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The Newsflash is a bi-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.

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Asylum Seekers and Refugees – including refugee resettlement

Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme

The Home Office has announced further details of the [Afghan citizens resettlement scheme \(ACRS\)](#) which will provide protection for people at risk and identified as in need. The ACRS will prioritise those people who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan who face a particular risk from the Taliban, for example because of their stand for democracy and human rights, or because of their gender, sexuality, or religion. The Government has committed to welcome around 5,000 people in the first year and up to 20,000 over the coming years. Anyone who is resettled through the ACRS will receive indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK and will be able to apply for British citizenship after 5 years in the UK under existing rules. The route will be kept under constant review and will be operationally flexible given the challenging circumstances.

Prioritisation and referral for resettlement will be in one of three ways:

- Vulnerable and at-risk individuals who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme will be the first to be resettled under the ACRS. People who were notified by the UK government that they had been called forward or specifically authorised for evacuation, but were not able to board flights, will also be offered a place under the scheme if they subsequently come to the UK.
- Secondly, the government will work with the UNHCR to identify people most at risk and refer them for resettlement, replicating the approach the UK has taken in response to the conflict in Syria.
- Finally, the government will work with our international partners in the region to implement a referral process for those inside Afghanistan (where safe passage can be arranged), and for those who have recently fled to countries in the region. This process will likely be affected by the ongoing situation within Afghanistan.

This scheme will run alongside the [Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy \(ARAP\)](#) scheme, which launched on 1 April 2021 and which has already resettled thousands of Afghans who have worked with the UK Government, and their families. The ACRS scheme is not yet open. Further details will be announced in due course.

Department for Work and Pensions support for those arriving from Afghanistan

Work is underway across the whole of government to ensure the Afghans who stood side by side with the UK in conflict, their families and those at highest risk who have been evacuated, are supported as they now rebuild their lives in the UK. The Department for Work and Pensions are also very aware of the large number of UK nationals who were also evacuated from Afghanistan in connection with the collapse of the Afghan government on 15 August 2021, who needed to leave Afghanistan suddenly.

Those arriving in the UK from Afghanistan, either as part of the repatriation efforts, or under one of the relocation and resettlement schemes have arrived under difficult circumstances. In response to this, departments have legislated to exempt those arriving from Afghanistan from the usual residency tests which restrict access certain benefits for new arrivals to the UK, including Universal Credit.

The changes ensure that individuals arriving under one of the relocation and resettlement schemes are exempt from the residency tests for:

- DWP means-tested benefits, including Universal Credit and Housing Benefit
- disability and carer benefits
- child benefit
- homelessness assistance
- social housing

This means that individuals who arrive under one of the Afghan relocation and resettlement schemes will meet the residency requirements and be able to access these benefits and services when they arrive in the UK. An exception to this is the provision for immediate eligibility for housing assistance in Wales, where this will be the case from mid-October 2021.

For further information on support from the Department for Work and Pensions, click [here](#). Further information on the UK government's [Operation Warm Welcome](#) can be found on GOV UK.



Bell Foundation ESOL programme focuses on refugee education and employment

The Strategic Migration Partnership/East of England Local Government Association is delighted to have been awarded funding for a qualitative evaluation of the [Well being and Work for Refugee Integration Project](#) by the Bell Foundation, which is based in Cambridge. The first projects funded in their new [ESOL Programme](#) all focus on refugee education and employment. Additional information can be found [here](#)

Neighbours for Newcomers launches new pilot programme to welcome refugee nurses joining the NHS

Neighbours for Newcomers - N4N, provides a new way for people seeking sanctuary to arrive in the UK. The newcomers are nurses who have fled their home countries and are coming to the UK on Skilled Worker visas to work in NHS Trusts. They will be working at hospitals in Dewsbury, Great Yarmouth, Hillingdon, North London, Norwich, Oldham and Portsmouth.

