Asylum Seekers and Refugees

The Newsflash is a monthly round up of publications, information, events, funding and jobs relating to asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers for anyone who wants to keep up to date with the latest developments.

The newsflash is produced by the East of England Local Government Association - Strategic Migration Partnership.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees - including Syrian resettlement

Unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children: safeguarding pressures thematic report from the ADCS

The number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) looked after by local authorities in England have more than doubled between 2014, reaching 4,210 in 2016. A relatively small number of local authorities (largely the ‘port’ authorities) have been supporting a disproportionately large number of UASC. To address this, the voluntary National UASC Transfer Scheme (NTS) came into effect from July 2016. It is predicated upon each local authority accepting UASC up to 0.07% of its child population to achieve a more equitable distribution across the country. Following the dismantling of the Calais camp, the pace and number of UASC who need to be transferred has increased. This report looks at the changing national picture and aims to provide information about the characteristics and needs of UASC and refugee children, and the services delivered to meet their needs. Please follow this link to read the report in full: http://adcs.org.uk/assets/documentation/ADCS_UASC_Report_Final_FOR_PUBLICATION.pdf

Implementation of section 67 of the Immigration Act in France: guidance and comment from ECRE

This guidance explains Home Office policy on transferring unaccompanied children who lived in the migrant camp in Calais on or before 24 October 2016 to the UK. It provides information to caseworkers on identifying and assessing children who may be eligible to be transferred to the UK. Please follow this link to read the report in full: Implementation of section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 in France - Publications - GOV.UK. Reporting on this new guidance, ECRE, the European Council on Refugees and Exile, identified how this guidance has narrowed the reach of the ‘Dubs’ amendment: ‘To be eligible, it must be the case that transfer to the UK is in the best interests of the child, they must have been present in the Calais camp on or before 24 October 2016, and they must have arrived in Europe before 20 March 2016. In addition, the child must meet at least one of the following criteria: 12 years old or under; referred by the French authorities (or an organization working on their behalf) as being at high risk of sexual exploitation; 15 years old or under and of Sudanese or Syrian nationality; or under 18 and the accompanying sibling of a child meeting one of the above additional criteria.’ Please follow this link to read the ECRE bulletin in full: UK: New Limitation to Dubs Amendment, ECRE Comments on Asylum Procedure Regulation, Norway: Stateless children granted right to obtain citizenship

Government’s Immigration Tribunal fees’ increase reviewed and proposed increase halted

In a written statement to parliament, the Minister of State for Courts and Justice announced that: “we have listened to the representations that we received on the current fee levels and have decided to take stock and review the immigration and asylum fees.....From today all applicants will be charged fees at previous levels and we will reimburse, in all cases where the new fees have been paid, the difference between that fee and the previous fee.” Secondary legislation will be brought in to formalise the position. Alongside the fee changes introduced the following fee exemptions offered in the First-tier Tribunal include:
- those in receipt of a Home Office destitution waiver in respect of their initial application;
- parents of, and those with parental responsibility for, children receiving support from local authorities;
- children in local authority care; and
- those appealing a decision to revoke their humanitarian protection or refugee status.
Government debate, Westminster Hall: Refugee Family Reunion (Immigration Rules)
The debate centred on the gendered issue of family reunion: "Women and children are far more likely to have been left behind than men. Their only hope of escape is to wait for a male family member to reach a country of sanctuary and then apply for reunion. Recent research by the Red Cross shows that 95% of applicants waiting to join family members in the UK through refugee family reunion are women and children. It also found that the process was not safe." Furthermore, family reunion is only permissible where children are under 18, resulting in incomplete family reunions. Please follow this link to read the debate in full: Refugee Family Reunion (Immigration Rules) - Hansard Online

Government releases latest immigration statistics, July to September 2016
The latest data release looks at immigration figures for those coming to the UK on work visas, as students, for family reunions and to seek asylum or settle as refugees. It also looks at those being returned to their countries. Key data to note:
- Asylum applications in the UK from main applicants increased by 14% to 33,380 in the year ending September 2016. However, numbers of asylum applications in the third quarter of 2016 (7,146 in July to September) were lower than in the same quarter of 2015 (10,231 in July to September).
- In the year ending September 2016, the largest number of applications for asylum came from nationals of Iran (4,822), followed by Iraq (3,127), Pakistan (2,937), Afghanistan (2,567), Syria (2,102) and Bangladesh (1,927).
- There were 3,144 asylum applications from unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) in the year ending September 2016, a 15% rise compared to the year ending September 2015 (2,724); UASC applications represented 9% of all main applications for asylum.
- 4,162 people (including dependents) were granted humanitarian protection under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme in the year ending September 2016. Since this scheme began in 2014, a total of 4,414 people have been resettled.
Please follow this link to access the data in full: Immigration statistics, July to September 2016 - Publications - GOV.UK

