

Migration news roundup 23 January 2023



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Stories that inspired us this week

Professional footballer at York City Maziar Kouhyar paid a visit to a youth group run by Refugee Action York, and talked about his background as an Afghan refugee. (Source: York City Football Club)

A new Salvation Army café and community hub is looking for volunteers in Scarborough to support Ukrainian refugees. (Source: This is the coast)

International news

A UNHCR livelihood training project run by a local NGO in Afghanistan could cease if Taliban decrees on women's work and study stay in place. This would exacerbate the precarity of internally displaced people and refugees living in the area. (Source: UNHCR)

Tackling illegal migration in the Mediterranean was confirmed as a strategic priority for Italy and Turkey by their ministers in a recent meeting. Catholic leaders have also been commenting on Mediterranean migration; the Pope said that 'migrants must be welcomed' and pointed to 'European injustice' as countries receiving migrants are not supported by the rest of the EU, while at a parliamentary hearing a Bishop critiqued a recent Italian law to curtail rescue activities of NGO ships. (Sources: Info Migrants, Reuters)

Rwanda set up an emergency refugee camp in anticipation of increasing numbers of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Rwanda clarified it does not plan to deport Congolese refugees as reported recently but expects the international community to intervene in the conflict in eastern DRC. (Source: The New Times)

UK borders and migration policy

The courts accepted an application for permission to appeal against the recent Rwanda scheme ruling. While there's no set date it's expected to take months and it's increasingly unlikely the Home Office would remove anyone to Rwanda in the meantime. You can read further analysis of the litigation here. NGO Human Rights Watch says the policy signifies the UK is abandoning its commitment to refugees. (Sources: Independent, Free Movement, Human Rights Watch)

The Online Safety Bill could be used to tackle small boat arrivals with a proposed amendment that would ban broadcasting videos showing the arrival of Channel migrants 'in a positive light'. Official data shows almost two straight weeks in January of zero arrivals via small boats - the longest break in arrivals for nine months, believed to be a result of weather conditions. French authorities accused the UK of failing to rescue a boat of 38 migrants eventually picked up by French coastguards in early January. (Sources: Reuters, Ministry of Defence, Evening Standard, the Guardian)

A Holocaust survivor challenged the Home Secretary on her choice of language in relation to people arriving to claim asylum. Albania's Foreign Minister Olta Xhaçka criticised Minister Robert Jenrick for tweeting about 'working round the clock to remove illegal Albanian migrants.' (Sources: BBC, Twitter)

There have been press reports of arrivals from Albania breaching immigration bail conditions by cutting off their ankle tags. The Home Office is starting to use fingerprint scanners as an alternative to tagging for some people on immigration bail, using a handheld GPS device throughout the day. (Sources: Express, the Guardian)

The 'Rule 35' process for medical practitioners to identify vulnerable detainees has been branded 'ineffective' by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) who described

a 'lack of interest' by Home Office senior managers. The Home Secretary is stopping commissioning specific reports on adults at risk in detention, but the theme will be included in the Chief Inspector's own programme. (Source: ICIBI)

The investor visa route, temporarily closed to new applicants after the invasion of Ukraine, has been permanently closed. (Source: Free Movement)

This article considers the influence of foreign policy in the post-Brexit migration landscape, and the consequent differential treatment of migrant groups. (Source: Open Democracy)

Specific migrant groups

An FOI request revealed the extent of waiting times on asylum decision making: over 30,000 people have been waiting over six years, over 60,000 have been waiting for more than three years and 12,000 for over ten years. (Source: Daily Mail)

Hundreds of unaccompanied asylum seeking children continue to share rooms with adults after being wrongly deemed over 18. The president of the Association of Directors of Children's Services highlighted pressure on Children's Services as well as the risk to children accommodated in unregulated hotel settings. (Source: Independent)

The UK government received further criticism for its failure to reunite Afghan refugees, with some refugees evacuated to the UK still separated from family members in Afghanistan, unable to join them. (Source: the Guardian)

The Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities published updated guidance on the Homes for Ukraine scheme for councils, sponsors and guests. A parliamentary committee asked ministers to account for the reductions to council funding to support Ukrainian refugees. (Sources: DLUHC, The MJ)

This report explores the experiences and aspirations of Big Issue vendors in Bristol who may have no recourse to public funds including many people from a Roma background. (Source: The Big Issue Foundation)

A new independent, cross-party International Higher Education Commission counts former ministers among its commissioners. They intend to challenge false narratives about international students and challenge government intentions to curtail student visas. (Source: University World News)

Immigration raids targeting EU nationals without permission to work in the UK have been reported. (Source: GB News)

58% of Windrush compensation claims had a final decision by December 2022. Home Office data shows over £52 million paid across 1,377 claims, while a further almost £10 million has been offered, awaiting acceptance or pending review. (Source: Home Office)

Cohesion and integration

Ethnic segregation is decreasing and towns and cities are increasingly diverse according to census data. Whilst London is still the most diverse, areas such as Leicester, Birmingham and Luton are seeing significant rises in different ethnic groups - multiple different communities rather than a single, dominant minority. (Source: the Guardian)

The Journal of Refugee Studies published an article on the effectiveness of refugee reception and integration programmes based on practices in the Netherlands. (Source: Journal of Refugee Studies)

Charity Reset is holding CommuniTeas events to spread awareness on Community Sponsorship over a cuppa. (Source: Reset)

Last updated:

23rd January 2023

Contact us about research

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

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Source URL: *<https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/news/migration-news-roundup-23-january-2023>*