

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

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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 refugee resettlement

Wellbeing and Work for Refugee Integration – new Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) employment project for refugees across the East of England

The Strategic Migration Partnership has secured funding to deliver a region-wide project to overcome the barriers to employment to facilitate more refugees moving from benefits into employment.

The AMIF project, which is ultimately funded by the European Union but administered in the UK by the UK Responsible Authority (UKRA), will run from April 2020 until December 2022 and will have three strands which are being delivered by partners across the region:

1. A mental health and wellbeing programme to overcome the effects of past trauma and allow refugees to move forward into good mental health and improve their confidence, recognising that a good job can help restore a sense of purpose and self-worth.
2. A network of employment advisers to assess refugees' past skills and experience, identify gaps, look at the opportunities in the local job market and produce action plans to move refugees into training and work; this strand also includes employer liaison officers to build relationships with employers of all kinds in the region and facilitate connections with employers willing to give refugees work experience leading to employment.
3. A series of "English and Skills" courses for various industries. The aim of these courses is to ensure refugees have the specific skills they need to enter a particular industry. The first course has already been produced and facilitates work in the hospitality sector, including obtaining a food hygiene certificate. The other industries have yet to be decided but may include health and social care, childcare with a focus on nurseries, construction industry with CSCS cards and logistics/warehousing/factory work.

For more information on the project see our website: <https://smp.eelga.gov.uk/refugees/well-being-and-work-for-refugee-integration-project/>

Immigration statistics, year ending March 2020

There were 35,099 asylum applications (main applicants only) in the UK in the year ending March 2020, 11% more than the previous year, but lower than the recent peak in the year ending June 2016 (36,546). In the year ending March 2020, 54% of initial decisions on asylum applications were grants of asylum, humanitarian protection or alternative forms of leave (such as discretionary leave or UASC leave). This was the highest initial decision grant rate on record, up from 39% in the previous year.

The Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) accounted for over three-quarters (4,030) of those resettled in the UK in year ending March 2020. 19,768 refugees have been resettled since the government announced the target of resettling 20,000 refugees under the scheme. The East of England has resettled 957 people under VPRS and 100 under VCRS (1057 in total).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2020/how-many-people-do-we-grant-asylum-or-protection-to>

An additional one-off report will be published on 28 May 2020, providing a statistical overview of COVID-19 impacts on the immigration system through to the end of April 2020. The information in this additional report is designed to provide an overview of the key impacts on the immigration system of the pandemic of COVID-19 in the UK and the introduction of lockdown measures in March and April 2020.

Asylum Accommodation & Support Factsheet for Strategic Migration Partnerships

The factsheet is now available on our website. Please follow this link for further details:

<https://smp.eelga.gov.uk/covid-19/> and click on the 'Asylum' tab.

UPDATED NHS Coronavirus information translated by Doctors of the World in partnership with the British Red Cross

Further to recent changes in the Government and NHS official guidance on COVID-19, Doctors of the World UK have been updating its translated guidance in 60 languages. The updated version includes changes in social distancing rules and the new symptom of coronavirus. Please note the guidance is valid across the UK.

You can find these resources on <https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/coronavirus-information/>

Please check the list of languages on the website to see if the language has been updated, but all languages will be ready in a couple of days. Audio/video recordings and animated messages for migrants in different languages will be ready soon.

Information on COVID-19 testing and treatment being free of charge, irrespective of immigration status translated into 40 languages

Please visit the PHE Migrant Health Guide <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-entitlements-migrant-health-guide#main-messages> under sub-heading 'Translated advice and guidance for the public' to access the full set of languages. These translations are based on the simplified message in English available on the NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/visiting-or-moving-to-england/visitors-from-outside-the-european-economic-area-eea/>

COVID-19 Infographics

A group of doctors, medical students and volunteers have created infographics to help summarise key points about COVID-19 in a variety of languages to get the right information, in an easy to understand format, to these communities. Follow this link to see available resources: <https://covid19graphics.info/>

Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance

The guidance applies to staff working in education, childcare and children's social care settings in England, the children, young people and learners who attend these settings and their parents or carers. It explains the strategy for infection prevention and control, including the specific circumstances PPE should be used, and thus work safely during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