Working with the local NHS Trust hospital, [Reset Communities and Refugees](#) will match the needs of these newcomers to groups of volunteer neighbours who have knowledge and experience of their local community.

Neighbour volunteers will be offering a friendly welcome to these newly arrived nurses. Groups of up to 5 volunteers will ensure that their new neighbour settles into their home and feels confident in the neighbourhood. Neighbours offer companionship as the newcomers establish their life here.

To read more about the launch, click [here](#)

Refugee Family Reunification in the UK: Challenges and Prospects – report by Families Together and the University of Bedfordshire

This [report](#) provides a holistic picture of the many challenges faced by refugees who wish to be reunited with their family members under the UK immigration system, and the challenges faced by the legal professionals and organisations which seek to support them.

The authors said: "In the United Kingdom, the legal and policy framework regulating family reunification for refugees and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection has been the subject of extensive debate – and criticism – for some years. Common concerns raised by refugees, refugee support charities and independent observers include the restrictive rules on eligibility, the unnecessarily burdensome nature of the application process, the lack of free qualified legal support and the unpredictability of the decision-making process.

"This report aims to contribute to this debate by providing a comprehensive assessment of the UK legal framework relating to refugee family reunification and its implementation in practice, including the position in respect of legal aid, and the availability of qualified assistance in making applications for family reunification."

For an overview of the report, click [here](#)

Asylum backlog passes 70,000 – Free Movement

The backlog of asylum cases has passed 70,000 despite a fall in the annual number of applications.

Almost 71,000 asylum seekers, including dependants, were awaiting an initial decision on their claim for refugee status as of 30 June 2021, according to new Home Office [figures](#). The overall backlog has doubled in just a couple of years - at the end of 2018, the figure was 36,000.

The rise in pending cases comes despite the number of new applications remaining below pre-pandemic levels. The flow of asylum claims into the system rose in the second quarter of 2021, but remains well below the 2019 peak. The running total in the year ending 30 June 2021 is lower than the number for the year to 30 June 2020.

A different measure of the backlog — asylum seekers waiting for more than six months for an initial decision — also shows an alarming rise. The number of people in this position is up almost 40% year-on-year, to 54,000.

Read more of this article by Free Movement [here](#)

The latest release of the asylum and resettlement datasets is available [here](#)



House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee inquiry – Equality and the UK asylum process

MPs on the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee are to scrutinise the current UK asylum process, investigating how far individuals fleeing persecution are able to seek asylum in the UK in a safe and fair manner.

The Committee is seeking evidence about the nature and extent of asylum claims from people with diverse characteristics, for example age, race, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment, and different groups' experiences of the asylum process in the UK. It will assess how far the Government is able to address discrimination or specific dangers for those with protected characteristics within the existing system. The inquiry will also consider any early evidence about people's experiences of the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme.

You can read more about this call for evidence [here](#). Evidence can be submitted until **Monday 8 November 2021**.

The Committee is also looking for Specialist Advisers for its inquiry into equality and the UK asylum process. For further information, click [here](#)

High Court has concluded that a trafficking victim who is also an asylum seeker must be granted permission to stay in the UK

In the case [R \(KTT\) v Secretary of State for the Home Department \[2021\] EWHC 2722 \(Admin\)](#), the claimant KTT argued that when a trafficking victim has claimed asylum, it is necessary for them to stay in the UK while that claim is considered. As a result, there is an obligation, as a matter of international law under Article 14(1)(a), to grant permission to trafficking victims who have also claimed asylum. The judge found that failure to comply with the requirements of Article 14(1)(a) was a breach of domestic law.

