

Migration news roundup 27 February 2023



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Stories that inspired us this week

In the Sheffield Star, a Ukrainian refugee family thanks the people of Sheffield for 'welcoming them with open arms', highlighting the support from charity Theirworld, which delivers online lessons on Ukrainian language, literature and history to young refugees around the world. (Source: The Star)

Two community cafes have recently opened in Yorkshire: The Sunflower Café in Scarborough is offering support to Ukrainian refugees including help with learning English, accessing training and

navigating healthcare and school systems while the Real Hope Cafe in Holbeck, Leeds, is helping people seeking asylum and refugees become baristas. (Sources: Scarborough News, Yorkshire Evening Post)

International news

More than 185,000 people have fled their homes in Somaliland following the recent conflicts in Las Anod and the surrounding regions. More than 60,000 are reported to have fled to Ethiopia. (Source: the Guardian)

President Biden's administration is set to launch a new immigration plan to deter migrants arriving through the US-Mexico border. Under the new proposals, people seeking asylum who pass through a safe third country would be denied access to the US asylum system. (Source: the Guardian)

UK borders and migration policy

The Home Office published details of a new fast track process to help clear the backlog of outstanding asylum claims. Up to 12,000 claims from the top five grant nationalities (Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria, and Yemen) could be fast tracked for decision without a full interview. The Home Office will instead ask people seeking asylum to complete a questionnaire within 20 days or risk their claim being withdrawn. Concerns have been raised about the complexity of the form and the challenges of obtaining legal aid representation. Meanwhile, Migration Observatory published this briefing on the asylum backlog. Since then, the latest quarterly asylum statistics revealed that the backlog has grown further to 132,000 outstanding claims related to over 160,000 people. (Sources: Home Office, the Guardian, Migration Observatory)

Thinktank British Future has proposed various reforms to the asylum system, including the introduction of a 'humanitarian visa' which would allow 40,000 people annually to make UK asylum claims at British consulates abroad. The proposals reportedly have some cross-party support. Meanwhile, in an interview featuring his experience of hosting a Ukrainian family, Immigration Minister Robert Jenrick said the imminent immigration legislation will mean those arriving 'illegally' will have 'no path to a life in the UK'. New Conservative chair Lee Anderson added heat to the debate with claims that Calais-based refugee charities encourage people to cross the Channel in small boats. (Sources: British Future, the Guardian, The Telegraph)

The quarterly immigration statistics were published, covering Home Office data to the end of December 2022 describing visas issued to people in 2022 for purposes of visits, work, study, joining family and seeking international protection, and also describing extensions to stays, detention and removals. The statistics show a slowdown in BNO visa applications with only 10,000 received in the last quarter of 2022 and the total number of applications under the BNO visa since its launch two years ago is just over 160,000. The statistics also provided an updated number on applications under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), which has reached 7 million, of which nearly 1 million was received after the deadline of 30 June 2021. (Sources: Home Office)

It's been ruled that despite grounds for suspecting Shamima Begum was trafficked for sexual exploitation, the removal of her citizenship was lawful, as it was a decision for the home secretary.
(Source: the Guardian)

An algorithm used to detect sham marriages is the focus of a prospective legal challenge after allegations that it discriminates against certain nationalities. (Source: BBC)

Specific migrant groups

A review of the latest quarterly asylum statistics argues that the Home Office is failing on multiple fronts to process claims and returns. Also on asylum, the threat of far-right led protests outside asylum hotel accommodation continues.(Sources: Free Movement, the Guardian)

An inspection of family reunion applications has found that applicants have faced 'unacceptable waiting times', routinely waiting more than 120 days for a decision, and highlights the detrimental impact of these delays. (Source: Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration)

On children and young people, a recent freedom of information request (Fol) has revealed that 14 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children have been detained in Manston processing centre, despite Home Office policy outlining that children should not be held in processing centres apart from in exceptional cases. Police have also traced down organised crime groups in Manchester who were putting to work unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who had disappeared from asylum hotels. (Source: the Guardian)

Cohesion and integration

Read the perspective of a person seeking asylum who was in the Knowsley hotel targeted by far right protesters recently. (Source: Metro)

Watch Freedom from Torture's Sonya Sceats speaking on Sunday Morning Live about the Together With Refugees open letter condemning inflammatory language and calling for an end to policies that demonise people seeking refuge (starts 03:00). (Source: BBC)

A new survey across 24 countries has found the UK is now one of the most accepting of foreign workers. (Source: the Guardian)

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Contact us about research

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