The working paper estimates that the government could slash as much as 25% off the £233.5 million annual bill for asylum support payments if asylum seekers and those refused asylum who cannot go home were allowed to work in the UK. Please follow this link to read the paper in full: https://asylumwelfarework.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/welfare-costs-working-paper.pdf

University of Oxford, Compas report - Meeting the challenge: Voluntary sector services for destitute migrant children and their families
This new report examines how destitute migrant families access support from the voluntary sector, necessary as they are not able to access public services due to their being ‘No recourse to public funds’. The research indicates that those providing services tend to be small, local organisations or small units within larger national organisations. However, most of these organisations have a particular remit which has the effect of excluding some migrant families, such as those who are mobile EU citizens or those with irregular immigration status. Please follow this link to read the report in full: http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/media/PR-2016-Meeting_the_Challenge.pdf
Coram Children’s Legal Centre – Migrant Children’s Project Newsletter November 2016
This latest newsletter outlines new training offered by Coram Children’s Legal Centre on EU children in care. There is also information on their new factsheet on local authority support for children with immigration status issues. Please follow this link to read the newsletter, with other news and updates included: MCP November newsletter - new training on EU children in care, new fact sheets & more...

Doctors of the World – new training programmes for health professionals to meet needs of refugees and unaccompanied asylum seeking children
Doctors of the World offers 2 hour or half day workshops on the subjects for the following audiences:
- Planning and delivery of primary care for vulnerable groups—GP receptionists and Practice Managers
- Access to healthcare for refugees and migrants (clinical staff) — clinical staff or medical students
- Access to healthcare for refugees and migrants (non-clinical staff) — non-clinical staff working with refugees or migrants in any setting e.g. health care or community/voluntary sector.
- Healthcare needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) (Clinical staff) — clinicians carrying out statutory health assessment for unaccompanied minors, GP practices registering unaccompanied minors.
- Healthcare needs of those resettled via the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme (Clinical/non-clinical staff) — GPs registering resettled Syrian Refugees. CCG/LA professionals involved in care planning for refugees arriving through the programme.
If you are interested in arranging a training course please contact Amy Kimbangi, UK Programme Development and Support Officer, Doctors of the World UK, (from the Médecins du Monde network). T: +44(0) 20 3535 7726 or e: AKimbangi@doctorsoftheworld.org.uk

Migration

New measures in the Immigration Act come into force – right to rent checks become tougher
From 1 December 2016, two further measures in the Immigration Act, which affect the private rented sector, have come into force. This means that:
- It is now easier for private landlords to evict illegal migrant tenants.
- It is now a crime to knowingly, or with reasonable cause to believe, let to illegal migrants.
These measures are designed to demonstrate the Government’s commitment to tackle illegal immigration, and its determination to take the necessary steps to protect public services and access to the private rented sector for our lawful residents. Further information on the measures and the Immigration Act 2016 is available on GOV.UK: Residential Tenancies fact-sheet Guidance on evictions. The Immigration Act 2016.

Government guidance updated: Code of practice on the English Language requirements for public sector workers
This guidance was first issued in July – this revised version has been produced to align with the new duty to have English language fluency for customer facing public sector workers under part 7 of the Immigration Act, which came into force on 21 November. The guide outlines which public bodies are covered by this duty and how to define a public-facing worker. It covers details of what standard of fluency of English should be set in relation to each public facing post, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). It outlines what remedial action should be undertaken where someone is found not to be sufficiently fluent and how to handle any complaints regarding a breach of the fluency duty. Please follow this link to read the guidance in full: English language requirement for public sector workers: code of practice - Publications - GOV.UK
NRPF Network guidance - Court of Appeal guidance on support for families with NRPF
Local authorities may need to review how they decide subsistence payments following the ruling in the case of R (C, T, M and U) v London Borough of Southwark [2016]. Please follow this link to read a case summary and guidance from the NRPF Network: http://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/News/Pages/subsistence-for-families.aspx

NRPF Network new practice guidance – assessing and supporting children and families who have no recourse to public funds
This guidance is intended to provide a reference for local authorities to use in order to apply statutory duties and powers in relation to safeguarding the welfare of children in households where the parents have no recourse to public funds and require accommodation and/or financial assistance: http://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/Documents/Practice-Guidance-Families.pdf

