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The Newsflash is a two-weekly 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

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Service Support Centres (SSC) – locations to register biometric data

SSCs will begin operation from the New Year alongside the current Home Office contract with the Post Office and provide biometric enrolments. From 31 March 2019, the SSC should take over all enrolments from the Post Office. For Asylum applicants this will mean changes to the locations where they register their biometrics. For applicants in Cardiff, Croydon, Glasgow, Liverpool and Solihull the SSC is either in or close to the asylum interview office. For these sites UKVI will ask main applicants to attend to have their biometrics enrolled prior to or after their asylum interview. For applicants in Sheffield, a separate appointment will be made as the SSC is in the city centre. In Leeds, Newcastle and Hounslow there is no local SSC. In these places, applicants will be able to enrol their biometrics at the asylum office. UKVI will provide travel tickets to enrol biometrics for asylum applicants in receipt of financial support and those scheduled to attend another SSC location or if UKVI have been unable to capture biometrics at a screening or asylum interview. Prior to this change in March 2019, UKVI will be issuing applicants who have yet to enrol their biometrics with an enrolment letter. Please encourage these applicants to attend the Post Office to complete their enrolment prior to the change in process. Please direct any queries to direct these to Kerstin Thompson on e: Kerstin.Thompson@homeoffice.gov.uk.

UN General Assembly announces the Global Compact on refugees

The member states of the UN General Assembly have agreed on an innovative global framework to better serve the forcibly displaced and their host communities. The Global Compact on Refugees builds on the existing international legal system for refugees, notably the 1951 Refugee Convention, and on human rights and humanitarian law. It is a non-binding operational tool to bolster cooperation. Please follow this link to learn more: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/latest/2018/states-reach-historic-deal-refugees-commit-effective-fairer-response>

New report from British Red Cross – still and ordeal: the move-on period for new refugees

In 2014, the Red Cross published a report that showed the move-on period was an ordeal for new refugees. Four years on, despite some positive policy changes, it remains an ordeal. The report recommends further changes are now needed, including extending the move-on period to at least 56 days. Please follow this link to read the report in full: www.redcross.org.uk/refugee-move-on-period

Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending September 2018

This data release includes experimental statistics on asylum applications made based on sexual orientation. Over the three years 2015 – 2017, 6.6% of asylum applications had a sexual orientation component (5,916 applications). 1,540 grants of asylum or another form of protection were issued to main applicants whose claim had a sexual orientation basis, over this period. Please follow this link to access the data in full: [Immigration Statistics, year ending September 2018](#)

New legal aid immigration contracts awarded by Legal Aid Agency

Please follow this link to access details of who has been awarded legal aid immigration contracts to work in the Midlands and East of England: www.gov.uk/government/civil-news-2018-standard-civil-contract-holders-list

Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration - Inspection report on Country of Origin Information

The report reviewed the Home Office country information on the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran and Turkey. This round of reviews highlighted the problems with country of origin products where the most reliable and up-to-date information is not readily available in English. The problem of not using non-English language sources is not simply that more up-to-date and first-hand information is omitted, but also that the available English-language sources can assume more weight than they merit. Please follow this link to read the report: https://government/Inspection_of_Country_of_Origin_Information_May_2018.pdf. The Home Office's response to the Chief Inspector's report can be found at this link: www.gov.uk/response-to-a-report-on-an-inspection-of-country-of-origin-information

Community sponsorship of refugees – application process simplified and new training site launched

The simplified application form and updated guidance are now available. The application form now incorporates the resettlement plan in a single document, and is accompanied by new guidance to help with completing the form. The guidance for prospective sponsors, the local authority guidance and the sample agreement have also been updated. These changes are designed to bring greater clarity and make it easier for community groups to get their application right first time. All of the revised documents can be found on GOV.UK at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-full-community-sponsorship>. Anyone with any questions or feedback on the new forms or guidance, please contact the Home Office on e: communitysponsorship@homeoffice.gov.uk. Reset have also launched their new training website, packed with resources and guidance for prospective and existing community sponsor groups. Please follow this link to access the site: <https://training-resetuk.org>

Herts welcomes Syrian families (HWSF) – latest news

To work with the (nearly) 50 refugee families settled across Hertfordshire, HWSF need more Language Supporters to help individuals practice their English. Anyone interested in volunteering, please contact HWSF's volunteer coordinator, Caroline Herring on e: carolineherring52@gmail.com. They are currently looking for donations of TV/coffee tables, sewing machines, piano keyboards and good quality toys and games for children from 1-16 years. HWSF have hosted a number of get-togethers for the families in November and December and have events planned for January. To read about some of their recent activities, go to HWSF's website [here](#). Finally, HWSF was featured on Radio Verulam in November. The broadcast gave an overview of their work and included an interview with a young Syrian refugee. Please go to the [website](#) to hear the [podcast](#).