Further comment by Free Movement is available [here](#)

UNHCR Legal Observations on the Nationality and Borders Bill

Through the publication of comprehensive legal analysis UNHCR has warned that the Nationality and Borders Bill undermines the 1951 Refugee Convention, the agreement which has protected refugees for decades and of which the UK is a signatory. The UNHCR are concerned that if implemented, the policies would risk the lives and well-being of vulnerable people. UNHCR believes this Bill would undermine, not promote, the Government's stated goal of improving protection for those at risk of persecution. Read their full report [here](#)

Migration

Routes: new ways to talk about Covid for better health – London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine seeking migrant workers for paid research project

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine would like to talk to migrant workers to understand their experiences of COVID and the pandemic response, because they are not always well served by healthcare services. The researchers are particularly interested in talking to migrant workers in precarious jobs (e.g. zero hours contracts, informal economy).

The researchers are seeking migrant workers who might be interested in participating in this research: either being interviewed for about an hour or participating in a group discussion and will pay £40 per interview, or £40 for participation in a group discussion, as cash or a voucher. If anyone from organisations supporting migrant workers would like to participate as a key informant, please get in touch to discuss how that might work too. Funds are available to support organisational involvement.

The project is funded by DHSC (Department of Health and Social Care) but is independent and not part of health services. For more information or if you have any questions, please contact the team at depth@lshtm.ac.uk or call Sam on 07926 542343.



NRPF Connect data report

NRPF Connect is the national database for councils to record details of households with no recourse to public funds that are being provided with accommodation and financial support by social services.

This [report](#) is based on an analysis of the collective data provided by 68 councils that were using the database during the financial year 2020-21.

The data demonstrates that councils in England and Scotland play an essential role in safeguarding the welfare of destitute families, care leavers, and adults with care needs, who are excluded from mainstream benefits due to their immigration status. People who have no recourse to public funds can experience destitution and/or homelessness, and, in many cases, will have complex immigration cases. However, councils are not funded by the UK government to provide accommodation and financial support to people with no recourse to public funds. Effective support provision also requires a specialist response so that people are assisted to achieve a sustainable outcome to their situation of destitution in the UK, which, as the data demonstrates, for many will be by obtaining leave to remain.

This report presents the headline figures nationally and regionally with an analysis of the trends. Recommendations informed by the data are made for the UK Government, to help reduce this cost pressure on local government, and for councils to help improve service planning.

More than £36 million offered in compensation to the Windrush generation

The Windrush Compensation Scheme paid more than £1.5 million in the month of August – bringing the total amount paid and offered to more than £36 million.

Changes made to the compensation scheme in December 2020 included increasing the minimum payment to £10,000 - 40 times greater than the previous minimum award available. Within 6 weeks of the changes being announced, offers for compensation increased by £6.17 million to more than £12 million at the end of January 2021.

Total payments have also risen rapidly since the changes were announced. Since the end of December 2020, the Home Office has paid more than 9 times the total amount previously distributed throughout the lifetime of the scheme, which began in April 2019.

In August 2021 the Home Secretary announced that anyone seeking compensation for the losses and impacts they suffered because they were unable to demonstrate their lawful status can do so indefinitely, by removing the formal end date. She also announced further improvements to the compensation scheme including changes to the primary claim form to make it easier to complete for applicants and easier for caseworkers to process.

Click [here](#) to read more on this.

For the data on claims and payments made under the Windrush Compensation Scheme up to September 2021, please click [here](#)

Fostering inclusive post-pandemic labour markets is central to reversing the heavy economic impact of COVID-19 on migrants & refugees in Europe – Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Europe report

The fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has led to Europe's largest one-year economic contraction since the Second World War. While historically large investments by EU governments in job retention measures have temporarily cushioned the blow, this also means the full labour market effects of the crisis remain to be seen. What is clear is that the pandemic has exacerbated the labour market challenges already facing some immigrant groups, including recently arrived refugees, migrant women and those with limited digital literacy.

As Europe plans for the post-pandemic recovery, strategic efforts will be crucial to reverse disruptions to migrant integration and heightened labour market vulnerabilities, a new Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Europe study finds. The report, [Taking the Long View: Options for inclusive post-pandemic labour markets](#), examines the factors that have contributed to the precarious situation of many immigrants and refugees in Europe and offers recommendations for incorporating these groups into the post-pandemic workforce.