Free school meals for NRPF children

The Department for Education (DfE) has announced that it is temporarily extending free school meal eligibility during the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes some children of groups who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF), including children of families with no recourse to public funds with a right to remain in the UK on grounds of private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and; children of families receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 who are also subject to a no recourse to public funds restriction. Full details are available in the DfE's updated guidance (see link below). The guidance includes further information on how the extension to eligibility is being applied; and more detailed operational guidance for schools, including a sample application and self-declaration that can be used to support free school meal applications from these families.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance>

International Family Tracing Service (IFTS)

Following government advice on Coronavirus the International Family Tracing Service have currently suspended all face to face appointments and will be updating their referral criteria as soon as possible; this is likely to prioritise the most urgent cases. IFTS are looking at ways to continue working with service users on the phone over the coming weeks.

Please contact: 07595 27 89 30; Email: IFTCNS@redcross.org.uk Please cc abainbridge@redcross.org.uk

Home Secretary announces visa extensions for frontline health and care workers

Free visa extensions will be automatically granted to more crucial overseas health and care workers. Frontline workers, including midwives, radiographers, social workers and pharmacists, with visas due to expire before 1 October 2020 will receive an automatic one-year extension. It will apply to those working both in the NHS and independent sector and include their family members. This builds on the Home Secretary's announcement in March for NHS doctors, nurses and paramedics. All will be exempt for the Immigration Health Surcharge for the duration of the exemption.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for UK visa applicants and temporary UK residents

This is advice for visa customers and applicants in the UK, visa customers outside of the UK and British nationals overseas who need to apply for a passport affected by travel restrictions associated with coronavirus.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents>

East of England Strategic Migration Partnership website COVID-19 guidance

Please check our website for latest COVID-19 translated materials, information and updates.

<https://smp.eelga.gov.uk/covid-19/>

Migrant Help AIRE newsletter May issue

Migrant Help are committed to keeping stakeholders informed about the transition to the AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) contract to support asylum seekers in the UK. Read their latest newsletter about the progress they are making by following this link: <https://www.migranthelpuk.org/news/aire-news>

Migration

EU Settlement Scheme statistics

The Home Office has now (14 May 2020) received more than 3.5 million applications to the EU Settlement Scheme, according to the latest internal figures. The milestone has been reached with over a year still to go until the 30 June 2021 deadline.

Alongside this announcement, the Home Office has also released the most recent quarterly statistics report, providing more detailed information on the progress of the EU Settlement Scheme. This quarterly publication complements the high-level monthly statistical releases on the progress of the scheme and takes a more in-depth look at the total number of applications and their outcomes.

This report provides breakdowns of total and concluded applications by:

- Nationality
- UK country
- Age group
- Local authority
- Outcome type

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics>

EU Settlement Scheme: looked-after children and care leavers guidance

Guidance for local authorities and health and social care trusts to make sure looked-after children and care leavers apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers-guidance>

‘Brexit: What you need to know as an EU citizen living in the UK’ updated leaflet from EU delegation to the UK

The booklet is now available in 23 European languages. Please follow this link to download the leaflet in English and/or any other language(s) listed: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8f5b72ed-8ada-11ea-812f-01aa75ed71a1>

Two further booklets have been produced and are now waiting for final approval from Brussels before they can be published and translated. These focus on senior citizens and 3rd country nationals who are family members of EU nationals.

There is also a Facebook page called European Union in the UK. It has the library of videos on the rights of EU citizens and family members who reside in the UK. It includes some practical questions and answers related to the EU settlement scheme: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/EUinUK/522581808440122/>

The Facebook page also has another library of short videos for EU citizens in the UK about Brexit called ‘EU citizens ask the immigration lawyer’. EU citizens ask the immigration lawyer about the EU settlement scheme and other issues related to Brexit: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/EUinUK/2319000375014379/>

Immigration rules changes widening access to the EU settlement scheme to victims of domestic violence or abuse

On 14 May updates to the Immigration Rules were laid in Parliament, which includes changes to the EU Settlement Scheme. The rule changes will widen access to the scheme to victims of domestic violence or abuse. If a family member’s relationship with an EEA citizen breaks down permanently as a result of domestic violence or abuse, this, coupled with their own continuous residence in the UK, will be recognised as part of their application. This is consistent with the Government’s wider commitment to tackling domestic violence and abuse as well as protecting and supporting victims of it.