Home Office research report - The UK Government's Approach to Evaluating the Vulnerable Persons and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Schemes

This paper outlines the UK Government's approach to resettling refugees under the Vulnerable Persons and Children's Resettlement schemes and the strategy for evaluating their delivery and effectiveness. It sets out features and characteristics of the intake, and then outlines the structures in place to respond to arrivals including policy initiatives. Findings from a small pilot study using UK social media posts explored public discourses on the Syrian refugee intake. The paper concludes with reflections underpinning the approach to evaluating the delivery and effectiveness of the schemes at integrating refugees into UK society. Please follow this link to read the report in full: gov.uk/evaluating-vulnerable-resettlement-schemes

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) - Access to healthcare for people seeking and refused asylum in Great Britain: a review of evidence

This research report is a review of evidence looking at the barriers people seeking or refused asylum face in trying to access healthcare services in the UK, and what may help them to do so more easily. The EHRC have also made [recommendations for what changes are needed](#) to make sure that people seeking and refused asylum have full enjoyment of their right to health. Please follow this link to access the report in full:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/access-healthcare-people-seeking-and-refused-asylum-great-britain-review>

The Guardian reports the Home Secretary's intention to review ban on asylum seekers working in the UK

The article reports his comments in the withdrawal from the EU debate when he said that, while there are no plans to remove the restrictive rules, it was an area he would like to review. Please follow this link to read the article in full: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/dec//sajid-javid-would-like-to-review-ban-on-asylum-seekers-working-in-the-uk>

Home Affairs' Committee publishes report on asylum accommodation

In its report on Asylum accommodation the Home Affairs' Committee say the Home Office needs to show greater urgency about the degrading conditions in which vulnerable people are being housed, including torture survivors, people suffering from PTSD, pregnant women and mothers with small children. Please follow this link to read the report in full: <https://www.parliament.uk/home-affairs-committee/asylum-accommodation-report>

Home Affairs' Committee publishes report into new asylum accommodation contract to replace COMPASS

The committee published a report on asylum accommodation in early 2017. In that report, they recommended local authorities be involved in developing and overseeing the replacement to the COMPASS contracts for providing asylum accommodation. They highlighted the failures of inspection and compliance to deal with properties left in a substandard, unsanitary or unsafe condition. They also warned of the pressures of clustering and uneven dispersal, and of the inequity that placed pressure on those communities where local authorities had volunteered to support asylum seekers. The procurement to replace to COMPASS began in November 2017. The committee returned to the subject of asylum accommodation due to recent concerns about the Government's handling of the process to replace COMPASS. They focus on three key issues: the contracts and the relationship between the Government and local authorities; the standards of accommodation provided for asylum seekers; and the question of fairness in the dispersal process. The committee finds that nearly two years after their previous report, little has improved and mistrust by local authorities of central government has deepened. The Government's handling of the replacement for COMPASS has led authorities to consider withdrawal from participation in the dispersal scheme. The committee recommends that local authorities should be closely involved in developing the replacement to COMPASS and have a partnership role in making decisions under the new contracts and overseeing their implementation. The committee recommends that as a first step the Government should consult local authorities on the full details of the proposed contracts before they are finalised. Please follow this link to read the report in full: <https://publications.parliament.uk/cmselect>

Films produced by separated asylum seekers and refugees for professionals

As part of the Surviving to Thriving Project, UpRising have been delivering tailored group sessions called 'Find Your Power' that introduces the idea of social action as a means to develop leadership and create change in communities. All of the programmes within the current project funding period are now complete and there are 14 unique films that have been produced by young people on the project in the East of England and Birmingham on a range of relevant topics including age assessments, loneliness, turning 18, dreams, prejudice, respect and the asylum process. They are all publicly available on this playlist on Youtube [here](#).

1 in 6 trafficked and unaccompanied children in care are reported missing in the UK – new report from ECPAT UK and Missing People

This new report, [Still in Harm's Way](#) reports that in 2017:

- 1 in 4 (24%) trafficked children were reported as going missing from care (246 of 1,015)
- 15% of unaccompanied children were reported as going missing from care (729 of 4,765)
- 190 children had not been found; almost 20% of the total number of trafficked and unaccompanied children reported missing (975)

The charities found that trafficked and unaccompanied children are much more likely to go missing than other children, including other looked after children. Over 1 in 6 (975 of 5,780) trafficked and unaccompanied children were reported missing in 2017; nearly 30 times the rate of other children, and almost double the rate of other looked after children, of whom just over 1 in 10 are reported missing. This highlights the failure of local authorities to adequately safeguard these children, who are already extremely vulnerable.