Nationality and Borders Bill: equality impact assessment

Published on 16 September 2021, this is an overarching [Equality Impact Assessment](#) (EIA) of policies in the Government's New Plan for Immigration. This EIA is a live document, which reflects the consideration of a range of data and evidence, including responses to the public consultation on the Plan, which ran between 24 March and 6 May 2021. In addition to considering the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act, the assessment has also considered vulnerability, as recommended in the Windrush Lessons Learned Review.

Feedback on this EIA is welcomed. Please send comments to: NPIEqualities@homeoffice.gov.uk

Underground Lives: Forgotten Children – Report by Hestia

Hestia have published their new report which explores the inter-generational impact of Modern Slavery entitled 'Underground Lives: Forgotten Children.' Last year Hestia supported 1,200 dependent children but they estimate that there could be over 5,000 vulnerable children in the system, with possibly many more who are unknown to us. Very little is known about these children and the impact of the trauma they and their mothers have been through. Read the full report [here](#).

Changes for family members applying under the EU Settlement Scheme

Changes to Appendix EU and Appendix EU (Family Permit) to the Immigration Rules come into force on 6 October 2021. As far as Appendix EU is concerned, the first major change concerns those seeking indefinite leave to enter or remain under paragraph EU11A as a joining family member, or limited leave under Para EU14A. Such applicants still need to meet the same family relationship and residence requirements, but the requirement not to be in the UK as a visitor will be removed.

It is not clear how much of an impact this amendment will have, however family members will have been affected by travel disruptions and restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and this easing may assist those seeking to re-establish their rights of residence in the UK who may have ended up returning to the UK as visitors. As a consequence, the definition of "visitor" will also be deleted from Annex 1.

The next set of changes all relate to the definition (in Annex 1) and the use (in all other relevant paragraphs of Appendix EU) of a "relevant document". This is a document that some categories of applicants, such as dependent relatives, must have in order to have their family relationship recognised. From 6 October 2021, this will instead read "a family permit (or a letter from the Secretary of State, issued after 30 June 2021, confirming their qualification for one)".

Further details are available [here](#)

Events and Training

'All the beds I have slept in' – Phosphoros Theatre – on tour Autumn 2021

'All the beds I have slept in' is a brand new play by [Phosphoros Theatre](#), a dynamic, emerging company of lived experience refugee performers, exploring the seam of kindness and care that lies within their experience of leaving their homelands to seek asylum. From a flat in North London to the exercise yard of a Greek detention centre, beds anchor us to the various points of the journey. Supposed spaces of safety become transient; shelters are taken away without notice; and the route from one place to the next is fraught with obstacles. This play is a shout-out to all the real people who kept the actors moving forward. It explores the hidden moments of hospitality that change the course of a journey, and how to repay them. The intimacy created between friends when family is absent, and how to stay hopeful in a scary world. Click [here](#) to see the performance dates and venues, and for links to book tickets directly with venues.

Various workshops are available for Refugee Youth Groups/ESOL classes, Schools and Professionals. Click [here](#) for more information. Although based in London, Phosphoros Theatre is able to travel around the UK to deliver [training](#) and workshops.



EU Settlement Webinar – Wednesday 20 October 2021 – 13:00-14:00

In this free 1-hour webinar, Jonathan Holt of Garden Court North Chambers provides guidance and updates regarding the increasingly important EU Settlement Scheme. Jonathan will cover the entire process, from application, through review, to appeal rights, this will be a short but comprehensive journey through the current operation of the scheme.

