

Migration news roundup 20 March 2023

Image
View of Houses of Parliament from bridge over river Thames

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Stories that inspired us this week

The [University of Sheffield has launched a Ukrainian language conversion course](#), the first of its kind in the UK, for those who are already familiar with other Slavonic languages and wanting to learn at a faster pace. (Source: University of Sheffield)

A [Syrian man who is training to be a solicitor in Manchester shares about his long and difficult journey](#) to flee the conflict in his homeland and how his experiences of the UK asylum system have inspired him to pursue a career in law. (Source: Manchester World)

Read about some of the [people with a refugee background who have achieved flourishing careers in the world of film and television and won awards at the Oscars](#). This includes [2023 Oscar winner Ke Huy Quan who was a child film-star and a child refugee](#) originally from Vietnam. (Sources: International Rescue Committee, BBC)

UK borders and migration policy

[Following budget week, here's an overview of announcements relating to migration](#), including additional language support for Ukrainians and business visitor changes. In light of [review of the construction and hospitality sectors, five occupations in construction will be added to the shortage occupation list](#). A full review of the list is expected later this year. (Sources: Free Movement, Migration Advisory Committee, BBC)

[The Illegal Migration Bill passed its second reading in the House of Commons](#) despite criticism from prominent Conservatives including former Prime Minister Teresa May and [calls from moderate Tories to see the legal advice for the proposed laws](#). [Amid backbench calls to leave the European Court of Human Rights](#), Justice Secretary Dominic Raab told a parliamentary committee that there is no risk of this 'in the short to medium term'. (Sources: BBC, iNews, Evening Standard)

Here is an [overview of the detention provisions in the Bill](#), with the Home Secretary clarifying that [unaccompanied children seeking asylum will be exempt from these](#). (Sources: Free Movement, the Guardian)

Outside Parliament, [Gary Lineker was reinstated as Match of the Day presenter](#) in the wake of the row prompted by his tweet criticising the bill, but critique of the proposed legislation continues. [Former Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Sara Thornton has warned of the implications for trafficking survivors](#), while [charities](#),

[businesses and other groups have voiced their opposition](#) in an open letter to government, and a [protest took place in Parliament Square](#). (Sources: BBC, Independent, the Guardian)

Relatedly, [the UK is to step up its funding to France to tackle small boat crossings](#) with nearly £500 million agreed to be paid over three years. (Source: BBC)

Specific migrant groups

A group of ten people seeking asylum won a legal challenge giving them permission to [challenge the Home Office plans to remove them to Rwanda](#). The Home Office previously won a High Court ruling that the scheme was lawful. This new challenge will consider whether the court properly considered whether Rwanda is a safe place for people seeking asylum. [Some individuals are reportedly going 'underground'](#) due to fears of removal to Rwanda. (Sources: the Guardian, Sky News)

A new report exploring the [experiences of lesbian and bisexual women in the UK asylum system](#) highlights the challenges faced by women such as around disclosure and reigniting trauma. (Source: Women for Refugee Women)

The Home Office published new details of a [new fast-track process to speed up child asylum claims](#), similar to the streamlined asylum process recently announced for adult and family claims. The new process, which applies to those under 18 including unaccompanied children, involves a Preliminary Information Meeting with a view to possibly being able to make a decision without a substantive interview. Meanwhile, the [British Association of Social Workers urged its members not to work for the new National Age Assessment Board](#) for fears of political pressures influencing social workers' judgement and negatively impacting on child welfare. (Sources: Home Office, the Guardian)

Two pieces of research on Homes for Ukraine are out, reporting that [the scheme has been broadly successful](#) and could be a blueprint for a similar programme for other nationalities, with [81% of hosts reporting a positive experience of the scheme and 88% saying they would host again](#). A poll conducted as part of the research found [68% of Britons in general thought taking 150,000 refugees from Ukraine was a good thing](#). However, [the issue with securing new accommodation remains, following the end of sponsorship arrangements](#). (Sources: Commonweal Housing, More in Common, the Guardian)

This article looks at [the current environment for Afghan women refugees in the UK following International Women's Day](#). It discusses threats Afghan women face in their own country and their needs once they arrive to the UK, including integration, employment and mental health support. (Source: Refugee Council)

[Hong Kong activists are disappointed with the assessment of China as not a national threat to the UK](#) and call on the UK government to take a tougher stand. (Source: iNews)

[There is a suspected rise in Roma children taken into care, including in Bradford](#), but the increase in cases observed by community workers may not show up in official data as many families are reluctant to identify themselves as Roma or gypsy. (Source: BBC)

Cohesion and integration

This article discusses a cycle where [charity workers experience rising cases of abuse following comments about migration from ministers](#), charities step-up their vocal opposition which leads to a greater public backlash. In response, [the chair of the Charity Commission confirmed the right of charities to campaign and speak on behalf](#)

[of those in need, including refugees, but called on the sector to use a balanced approach](#) to avoid alienating the public. (Sources: Open Democracy, Civil Society)

Police revealed a series of incidents under investigation where [staff and residents at an asylum hotel in Knowsley have been attacked](#). The site was also the scene of a violent far-right protest last month. (Source: Sky News)

International news

The [EU flew 60 Bangladeshi migrants to Dhaka](#), confirming its intention to step up returns for migrants and people seeking asylum. In contrast, the International Centre for Climate Change and Development says [governments should create a legal status for people displaced due to climate change](#), as they currently have no rights nor legal migration options in Europe. (Source: InfoMigrants)

Outside Europe, [these videos bring a spotlight on migration](#) and [discrimination experienced by migrants](#) in African countries, in particular in Tunisia. Also in Africa, violent clashes between non-state armed groups and government forces have driven [hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), and in Ethiopia around [100,000 Somalis have arrived in the past four weeks to escape clashes and insecurity](#). (Sources: InfoMigrants, UNHCR)

Contact us about research

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