Coram Children's Legal Centre, Migrant Children's Project Newsletter – November and December 2018 issues

Please follow this link to read the latest editions of the newsletter for news, reports and training information from Coram November: <https://november-newsletter> December: <https://newsletter>

A new tool to help primary care practitioners to work with new migrant patients

Please follow this link to access this new tool from Sheffield University: <https://migrant.health/>. Please register and engage with the Q&A section as the University builds their community of practice.

Migration

Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2019 published

The full title is a bill to make provision to end rights to free movement of persons under retained EU law and to repeal other retained EU law relating to immigration; to confer power to modify retained direct EU legislation relating to social security co-ordination; and for connected purposes. Please follow this link to these overarching documents (factsheets) which relate to the bill: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-and-social-security-co-ordination-eu-withdrawal-bill>.

Home Secretary announces white paper on future skills-based immigration system

Please follow this link to read the statement on the announcement about the UK's future border and immigration system, after we leave the EU, from the Home Secretary: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/home-secretary-future-border-and-immigration-system>. The White Paper proposes a fair and humane immigration system that recognises that immigration has made huge contributions to UK society, culture and economy - stimulating growth and making the UK an outward-looking nation. Please follow this link to access the white paper in full: <https://government/uploads/The-UKs-future-skills-based-immigration-system>

The Home Office published Immigration Statistics for year ending September 2018

The data shows an increase in work-related visas granted (up 5% to over 171,000), in particular Tier 2 (Skilled) work, which increased by 7% to nearly 100,000. Nearly 9,000 certificate of sponsorship applications for skilled work in the Human Health and Social Work Activities sector (up 45%), likely resulting from the removal of doctors and nurses from the Tier 2 cap. Please follow this link to access the data in full:

[Immigration Statistics, year ending September 2018](#)

Migrants' Resource Centre (MRC) publishes Comprehensive National Migration Strategy: Immigration policy proposals

This paper has been developed by the MRC to provide a basis for discussion on the future of immigration policy in the UK. It attempts to reconcile a number of objectives: ensuring the conditions are in place for migrants and the communities they settle in to thrive, rebuilding public trust in the effective functioning of the immigration system and ensuring that the overall benefits of migration, including economic benefits, are maintained. This requires a system which acknowledges the role that migrants play in dynamic and resilient societies and the need for migrant workers across the whole economy. It also needs to recognize the existing public attitudes towards a more restrictive immigration system, as well as the nuances of these attitudes. The proposals in this paper aim to deliver a fairer immigration system that could be broadly supported across the political and social spectrum. Please follow this link to read the paper in full: <https://www.migrantsresourcecentre.org.uk/Final-Immigration-policy-proposals-1.pdf>

Advice for EU citizens about benefits and pensions in the UK in the event of a no-deal scenario

This guidance explains the rights of EU citizens in the UK to benefits and pensions if the UK leaves the EU without an agreement (a 'no deal' scenario). Please follow this link to access the guidance in full: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-citizens-in-the-uk-benefits-and-pensions-in-a-no-deal-scenario>

Statement of changes introduced on 20 December – a member of EU's household can apply for settled status

In appendix EU of the Immigrations Rules, the definition of "family member" has been amended to include members of an EU national's household. This will enable EU citizens and their family members living in the UK to remain after Brexit. To read more about this, please follow this link to Free Movement's analysis: freemovement.org.uk/a-member-of-an-eu-national's-household-can-apply-for-settled-status/

Please follow this link to read the statement of changes in full:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statement-of-changes-to-the-immigration-rules-hc-1849-20-december-2018>

National Audit Office report on the handling of the Windrush situation

Under the Immigration Act 1971, which came into force in 1973, Commonwealth immigrants already settled in the UK were given indefinite leave to remain, but many were not issued with documentation, and the Home Office kept no records of these individuals' status. Over the last 10 years the government has further reformed immigration policies according to the principle that the right to live, work and access services in the UK should only be available to those migrants who are eligible. In early 2018, the media began to report stories of people who had come to the UK from the Commonwealth, being denied access to public services, being detained in the UK or at the border, or being removed from, or refused re-entry to, the UK. It was reported that these people did not have the paperwork to prove their right to reside in the UK. In April 2018, the government acknowledged that the Windrush generation had been treated unfairly and set up a taskforce to help individuals to resolve their immigration status. 2,658 people have been through the Windrush taskforce and were granted citizenship or leave to remain as of the end of September 2018. 164 people had been detained or removed since 2002 and 18 were considered to have suffered detriment such as being detained or removed. Please follow this link to read the report in full: <https://www.nao.org.uk/Handling-of-the-Windrush-situation-Summary.pdf>