Government data release: National Insurance number (NINo) allocations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK since January 2002 for NINo registrations to September 2016
This data release from the Department for Work and Pensions shows that a total of 825,000 national insurance numbers were allocated to overseas nationals for the year ending September 2016. Of these, 629,000 went to EU citizens and 195,000 to those from outside the EU. Romanians are now the largest number of those applying for NINos from within the EU (up 14%) and Indians top the list for non-EU (down 8%). Please follow this link to access the data release in full: National Insurance number allocations to adult overseas nationals to September 2016 - Publications - GOV.UK

IPPR report - Roma communities and Brexit: Integrating and empowering Roma in the UK
As a consequence of the Brexit vote, Roma migrant communities in the UK – already a vulnerable group – face further insecurity over the terms of their residency, and the end of EU funding to support their integration. This report examines the evidence on the disadvantages that Roma experience, and recommends how cash-strapped local authorities can help them by supporting community cohesion in more strategic ways. Please follow this link to read the report in full: Roma communities and Brexit: Integrating and empowering Roma in the UK | IPPR

Brexit immigration policy – question put in House of Lords
The question put by Lord Green of Deddington was “To ask Her Majesty’s Government when they plan to outline their objectives for the negotiations concerning the immigration regime for European Union citizens, following the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union.” He highlighted a report produced by Migration Watch outlining their suggestions as to how immigration should be managed post-Brexit. Other Lords asked follow up questions concerning access to migrant labour in the agriculture sector, the option to continue with free movement, concerns from the business community and reciprocal arrangements for UK nationals living in the EU. Please follow this link for the Migration Watch briefing paper: https://www.migrationwatchuk.org/briefing-paper/395 and this link for the Lords questions: Brexit: Immigration Policy - Hansard Online

The Bridge Plus+, Norwich issues latest B-Me Voice magazine
Please follow this link to the latest edition of the magazine, which features the adventures of Salah a refugee, reports on how Norwich came together after an arson attack on a Romanian shop in the city and much more: http://issuu.com/jobridging/docs/b-me_voice_magazine_-_2016_november

The Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum is moving premises
The Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum will be moving to Arbury Court, Cambridge. This move will see the Forum come together at the same premises as the CCVS (Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service) and the CVS (Cambridge Volunteer Centre). Please also note that there will now be only one telephone number to reach all of Forum’s through which is t: 01223 655241.
Cities of Migration – November bulletin issued
Cities of Migration features news and articles about how cities across the world create opportunities for integration of new migrant communities, sharing ideas and examples of good practice. This latest edition includes an opinion piece from a contributor from the east of England, Michal Siewniak from CVS Broxbourne and East Hertfordshire. Please follow this link to read the bulletin in full: Cities of Migration Newsletter, No. 65, November 2016

Events

International Café – 3 December, Peterborough
The International Café, which happens monthly to help people improve their English language, will be taking place from 14.30-16.30 at the Allama Iqbal Centre, 157 Cromwell Road, PE1. The café offers relaxed, conversational English over free sandwiches, cakes and drinks. Families are welcome—but we do not provide child care, so parents/carers are responsible for the children. The details are here: http://www.linguagloss.com/cafe/ and here: https://www.facebook.com/events/699265366895469/. The next café will take place on 21 January 2017. Please contact Gill if you have any questions on e: esol@linguagloss.com or m: 0788 44 33 586.

Active EU Citizens workshop – 15 December, Welwyn Garden City
This free workshop, part of the Strategic Migration Partnership’s EU funded ACT project, from 18:30 - 20:30 at Welwyn Garden City Fire Station, Unit 25 Peartree Farm Peartree Lane, AL7 3UW. Delegates from an EU member state (not including the UK), can register for a place at this workshop. At the workshop, we will be discussing what it means to be an ‘active citizen’, and there will be special guests coming in to talk about the activities that they are involved in. We will also discuss topics such as:
- Voting in elections
- Volunteering
- Ways to be more involved in our neighbourhoods & communities
After the workshop, if you would like some practical experience of working to improve your neighbourhood or community, we will try to find you a mentor. This would be someone who has come to the UK as a citizen of another EU country and is now playing an active part in life here in the UK. To find out more or to register to attend, please follow this link: ACT - Active EU Citizens workshop – Welwyn Garden City | Events | EELGA SMP

