Migration news roundup 24 July 2023

Image
View of Houses of Parliament from bridge over river Thames

Photo: Jon Bicknell

- Stories that inspired us this week
- International news
- UK borders and migration policy
- Specific migrant groups
- Cohesion and integration

Stories that inspired us this week

Two young girls are now almost fluent in Welsh, after fleeing Ukraine and attending school in Anglesey. (Source: BBC Wales)

Enjoy this beautiful photo essay celebrating the contributions of migrants to the NHS. (Source: the Guardian)

A new exhibition in Plymouth features art, poetry, and dance from Sudan, to Ukraine, to Plymouth locals. (Source: Reclaim the Sea)

International news

The European Union and Tunisia have reached a £90 million deal to strengthen borders, create legal pathways, stop smuggling and return migrants. However, experts have raised concerns over violence against migrants in Tunisia, for example the evidence of serious human rights abuses against black African migrants. (Sources: BBC, UN News, Info Migrants)

UK borders and migration policy

The Illegal Migration Bill has become the Illegal Migration Act, having received royal assent after the government won crucial votes in the House of Lords. The UN responded saying that the legislation ‘is at variance with the country’s obligations under international human rights and refugee law’. Implementation relies partly on the UK government’s ability to remove people to a third country (October is reportedly the earliest expected date for the Supreme Court hearing relating to the legality of the Rwanda policy). The Chief Executive of Refugee Council provided analysis on possible changes to provision and support in relation to the Act. (Sources: Home Office, BBC, UNHCR, Independent, the Guardian)

Changes to immigration rules cover a range of issues. For example, an asylum claim can now be treated as withdrawn due to not keeping in touch with the Home Office, and failing to attend reporting events. Occupations in the construction industry have been added to the shortage occupation list, along with some fishing jobs. (Sources: Free Movement, BBC)

The immigration health surcharge migrant workers pay annually to use the NHS, is increasing from £624 to £1,035. Work and visit visas will also rise by 15%, leading to concerns about the impact on individuals. (Source: Free Movement)

Specific migrant groups

A report on the impact of negative asylum decisions highlights homelessness and mental and physical health as issues. This guide is aimed at local authorities supporting asylum seekers living in temporary accommodation. (Sources: NACCOM, Migrant Champions Network)

It's reported that over 11,000 people are awaiting the outcome of a refugee family reunion application to join family in the UK. (Source: Independent)

The changed immigration rules (above) also affect those applying to the EU settlement scheme (EUSS):

- from September 2023 those with pre-settled status will have their status automatically extended by two years.
- from 9 August applicants will have to provide a valid reason for late applications before it is accepted, and a Certificate of Application issued.
- EUSS will no longer be open for family members of a qualifying British citizen. (Source: Home Office)

The Children's Commissioner shared concerns for unaccompanied children as the Illegal Migration Bill passes. (Source: Children's Commissioner News)

A government survey of seasonal workers found 90% would work on UK farms again, but there were concerns - one in ten respondents had been threatened, and under half had warm accommodation, or had not received all the necessary supplies for work. (Source: Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs)

This article looks back at the tragic event in 2004 when 23 trafficked Chinese people working as cockle pickers lost their lives in Morecambe. The 2015 Modern Slavery Act aimed to prevent this type of exploitation in the UK, but there are concerns that the new Illegal Migration Act will undermine these efforts. Additionally, here's an insight into the Vietnamese labour export policy, particularly in Nghe An Province (Sources: Lancs Live, Open Democracy, Al Jazeera)

Cohesion and integration

Eid celebrations brought Muslims and non-Muslims together recently in Grimsby. (Source: Grimsbylive)

In August Birmingham art gallery ‘Ikon’ will celebrate its first Migrant Festival whilst in Exeter, groups including migrant communities and refugees, will be taking part in a multicultural sports festival. (Sources: BBC, Exeter City Council)

In Manchester, a football match between young asylum seekers and local police was organised to build trust and boost community engagement. Meanwhile, Burnley Football Club partnered with Islamic Relief UK to provide essential food packs to people in the community, including refugees and asylum seekers. (Sources: Greater Manchester Police, Burnley Express)

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Contact us about research

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