The rule changes also mean that a family member applying to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) or for an EUSS family permit may also be required to provide a certified English translation of (or a Multilingual Standard Form to accompany) a document as evidence of the relevant family relationship.

In addition, the rule changes mean that family members of British or dual British-Irish citizens who are people of Northern Ireland will be able to apply for status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

This delivers on the commitment the UK Government made in the ‘New Decade, New Approach’ agreement in January 2020 which restored the power sharing executive in Northern Ireland.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885020/CS207_CCS0520583832-002_Explanatory_Memo_to_CP_232_PRINT.pdf

Support for modern slavery victims affected by coronavirus

Individuals supported through the modern slavery victim care contract will be allowed to stay in government-funded safe accommodation for the next three months, as the government steps up measures to protect the vulnerable from coronavirus. Through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) individuals are able to access support including accommodation for at least 45 days if found to be potential victims. Where they would ordinarily be assisted to move on from their accommodation, this temporary change will ensure that these individuals remain safely in accommodation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-victims-of-modern-slavery>

Events & Training

Engaging Migrant Communities in the Context of Covid-19: Lessons from the Field

The International Organization for Migration - UN Migration would like to invite you to attend their 90-minute webinar in which they explore the importance of migrant community engagement, as learned in previous pandemic responses. This will include information on successful methodologies for engaging migrant communities during a pandemic, case studies detailing how culture informs pandemic responses, and further resources to help support the success of local COVID-19 response measures.

Please follow the link below to all upcoming webinar dates, which will be updated on a regular basis as IOM continue schedule more. Current dates are as follows:

10 June 2020 at 2:00pm, 18 June 2020 at 3:00pm, 23 June 2020 at 2:00pm & 30 June 2020 at 3:00pm

https://iomint-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/mradke_iom_int/EbDEQh9_W6NNi1JihSWHWxMbc3JGZ5Q3DoqqQ-vZFy-O8Q?e=dbYXvd

Free complex casework training for EU Settlement Scheme from Greater London Authority

The GLA is delighted to launch their programme of free complex casework training for the EU Settlement Scheme, developed by legal partners Here For Good and supported by the EU Delegation to the UK.

Since the Brexit referendum, the EU citizens' rights sector has done an incredible job in supporting vulnerable and at-risk EU, EEA and Swiss citizens, as well as their family members. As you will appreciate, however, the months ahead are arguably the most challenging in helping the most vulnerable secure their rights in the UK. Many of those still left to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme face additional barriers to obtaining their correct status, but existing advice and support services are under extreme pressure given the scale of the challenge and the complexity of some cases. As such, it is vital that the sector is upskilled and as much capacity is created as possible.

Delivered via Zoom by Here for Good's team of experienced immigration solicitors, these sessions are open to all organisations and individuals across the UK, and will equip caseworkers to effectively support those with complex cases in at-risk groups, including children in care, the elderly, and applicants with criminal records.

Designed to complement existing OISC training, these short sessions are a great opportunity for professional development within the sector and can serve as a basis from which to gain further OISC accreditation if desired.

Registration is now open for sessions taking place throughout June and July at www.london.gov.uk/EUSS

Your organisation will be able to sign up multiple individuals using the same form. After registration, you'll receive a confirmation email, and we will follow up before your chosen session(s) with details on how to access the Zoom meeting and training resources.

Responding to Covid-19 Online Programme: UK Migration & Refugee Sector - 13 July - 30 September 2020

This free, online leadership programme seeks to strengthen leadership skills and organisations to cope with the immense pressure and learn together about how to respond and lead. People who are part of the UK migration and refugee sector are invited to apply to take part in a free leadership programme this summer. The programme will provide the leadership tools, skills and development to overcome challenges, and to foster relationships that benefit organisations and the sector as a whole.

