 year 'UK connection test' affecting many migrants who were already on a council waiting list. (Sources: UK Parliament, Telegraph)

Specific migrant groups

The Home Office has updated the fact file on Bibby Stockholm explaining that everyone on board will be moved off the barge before their asylum decision is served. The briefing also explains that no-one will be moved to Portland, Weymouth, or Dorset Council area. (Source: Home Office)

Non-statutory First Responders have written to the Home Secretary to ask for more resources after analysis found ongoing capacity issues, resulting in delays for survivors of trafficking and modern slavery being able to access support. (Sources: Unseen, Anti-Slavery International)

This briefing provides an overview of the Immigration Health Surcharge which is payable with many types of immigration applications, including the BN(O) visa route. (Source: UK Parliament)

On International students, in this article Joyce Yang, a writer and international student from Beijing who has lived in the UK for four years, reflects on how the political narrative around foreign students has perpetuated many stereotypes about them, obscuring their beneficial contributions to higher education and other sectors. Meanwhile, the new Education Secretary has stated that the government will not be removing visa restrictions put in place by the previous government, preventing international students from bringing their dependents into the UK.
(Sources: the Guardian, Independent)

Cohesion and integration

The Young People's Voices Group in Scotland have published a report for International Youth Day. Conducted by young people with lived experience of seeking asylum, the report brings together challenges and possible solutions shared by participants, with the goal of empowering youth-led advocacy. (Source: Scottish Refugee Council)

Wissam Asaad, a Palestinian nurse who came to the UK as part of a refugee recruitment scheme, shares his experience of joining the NHS – how he came to be part of the Displaced Talent Mobility Visa employment scheme, the challenges he faced and the support he received as part of his integration into the NHS. (Source: Nursing Times)

Last updated:

19th August 2024

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Source URL: <https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/news/migration-news-roundup-19-august-2024>