Migration news roundup 14 August 2023

Image
View of Houses of Parliament from bridge over river Thames

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Stories that inspired us this week

Mandinari Citizens in the UK (MCUK), a Wakefield-based network of Gambian-born UK residents, celebrated its 20th anniversary. (Source: Yahoo News)

Known for his work on Coronation Street and the Fast and Furious film series, a Knaresborough cinematographer has produced Homebuoy, a short film raising awareness of the challenges that many refugees face. (Source: Harrogate Advertiser)

International news

Following incidents of public Quran burnings in Sweden, some of the Muslim community have been attempting to change the narrative by engaging in friendly dialogue with onlookers. (Source: Al Jazeera)

Tensions are growing at the Polish–Belarusian border as Poland accused Belarus of aiding illegal crossings, with added concerns due to the presence of soldiers from Russia's Wagner mercenary group. (Source: InfoMigrants)

A new study shows that search and rescues in the central Mediterranean are not a ‘pull factor’ in the choice to migrate via that route. (Source: InfoMigrants)

UK borders and migration policy

From 2024, fines for employers or landlords will at least triple for employing or renting property to people without the necessary migration status. Here is some analysis of the context and possible implications. (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)

The Home Office published updated statistics ‘relating to the Illegal Migration Act’ on small boat arrivals, asylum applications and support, enforcement and decision makers, covering data to

July 2023. In a week unofficially known as ‘small boats week’, where government wanted to proactively discuss the topic, media reports of Ascension Island being a potential site for deporting people seeking asylum gained coverage. Then tragedy struck with news of six people who died trying to cross the Channel. Over 50 were rescued after their boat capsized but some people remain unaccounted for. (Sources: Home Office, Huffington Post, Al Jazeera)

This article fact-checks claims about the asylum system by the Immigration Minister and Shadow Home Secretary. Robert Jenrick, the immigration minister, also appeared to be reconsidering leaving the European Convention on Human Rights to remove blocks to the Rwanda plan. (Sources: BBC, the Guardian)

Government clashed with immigration lawyers over various issues:

- Following the recent suspension of certain immigration law firms, the Professional Enablers Taskforce was formally launched to ‘increase enforcement action against lawyers who help migrants exploit the immigration system’, with plans to expand the remit to other professions. (Source: Home Office)
- Legal aid providers have written to the Lord Chancellor expressing concern about payment rates and their capacity to cope with the volume of work anticipated to result from the Illegal Migration Act. (Source: The Law Society Gazette)

Migration to the UK in recent decades has been at a similar level to other high-income countries, according to this briefing on net migration. (Source: Migration Observatory)

Specific migrant groups

On asylum processes:

- Over 6,000 asylum cases are recorded as ‘withdrawn’ in Q1 2023, over three times more than in the preceding quarter. This article considers whether the Home Office is acting unlawfully in treating some asylum claims as 'withdrawn'. It explains that new reasons for withdrawal (claimants not reporting, not maintaining contact, and not updating their contact details) were applied to cases before the date they were added to the immigration rules. (Source: Free Movement)
- This three minute analysis calculates government is unlikely to clear the legacy backlog of asylum claims by the end of 2023 if decisions continue at the current ‘best’ rate. (Source: Channel 4)
- Guidance for Streamlined Asylum Processing (SAP) for children’s casework has been updated to reflect the extended timeframe to include non-legacy claims made from 28 June 2022 to 6 March 2023. (Source: UK Visas and Immigration)

On asylum accommodation and support:

- Although a first group of people seeking asylum was moved into the Bibby Stockholm, subsequently they were removed following a Legionella outbreak in the water that can cause serious lung infection. (Source: Sky)

- There are concerns about the performance of outsourced services for accommodating and supporting people seeking asylum. Meanwhile Serco anticipates increased income due to greater demand for its work in the immigration sector. (Sources: the Guardian, Evening Standard)
- A freedom of information request revealed painting over cartoons at Manston, the asylum reception centre where children are held, has cost over £1,500. (Source: the Guardian)

A statistical briefing on migration to the UK from Ukraine shows an average 266 arrivals under the Homes for Ukraine scheme per council area. (Source: Migration Observatory)

Concerns about cheating in online English tests could have cost hundreds of international students their academic year after a testing organisation cancelled some exam results that students need to qualify for university entry. (Source: The Pie News)

The 51st Manchester Caribbean Carnival celebrated the 75th Windrush anniversary. (Source: Manchester Evening News)

A tightened approach to late applications under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) came into force and the EUSS caseworker guidance has been updated. Late applicants must now prove reasonable grounds for delayed applications. (Source: Home Office)

Cohesion and integration

Applications are open for grants to run events encouraging local communities to come together. The project between Migration Yorkshire and the Jo Cox Foundation is encouraging applications from Hongkongers and other migrant groups. (Source: Jo Cox Foundation)

In a short video Kotob Daoud shares his story of resettlement from Syria to Somerset and the journey he's been on through art and music. (Source: Somerset Council)

Hull City Council announced it will resettle and support 50 refugees in the coming year, as part of its role as a City of Sanctuary, while Cambridgeshire libraries received a Sanctuary Award. (Sources: Hull Daily Mail, BBC)

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Contact us about research

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