

Migration news roundup 2 December 2024

Image
View of Houses of Parliament from bridge over river Thames

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Stories that inspired us this week

Watch this one-minute clip of a group of [Afghan women celebrating their graduation at Dundee University](#).
(Source: STV News)

[Zaid Alqassab, a Ukrainian refugee who has struggled to find a job in the UK as a qualified civil engineer, has opened a Sumerian café in Scotland](#) selling unique teas and coffees. (Source: Glasgow Live)

International news

[Dozens of social workers and police officers employed at the Italian asylum centre in Albania have returned to Italy](#) after only 24 people seeking asylum arrived in the first month, before an Italian court ruled their detention unlawful. The agreement with Albania will cost approximately €1 billion over five years. (Source: the Guardian)

In a case brought by an Iranian applicant in Switzerland, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that [states should not refuse asylum claims by LGBTQI+ people on the basis that they could act discreetly](#) to hide their sexual orientation. (Source: Free Movement)

UK borders and migration policy

[Quarterly net migration statistics](#) show [net migration fell by 20% in the 12 months to June 2024, to 728,000](#), attributed mainly to previous government measures preventing students bringing dependants. Figures for previous years have been revised upwards, to a new high of just over 900,000 people in the year ending June 2023. (Sources: Office for National Statistics, Sky)

[Changes to the Immigration Rules](#) include a requirement for Ukrainians to register biometrics before travelling to the UK. The Ukraine Permission Scheme will open 4 February 2025 where people on one of the current Ukraine schemes can apply to remain for another 18 months. Another change is that Colombian visitors now need a visa to travel to the UK – this is in response to increasing asylum claims from that country. (Source: Free Movement)

[Keir Starmer has insisted UK border staff continue undertaking checks at French ports](#), despite pressure from a group of French mayors calling for a treaty renegotiation that would include legal routes and for UK asylum claims to be processed in France away from coastal areas. (Source: Independent)?

[Post-Brexit immigration policy has been blamed for a 300% increase in asylum applications in the Republic of Ireland](#) compared with five years previously, with most claimants crossing the border from Northern Ireland. (Source: BBC)

The Home Secretary reiterated her pledge for stronger action on businesses who illegally employ migrant workers, stating that [immigration enforcement visits have increased by 20% since the new government came into power](#), and highlighted more enforced returns. (Source: The Standard)

Specific migrant groups

£20 million government [investment into legal aid sector has been announced, including for immigration work](#), such as to support victims of modern slavery and trafficking, as well as domestic abuse. Anticipating the 10% rise in rates, immigration law experts warned [there are not enough qualified solicitors to manage thousands of outstanding asylum cases](#). A legal aid consultation will begin in January 2025. (Sources: Ministry of Justice, the Guardian)

Migration Yorkshire's [local migration data dashboards have been updated](#) with the [latest national immigration statistics published](#) for the year ending September 2024. National highlights include:

- There were 99,800 asylum applications in the past year, similar to the previous year. Only [28% of people claiming asylum in the UK arrived on a small boat](#).
- [89,000 people received grants of leave under 'safe and legal routes'](#) to come or remain in the UK, through: the British Nationals Overseas (BNO) visa (31,000), Ukraine schemes (29,000), refugee resettlement (9,600 arrivals in the past year; 95% of these through Afghan schemes) and family reunion (19,000).
- [EU Settlement Scheme applications](#) since 30 June 2021 average at over 50,000 per month; most now are repeat applications as people transition from pre-settled status, with a declining proportion of late applications.
- [Applications to the BN\(O\) visa route continue to decrease each quarter](#), from over 30,000 applications when the scheme opened to just over 5,000 at the end of September.

(Sources: Migration Yorkshire, Home Office)

On asylum:

- [The Scottish Government has drafted a proposal to allow asylum seekers the right to work](#), requesting the UK government engage with them on a pilot scheme. (Source: Scottish Government)
- [A new exhibition of photographs in Gateshead shows experiences of going through the UK's asylum system](#). 'Asylum: a long and painful process' is open until February 2025. (Source: Northeast Bylines)

On modern slavery, in a series of reports on allowing people to work who are within the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), [a third report considers how working could support survivor recovery](#). (Source: Kalayaan)

Cohesion and integration

[Imam Adam Kelwick, who embraced protestors outside the Abdullah Quilliam Mosque in Liverpool during the riots, has been awarded a prestigious Beacon Mosque Award](#) for 'most impactful imam'. (Source: BBC)

Catch up on [what leaders from around the country said at the 'After the riots' community cohesion summit](#). The article anticipates a new national cohesion strategy. (Source: British Future)

Contact us about research

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