

Migration news roundup 20 May 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

The '1 in 100 million' campaign was launched to support the Refugee Olympic Team as it prepares to compete at the Paris Olympic Games. Cindy Ngamba from Cameroon, who has been living in the UK for 15 years, becomes the first boxer in the team. (Sources: International Olympic Committee, BBC)

Cenia Elizabeth Muñoz, a woman who seeks asylum in the UK and who gave up on her dream of being a teacher, says that her passion has returned. This comes after she enrolled in a bridging course to assist people without the necessary qualifications to gain new skills and advance to higher education. (Source: University of Chichester)

International news

Over 30,000 children have crossed the Darien Gap so far in 2024, the dangerous route connecting South and central America. This figure includes 2,000 unaccompanied minors. (Source: BBC)

The EU signed the New Migration and Asylum Pact. From 2026 member countries must offer to relocate asylum applicants where the first host country is under migratory pressure or offer financial assistance. (Source: France 24)

This article describes some stories of LGBTQ+ people arriving to seek refuge in Europe and the support they can find, such as Rainbow Railroad. (Source: France 24)

Albania has a new network of surveillance cameras along its borders with Kosovo, funded by the British government (costing £1.6 million) in an attempt to reduce the number of people seeking to enter the UK. (Source: AP News)

UK borders and migration policy

The Home Office has extended its agreement with Rwanda to include the relocation of people whose asylum application got refused. You can read some legal analysis here. Meanwhile the High Court in Northern Ireland ruled the Rwanda scheme should not apply in Northern Ireland, saying the policy undermines human rights protections agreed upon as part of Brexit in order to respect the Good Friday Agreement. (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement, the Guardian)

A newspaper reviews progress the government has made on the Prime Minister's five key pledges from last year, including tackling small boats arrivals. (Source: Independent)

The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) has recommended the graduate visa route stays open. Commissioned by government as part of measures to curb net migration, the review found no evidence of the route being abused by students or compromising the higher education system, and highlights the economic value of the route. Universities Scotland cautioned government about the detrimental effects of changes to the Graduate route on the financial viability of Scottish universities. Government is expected to respond to the review in the coming week, as latest net migration data is published. (Sources: MAC, the Guardian, Universities-Scotland)

The impact of net migration measures is highlighted by two major corporations in the finance sector who have had to rescind job offers to foreign graduates due to the roles no longer meeting the raised minimum salary threshold, with an impact in Sheffield. Relatedly, there's a new briefing on the impact of migration on population change. (Sources: The Economic Times, Migration Observatory)

A new research report on migrant destitution in the UK makes policy recommendations for both local and national government such as providing funding to local authorities, develop a role for strategic migration partnerships, and statutory guidance for councils on how to support people with no recourse to public funds. (Source: COMPAS)

Specific migrant groups

An Afghan man seeking asylum tells how having an electronic ankle tag for nearly two years impacted his wellbeing. A Home Office pilot in 2022 tagged people arriving on small boats, but the scheme was found to be unlawful. (Source: Independent)

The Ukraine Extension Scheme has now officially closed, meaning adults already in the UK outside of the Ukraine Scheme can no longer regularise their stay through the route. This article tells the story of a family impacted by the closure of the Family Scheme earlier this year. (Sources: Home Office, Independent)

A man has been asked by the Home Office to do a DNA test following his claim for compensation through the Windrush scheme, to evidence his relationship with his father. The man's claim relates to trauma and financial loss he endured due to what happened to his father during the Windrush scandal. (Source: Independent)

Three men in the UK have been charged with assisting the Hong Kong intelligence services for gathering information, surveillance and acts of deception, as well as forced entry into a UK address. (Source: ITV)

On children and young people:

- Lord Alf Dubs urged government to remove barriers to children joining relatives in the UK and to amend rules to allow refugee children in the UK to sponsor parents and siblings. He argues that the UK's refugee policy is 'delivering vulnerable children into the hands of people smugglers.' (Source: the Guardian)
- Charity Humans for Rights Network has threatened the Home Office with legal action over the risk of unaccompanied children potentially being sent to Rwanda whilst awaiting the result of age assessment. (Source: the Guardian)
- A report from Young Roots and the Helen Bamber Foundation highlights how stressful and re-traumatising the age assessment process can be for young people seeking asylum and suggests ways to improve the process. (Source: Young Roots)

On modern slavery:

- A briefing shares data about children who have experienced modern slavery not receiving support when they turn 18 despite being eligible for assistance. This happens partly because of the change in consent requirements to be part of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the system for identifying people who may be victims of modern slavery, when a person reaches adulthood. The report calls for statutory guidance about the unique needs of trafficked children as they become adults. (Source: ECPAT)

- Latest data on referrals to the NRM show a rise in referrals and the highest number of referrals for females since reporting began. Positive decisions at both stages of the process were at their highest. A related report 'A can of worms' criticises the lack of data on modern slavery that gets collected and published, for example around access to safe housing and counselling for survivors as well as data on visas that could help with preventative work. (Sources: Home Office, After Exploitation)
- An extension to a government pilot fund aims to address exploitative practices in the recruitment of care staff from overseas and sourcing alternative employment where an employer's sponsorship licence has been revoked. (Source: Department of Health and Social Care)
- This research report on the Seasonal Worker Scheme looks at how people get trapped in poor employment in farm work and how some migrant workers get into debt through, for example, late payments and underpayments. (Source: FLEX)

Cohesion and integration

'Shared Goals' is a report on the role of football clubs to bring together people from different ethnic, faith and social backgrounds. It looks at the ability of clubs to speak across social boundaries and offers suggestions on creating a welcoming atmosphere for everyone. A few weeks ago, we shared 'Terriers Together!', three minute video about Huddersfield Town AFC, who were part of the research project (Sources: British Future, YouTube)

A survey in Scotland about attitudes to immigration found views on the impact of immigration are broadly positive, and widespread support for immigration when needed for work or economic reasons. The survey also found greater support for a reduction in immigration, rather than an increase in immigration which was favoured a year ago. (Source: Migration Policy Scotland)

Puppet Little Amal is making her way across Northern Ireland as part of the performance art project, The Walk. Her arrival in Belfast is a key part of the Belfast 2024 programme, attending a host of community events and art installations. (Source: BBC)

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Contact us about research

If you have any questions about our research, contact us:

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