

Migration news roundup 22 April 2025

Image

View of Houses of Parliament from bridge over river Thames

This Migration News Roundup presents a selection of news, policy, research and statistics from the previous week on migration-related topics. The contents of each story do not necessarily reflect the views of Migration Yorkshire.

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

UK borders and migration policy

In an attempt to deter Channel crossings, the British and French governments are considering exchanging people seeking asylum. For example, those that claim asylum in France but have family in the UK, may be exchanged for people that arrived here using an irregular route. UK and French governments are reportedly holding talks on the issue, which may be a precursor to further agreements with individual EU countries under a 'readmissions framework' to be discussed at a summit in May. (Sources: the Guardian, Bloomberg)

The number of people arriving across the Channel on small boats reached over 8,000 by mid-April, another new high for the first four months of a year. Over 700 people arrived in a single day, the highest number for 2025. (Source: BBC)

The latest visa data shows applications fell by over a third in the year ending March 2025. This reflects restrictions faced by dependents of health and care workers and students, and the increase in the salary threshold for skilled workers. Indeed, this article reports that high visa charges deter overseas skilled workers, slowing down scientific research in a sector that already has shortages. A further study outlines how the UK is increasingly reliant on its migrant workforce highlighting the transport, communications and health sectors in particular, as well as increases in manufacturing and finance sectors. (Sources: Independent, Reuters, InfoMigrants)

Here's an up-to-date guide for employers on 'right to work' checks. (Source: Free Movement)

The current immigration Bill has reached Report stage – here's a guide to understanding amendments to the Bill proposed by government at committee stage.

The changes include a clause on the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) so everyone granted EUSS status has the same rights under the withdrawal agreement and further conditions that can be placed when someone is granted limited leave (including electronic monitoring). Further, a coalition of legal minds has published a briefing outlining objections to the Bill that cover many issues they anticipate will negatively affect people crossing the Channel, detainees, people seeking asylum, those with limited leave and trafficking survivors. (Sources: Free Movement, Electronic Immigration Network)

Specific migrant groups

Continuing on EUSS, an elderly Polish woman, who was initially refused permission to stay in the UK as a joining family member of her son due to applying on the wrong form, has now been allowed to remain. (Source: the Guardian)

The government recently introduced changes to child benefits claims which affect parents with refugee status. Now they can only apply for a three-month restriction on backdating claims, like any other claimants. (Source: the Scotsman)

Asylum accommodation continues to cause a headache for the government, which has been criticised for awarding contracts which continue to allow the use of barges and hotels until September 2027. Over a hundred charities and NGOs have written to the Prime Minister, calling for an end to 'expensive and unsuitable' hotel accommodation. (Sources: Independent, LBC, the Guardian)

Meanwhile in Leeds, the NHS trust has apologised to a woman with an active asylum claim, and cancelled over £10,000 of charges for maternity care after she was pursued by debt collectors. (Source: the Guardian)

Up to 10 additional local authorities will be given the opportunity to pilot devolved modern slavery decision making for children. The closing date for applications for grant funding is 14 May. (Source: Home Office)

Also on modern slavery, there are new publications on the following topics:

- Resources aimed at organisations supporting survivors with voluntary returns and repatriation.
- The causes of vulnerability to modern slavery at a global level, and how to effectively respond in the context of contemporary and ongoing challenges such as new technology, climate change, conflict, and forced displacement of people.
- A framework to help organisations identify risk factors and provide guidance on preventative work.
- A London pilot of a ‘trusted assessor’ model of access to housing, where trained advocates support survivors with the application process.

(Sources: International Organization for Migration UK, The Global Commission on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, Human Trafficking Foundation)

In our own region, the ongoing issues around exploitation of migrant care workers is highlighted by ‘Sophie’, who travelled from Zimbabwe to work in a South Yorkshire care home where she was often expected to work 16-hour shifts with no days off. (Source: BBC)

This article tells the story of Winston Jones, a member of the Windrush generation and once a manager of a Sainsbury’s bakery in London. The impact of being wrongly

refused re-entry to the UK, being homeless in Jamaica, missing family milestones and his long fight to resolve his immigration status meant that Jones was fearful to apply for compensation. (Source: the Guardian)

As Donald Trump's policies on immigration are getting more hostile towards international students, some UK Universities' officials urge the UK to take this as an opportunity to increase competitiveness and attract the most brilliant international students. At the same time, a new report from the International Higher Education Commission (IHEC), proposes a new roadmap to secure the future of the UK higher education on the global stage. (Sources: The Guardian, The PIE News)

Cohesion and integration

The Mental Health Foundation (MHF) has published a new report on the mental wellbeing of refugees and people seeking asylum. The report has found that the current system damages mental health and increases the risk of suicide, with the ban on working highlighted as a major contributor to feelings of worthlessness and inability to integrate into UK society. It particularly takes note of the effect of the riots last summer and makes recommendations on how to improve mental health, including developing an appropriate Integration Strategy. Drawing on the results of the report, the MHF has also published an article on how the ban to work for people seeking asylum impacts not only the individuals' health, but also the wider economy and community. (Source: MHF)

The Resolution Foundation has published a new briefing note on their research into the precarious work positions of 'foreign-born workers'. The research finds that 'foreign-born workers' are disproportionately likely to be found in precarious forms of employment, including temporary and zero-hours contracts, and other roles in the 'gig economy.' (Source: Resolution Foundation)

International news

EU data for the first quarter of 2025 shows that irregular migrant crossings into Europe, especially at land borders with Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and North Macedonia, have dropped by 30 per cent compared to the same period last year. In other news, as part of proposals to speed up the asylum process, seven countries,

including Kosovo, Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, India, Morocco and Tunisia, have been added by the EU to their list of safe countries of origin, which means that the claims would be fast-tracked. Those changes will need to be approved by both the European Parliament and EU member states before they are implemented. (Sources: the Guardian, BBC)

A US immigration judge has ruled that Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian activist and Columbia University graduate, can be removed from the US based on claims that his views oppose US foreign policy interests. Civil liberties organisations have condemned the decision as a threat to free speech and political expression. (Source: the Guardian)

Stories that inspired us this week

Belfast Council has approved the project for a new library for children from refugee families, which will provide them with reading materials in their own languages. It is believed that this will improve children's literacy skills and development. (Source: Belfast Live)

Ahead of the celebration of Refugee Week 2025, Warwickshire County Council has launched 'Community as Superpower', an art competition where children and young people are invited to imagine small and powerful things they can do to create a welcoming community. (Source: Warwickshire County Council)

Contact us about research

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