Working with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Course – 23 January, Birmingham
Following the implementation of the National Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Transfer Protocol, many Local Authorities with little or no experience of working with UASC’s are now required to meet the complex and challenging needs of this extremely vulnerable group of children and young people. In response to this, ENTRAIDE are offering an introductory training course for any professional working with or involved in supporting UASC’s to enable them to understand and respond appropriately to the needs of these children and young people and ensure that they are adequately safeguarded. Cost: The cost for this one day course is £90.00 + VAT. For further information and to book a place please contact Felix Kupay on e: info@entraideuk.org.uk or m: 07948602313 or web: http://entraideuk.org.uk/training-and-consultancy-best-practice-in-working-with-uasc

This event will include contributions from Legal Markets Leader and Head of Global Immigration at PwC, the legal director of Immigration Law Practitioners Association, the director of Migrants Rights’ Network and the Chief of Missions form the International organisation for Migration. Please follow this link for more information and to book to attend: Exploring the Future of Immigration and Asylum in Post-Brexit Britain | Public Policy Exchange
### Funding

**Controlling Migration Fund from the Department for Communities and Local Government – Prospectus released and applications invited**

The fund will be available over the four years 2016-17 to 2019-20. This fund has been created to respond to the pressures caused by high migration into localities as identified by local authorities and will deliver benefits to the established resident population. Funding will be awarded to those who can show that their project will alleviate pressures on local services. Those interested in making an application to the fund should first review the prospectus and are then welcome to discuss proposals with officials from the Department for Communities and Local Government. Please contact them on e: migrationfund@communities.gsi.gov.uk and follow this link to access the prospectus: Controlling Migration Fund: prospectus - Publications - GOV.UK

**Westheimer scholarship – funding for young asylum seekers to get to university**

The Westheimer Health and Social Care Scholarship has been launched to create opportunities for these young people who currently have limited options to pursue higher education. Ranging from an annual grant of £10-20k, this scholarship enables up to three young asylum seekers each year to study for a first degree or professional qualification in the field of health and social care. Scholarship applications for the academic year 2017/18 will open in spring 2017. The Westheimer Scholarship is an initiative of the Schwab Westheimer Trust which was established by former refugees who benefitted from welcome and support in the UK when fleeing Nazi Germany. The Trust continues to promote and encourage the education of young asylum seekers and refugees and make the wider community aware of their considerable efforts and achievements.

The scholarship is administered by Refugee Support Network, a charity which exists to help young refugees, asylum seekers and survivors of trafficking to build more hopeful futures through education. For more information about the fund, please contact Emily Bowerman, Programmes Manager on e: ebowerman@refugeesupportnetwork.org

**New scholarship for a refugee student – Balliol College, Oxford**

Balliol College is inviting applications for its new Balliol Students’ Scholarship from refugees wishing to study for an undergraduate degree commencing in October 2017. The scholarship is available to any student with current refugee status or a pending claim to asylum, whether in the UK, Europe or elsewhere. It covers full tuition, College fees and living costs, and aims to provide a talented student with the opportunity to study for a degree without disruption, so that they can achieve their full academic potential. There are further details about the scholarship and how to apply here.

**Save the Children grants available for asylum seeking families**

Save the Children has a number of grants available to resettled refugee or asylum seeking families with children aged under 8. To find out what the grant offers and how to apply, please speak to Jamie Hilton on e: j.hilton@savethechildren.org.uk

**Rosa UK launches new fund**

Woman to Woman fund, is a new grants programme dedicated to helping disadvantaged women and girls in local communities across the UK. Rosa has been awarded £2.2M from VAT receipts on sanitary products, for this programme of grants and support to small grassroots women’s groups. With grants of up to £25,000, this UK-wide programme aims to support no fewer than 100 local grassroots women’s organisations across the UK using funds from the ‘Tampon Tax.’ As well as grants, Rosa will provide additional support that women’s groups tell us they need, including mentoring, training and networking opportunities. Round 1 of the new programme will opened on 28 November. Grants will be awarded over 3 rounds until March 2018. Round 2 of the Woman to Woman fund will open in May 2017 and round 3 will open in September 2017.
Jobs

Personal Advisor for Norfolk County Council in the Norwich Leaving Care Team
Details of the role will soon be available. The candidate will need to have experience supporting Asylum Seekers (UASC) and Refugees. If you are interested (or know someone that is) or would like to get more information you can contact Owen Garrod, the Norwich Leaving Care Team manager on e: owen.garrod@norfolk.gov.uk

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