For further information and to apply follow this link:

https://www.cloresocialleadership.org.uk/programmes/responding-to-covid-19-online-programme-uk-migration-refugee-sector?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=post&utm_campaign=migration_refugee_programme

Funding

FY20-21 EU Settlement Scheme Grant Funding

On Friday 6 March 2020, the Home Office announced a further £8 million of funding to help vulnerable EU citizens apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) for the 2020-2021 financial year.

The new £8 million of funding will ensure that those who are the most vulnerable continue to receive a wide range of support online, over the phone and in person to help them apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

The bidding process for this funding will be launched in early May 2020. In light of COVID-19, we have decided to extend the competitive bidding process to allow a longer period of time for bids to be submitted.

Funding will be available to Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations willing to support vulnerable EU citizens and their family members with making EUSS applications.

Funding will also be available across the UK for Local Authorities (LAs) and local government associations or organisations providing support services (or equivalents in the Devolved Administrations).

The Home Office is making a level of continuity funding available to the existing 57 Grant-Funded Organisations through to the end of September 2020. As a result, the competitive bidding process will be for up to £4.5 million and will initially cover the period 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021.

For more information on the grant funding, please see the Contract Finder Notice on GOV.UK.:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/785b4e05-e2a2-4ff3-a13e-d2e036223d43>

Funding for Racial Justice Initiatives

Applications are now being accepted for a new Fund that provides financial support to individuals and organisations that are working to redress the impact of COVID-19 and beyond on those who identify as People of Colour (POC).

During the first round of funding, a total of £500,000 will be awarded to:

- Historic and newly formed people of colour led organisations who are at risk of closure because of COVID-19 and the impending recession.
- Community organisations, businesses and enterprises that are built on the social relationships, intergenerational knowledge and lived experience of people of colour in their work and infrastructure.
- Community groups and community-led organisations that are led by people of colour or whose efforts are working towards racial justice and equity to continue their work.
- Organisations, networks, and community groups that offer vital services and spaces of refuge to communities of colour; especially those who experience multiple forms of marginalisation. These include migrant rights groups, support in detention centres, LGBTQI groups, faith groups, advocates and those responding on issues affecting people of colour disproportionately (e.g., detentions, policing, gentrification, physical and mental health).

Three types of funding are available:

- Emergency and Recovery Funding: Grants of between £5,000 and £30,000 for organisations looking for smaller investments or for emergency funding, needed to sustain themselves and meet the needs of people of colour within the coronavirus/COVID-19 crisis.
- Long Term Structural Change Funding: Grants of between £30,000 and £50,000 for organisations and ideas that present transformational and radical alternatives that will support people of colour, creating solutions for change on a systemic level. This can include emergency funding required to sustain organisations who are working to make long-term structural change for communities of colour.
- Funding for Individuals: Grants of between £5,000 and £30,000 for individuals who identify as change-makers, activists, innovators, social leaders, ecosystem builders and artists who are carrying out their work outside of existing organisational structures.

<http://www.resourcingracialjustice.org/apply>

Jobs

Wellbeing and Work for Refugee Integration (WW4RI) Invitation to subcontract for Refugee Employment Adviser and Skills Assessor for Bedfordshire

We have an opportunity now open to tender to deliver Employment Advice to refugees and third country nationals in Bedfordshire. Deadline: 19 June 2020.

Please follow this link for details of the opportunity and how to apply:

<https://mk0eelgasmp5kqjergvs.kinstacdn.com/app/uploads/2020/05/Employment-Adviser.pdf>

Wellbeing and Work for Refugee Integration (WW4RI) Invitation to subcontract for ESOL tutoring

We have an opportunity open to tender for one or more sub-contractor to deliver the ESOL and skills programme for beneficiaries in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Suffolk. Bids will be considered from those working face to face, virtually or a blended approach. Deadline: 26 June 2020.

Please follow this link for more information about how to apply:

<https://mk0eelgasmp5kqjergvs.kinstacdn.com/app/uploads/2020/05/ESOL-tutor.pdf>

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