

Migration news roundup 15 April 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

Artwork by young refugees has gone on display in Margate, Kent. The project is a collaboration between a local artist and Kent Refugee Action Network, who said the process had ‘empowered’ the young people involved and allowed them to ‘express themselves and build confidence’.

(Source: BBC)

International news

EU members states agreed a new Migration and Asylum Pact which aims to reform the bloc's response to migration through quicker asylum decision-making and removals, as well as the ability for states to choose to either accept responsibility for processing claims or instead make financial contributions. These new measures have been criticised by NGOs. (Sources: EU, the Guardian)

Spain became the latest country to scrap its 'golden visa' scheme allowing foreign investors to obtain residency should they invest in property or business. The UK ended a similar scheme in 2022. (Source: BBC)

The UNHCR warns that the response to the crisis in Sudan remains heavily underfunded. Over eight million refugees have been displaced since conflict broke out one year ago. (Source: UNHCR)

UK borders and migration policy

The new minimum income threshold for sponsoring family members to come to the UK came into force this week. Sponsors are now required to earn £29,000 a year to be able to bring dependent family members. Also on the recent visas and immigration changes, this new briefing examines the possible impacts of new rules preventing health and social care visa holders from bringing dependants to the UK, whilst this briefing considers recent changes to immigration fees including the Immigration Health Surcharge and the increase in visa application fees. It provides examples of costs for different routes - a skilled worker with a dependent partner and two children could be paying up to £41,500 in total immigration fees. (Sources: Home Office, Migration Observatory)

This article examines the progress the government has made against the Prime Minister's five key priorities set in 2023, one of which was to stop people migrating to the UK using small boats. The first quarter of 2024 has seen records numbers of arrivals via the Channel. (Source: BBC)

Despite reports that housing allocated for refugees removed from the UK to Rwanda has been sold off to private buyers, the government still hopes to complete the first removals this spring. It's also been revealed that Rwanda's state airline rejected a deal to transport the first cohort of removals, due to the risk of reputational damage. (Sources: Sky News, Independent)

The Chief Inspector of Prisons found that despite volunteering to be returned, some Albanians have been detained for several weeks prior to removal under the UK-Albanian returns partnership. (Source: the Guardian)

Finally, the use of foreign aid money to support UK refugees with housing continues to increase each year, despite concerns over whether this is a breach of the terms of its use. (Source: Independent)

Specific migrant groups

There are a few items on asylum:

- A new parliamentary briefing explains the asylum support system. (Source: UK Parliament)
- The Home Office released a press statement announcing plans to close 150 asylum hotels by May 2024. (Source: UKPOL)
- There's a new report on refugee homelessness in London. Notably, it reveals that government data shows a 239% increase in homelessness among people leaving asylum accommodation nationally. (Source: Refugee Council)
- This article sheds light on the experiences of people living in Hull whose asylum claims have been refused. (Source: Sky News)

On resettlement, new Home Office guidance outlines transitional accommodation arrangements for arrivals under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. (Source: Home Office)

This article explains recent guidance on the deportation of EU nationals post-Brexit. Elsewhere, this story illustrates the financial and emotional impact of Brexit and the end of free movement on mixed British-EU couples. (Sources: Free Movement, the Guardian)

On Hong Kong BN(O)s, caseworker guidance covering the BN(O) visa route has been updated to reflect recent changes. (Source: Home Office)

The National Indian Students and Alumni Union (NISAU) UK has launched the 'Fair visa, fair chance campaign', opposing changes to the Graduate Route. They argue that the visa benefits the UK economy and higher education sector, as well as Indian students. (Source: The Economic Times)

Cohesion and integration

A London vigil has taken place to mark six years since the Windrush Scandal was exposed. Voices from the event called on the government to implement recommendations from the formal inquiry. (Source: the Guardian)

A new report from the University of Southampton and the Shpresa Programme explores how to implement trauma informed approaches to support young people going through the asylum process in the UK. (Source: Electronic Immigration Network)

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