Immigration health surcharge to double from January 2019

The immigration health surcharge will double on 8 January 2019. The extra fee paid by visa applicants to fund the NHS will rise to £400 a year, up from £200, for applications made on or after that date. Students and those on the Youth Mobility Scheme pay £300 (up from £150). Please follow this link to read the details as outlined by Free Movement: <https://www.freemovement.org.uk/immigration-health-surcharge-increase>

National Insurance number allocations to adult overseas nationals to September 2018

National Insurance numbers issued to applicants from the EU has dropped by 22% over the last year, whereas non-EU applicants are up by 2%. Please follow this link to access the data in full: www.gov.uk/national-insurance-number-allocations-to-adult-overseas-nationals

Events

Working with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC): triple planning – 11 January, Birmingham

This course is for all those who are involved in working with unaccompanied asylum seeking children and care leavers, who will be involved in undertaking needs assessments and pathway planning. The course covers relevant legislation and best practice, and will explore the implications of the introduction of the Immigration Act 2016. Participants gain an understanding of how to plan for the three possible outcomes for those with uncertain immigration status beyond the age of 18, including considerations when undertaking lawful assessments of educational need, and best practice when preparing young people for return to country of origin. Please follow this link for more information and to book a place: <http://entraideuk.org.uk/training-and-consultancy-best-practice-in-working-with-uasc>

British Red Cross and Luton New Migration Partnership Services Fair – 16 January, Luton

This fair will publicise services available to refugees and asylum seekers in Luton and is to take place from 11:00-14:00 at the Salvation Army, 1 Vicarage St, LU1 3HZ. Please email to book a stall or RSVP to e: RSenquiriesluton@redcross.org.uk.

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD): torn from home – 25 January, Ipswich

This commemoration will be held between 12.30 and 2.00 pm, at University of Suffolk, Waterfront Building, Lecture Theatre 2. The theme for this year's HMD is 'Torn from Home'. All are welcome.

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Strategic Funding Framework Open House – 28 February, Ely

This Open House event will launch the HLF's new Strategic Funding Framework to stakeholders in the East of England. This event will take place at The Maltings, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4BB. There will be a session in the morning and one in the afternoon – more details to follow in the New Year. Both sessions will follow the same format and will be a chance to hear about our new Strategic Funding Framework and ask questions. Since 1994, HLF has awarded over £543 million to more than 4,000 projects in the East of England.

Next steps for UK immigration policy - routes to migration, access to skills and priorities for enforcement – 30 April, London

Delegates at this conference will discuss the future for the UK's immigration framework - for both EU and non-EU migration - as Government considers priorities for immigration policy post-Brexit. The seminar will be an opportunity to assess Government's immigration White Paper. It also follows publication of the Migration Advisory Committee report on [European Economic Area \(EEA\) migration in the UK](#), which recommended that EU workers should be subject to the same visa rules as other migrants and an end to the cap on the number of high-skilled migrants coming to the UK. Attendees will discuss the future of immigration from the EU, including the effectiveness of the [Settled Status Programme](#) - which ensures the right to remain for EU citizens already settled in Britain - both currently and in the face of future expected demand for applications. Please follow this link to book a place: <http://www.westminsterforumprojects.co.uk/book/UK-immigration-2019>

Funding

Asylum, migration and integration fund (AMIF): documents and guidance

The AMIF is a European Union fund designed to help member states manage migration - by implementing, strengthening and developing a common EU approach to asylum and migration. The AMIF UK Responsible Authority is inviting proposals for projects to be supported through the fund. These projects may last up to 3 years, coming to an end by 31 December 2022. Organisations wishing to submit an application must contact the UKRA on e: AMIFcallforintegration@homeoffice.gov.uk, to express their interest. Interested organisations will be sent further information on how to apply when the call opens on 9 January 2019. The AMIF UK Responsible Authority will run a series of workshops to help organisations understand what makes a good application. These workshops will start at 11:00 am and last approximately 2 hours. The workshops planned are as follows:

- Thursday 10 January and Thursday 7 March 2019 – London
- Thursday 24 January 2019 – Manchester, and Thursday 31 January 2019 – Liverpool
- Wednesday 30 January 2019 – Birmingham
- Wednesday 06 February 2019 – Newcastle, and Thursday 07 February 2019 – Leeds
- Thursday 21 February 2019 – Glasgow
- Thursday 04 April 2019 - Bristol

For more information, please follow this link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2014-to-2020>. Please follow this link to access additional guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-documents-and-guidance>

EU Settlement Scheme - Grant Funding launch

The grant scheme, where voluntary and community sector organisations can apply for funding to support EU Settlement Scheme applications from vulnerable or at-risk EU citizens and their families, has opened. See the following link for more information: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/dcc90ff7-c416-465a-ad92-9dd7f15bcce7>. Relevant organisations will have until **12pm on 1 February 2019** to put in their bid. Funding will be for one year from 01 April 2019, and all funding must be spent within the 2019/20 financial year. The Home Office will expect funded organisations to report on the volumes of vulnerable applicants they have engaged, as well as the success of that engagement and the number of completed applications that have been submitted through their direct support.

University of Suffolk asylum seeker support scholarships available for 2019/20 academic year

For the 2019/20 academic year, the University of Suffolk is offering two Scholarships (one undergraduate and one postgraduate) for students who are seeking asylum in the UK, and who are not eligible to receive financial support from Student Finance England. The successful applicants will receive:

- A 100% tuition fee-waiver.
- The University of Suffolk Bursary of £500 per year of study*

This Scholarship will be awarded to a student until s/he is able to access support from Student Finance England. S/he will be required to apply for student support from Student Finance England in the following academic year.

*All *undergraduate* students who are seeking asylum in the UK will be eligible to receive the University of Suffolk Bursary. Please follow this link for more information: www.uos.ac.uk/university-suffolk-asylum-seeker-support

Jobs

Refugee Council Project Worker, Resettlement Team Hertfordshire. Full-time, 35 hours per week. Fixed term until March 2020. Grade/Salary: 5 £24,657 - £28,221

The UK government has committed itself to a Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme whereby people fleeing persecution from Syria are selected and processed in the region of origin and brought to the UK with their status already determined, as well as the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme. This scheme resettles children and adults from the Middle East and North Africa region, with a particular focus on supporting vulnerable children at risk and their families. The resettlement team provides advice and support for resettled refugees to help them access services and mainstream provision, and establish community links. Working with local stakeholders and in partnership with other voluntary sector agencies running similar services across the UK, the Refugee Council resettlement team promotes both the integration and independence of this group. The Refugee Council has agreed to work in partnership with Hertfordshire local authorities to deliver the regional programme.. This post will report to the project manager in Hertfordshire. For more information, please click on the attached Job Description and Person Specification. [10.12 PW JD Hertfordshire Nov 2018](#). The closing date for applications is **07 January 2019**.

Refugee Council Psychological Therapist. Ipswich. £100 per session – 5 days per month

The postholder will provide a psychological therapy service to Syrian refugees who have been re-settled in Suffolk under the resettlement programme. The role will involve offering a holistic assessment, therapy of up to 12 weeks and working closely with colleagues working in the VPRS to ensure individuals and families are accessing appropriate support and advice. The work involves working with both adults and young people. Fortnightly clinical supervision is offered. This role is 5 days per month, with one shift per week and one extra shift each month. This post is subject to a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service check. Repeat checks are initiated every two years. For more information please click on the attached job description and person specification - [Therapeutic Service VPRS Sessional JD Ipswich Dec](#). The closing date for applications is **10 January**.

Regional Migration Manager – East Midlands Councils. £46,608.00

The East Midlands works with the Government to put in place equitable and effective arrangements for asylum and refugee resettlement. East Midlands Councils is now offering an opportunity for someone with the right skills and attributes to strategically lead the management and delivery of migration programmes. As the region's principal adviser on matters relating to asylum and refugee resettlement, you will be responsible for building and maintaining partnerships with Home Office, East Midlands' local authorities and partner organisations. Working with senior decision makers from local and national Government, you will be responsible for developing and overseeing arrangements that include asylum dispersal, Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme, the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and associated refugee resettlement programmes. Requiring a blend of programme and financial management, with experience of managing priorities and team performance to meet deadlines; for this role, we are seeking someone with an understanding of relevant policy and legislation frameworks, and with a record of achievement in partnership development and management. East Midlands Councils has a friendly and professional working environment, where people have the autonomy and opportunity to influence their work to make a difference. For an informal discussion about this role, contact Stuart Young, Executive Director on 01664-502620. We do not accept CVs. The closing date for applications is **25 January 2019**. Please follow this link for more information and to apply: <http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/Jobs-EMC-East-Midlands-Councils/Regional-Migration-Manager/51423>

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