This webinar is aimed at legal practitioners and those working with them, with an assumed basic knowledge of the topic area. Click [here](#) for more details and to register to attend

Know your rights workshop Migrants' Rights Network and FLEX – Wednesday 27 October 2021 – 11:00-12:00

FLEX (Focus on Labour Exploitation) will be teaching a workshop on exploitation, with information around employment. This workshop is primarily for migrants in the UK, as well as caseworkers and organisations that work with migrants. The workshop will cover issues in the Migrants' Rights Network's 'Know Your Rights' guide, such as pay and working conditions and how to get advice on workplace rights. Register [here](#).

Law for Life and Roma Support Group – free online training on child protection for Roma advocates – Tuesday 16 November 2021 – 10:00-12:30

This training will help Roma champions and advocates who support Roma families to gain a better understanding of the child protection process.

The training will:

- Improve your understanding about the child protection process and key agencies involved in safeguarding of children in England
- Understand some of the reasons why Children's Services get involved
- Develop strategies needed to support Roma parents to positively engage with Children's Services

This training is aimed at intermediaries - Roma champions, advocates and support workers who support Roma families involved with Children's Services.

If you would like to attend, please fill in this short [registration form](#) or email dada.felja@lawforlife.org.uk

Online Conference – Child Criminal Exploitation 2021: Building a Multi-Agency Approach – Thursday 18 November 2021

Earlier this year, the Government gave their response to The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's review into child criminal exploitation. The Government indicated that there are significant risks for children arising from the easing of Covid-19 restrictions. These include challenges in the school environment, a greater danger of serious violence and improving the interaction of practitioners with children. Among professionals, there is consensus that effective multi-agency working helps tackle these problems, but how these coalitions are built and maintained is a serious concern for service providers. It is only through the sharing of best practice and expert knowledge that these challenges can be overcome.

Join the conference to learn from leading best practice case studies and hear from high-level keynote speakers in the field, enabling you to develop and improve strategies to prevent and tackle child criminal exploitation. Topics will include the Government's most recent policy measures, disrupting perpetrator activity, and harnessing social media to engage young people. You will also have the opportunity to network with senior colleagues from across the sector, sharing challenges and strategies to train social workers, use a proactive approach, and respond immediately to critical moments in children's lives.

For further information and to book a ticket, click [here](#)



Funding

The Human Trafficking Foundation Survivor Support Emergency Fund

The Human Trafficking Foundation established the fund with a grant from the Vandervell Foundation which is supplemented with funding from other supporters. The fund is available to help survivors of human trafficking and modern slavery with small one-off grants to meet their immediate needs when no other sources of funding are available.

Further information including how to apply is available [here](#)

Shared Ground Fund – Paul Hamlyn Foundation

The Shared Ground Fund supports organisations working towards the following long-term objectives:

- Influencing migration system reform: helping to build a policy and legal framework based on the principles of fairness, accessibility, due process, efficiency and respect for human rights.
- Improving access to support services, to ensure systemic exclusion which forces individuals into poverty is addressed and the needs of people who migrate are met, so that they have the longer-term support they need to settle, integrate and thrive in the UK.
- Strengthening civic participation so that people who have migrated to the UK have a stronger voice and are represented and meaningfully involved in the structures and services that affect their lives.
- Informing public understanding and countering the polarisation of migration and integration narratives.

Grants from £30,000 – £400,000 for work lasting up to 4 years. Rolling application cycle – no deadlines

For more information and details of how to apply, click [here](#).

The Blue Thread Big Ideas Fund

The Blue Thread is the Grabiner family foundation. The foundation was established with resources gained over the last 30 years through work in the media and private equity industries. The family are keen to use their good fortune to help causes in areas of particular interest to them including community support, fair immigration and justice for women.

The Blue Thread Big Ideas Fund supports young people to develop socially positive, mission-driven tikkun olam projects inspired by Jewish values and aimed at creating change in the world. The fund will award grant funding up to £3,000 to successful projects, and will also provide expertise, guidance, support, and advice tailored to each project's needs. Funding can be awarded to a young person or group of young people. Project leaders should be aged 16-25, but members of a project group might be older or younger.

Future funding rounds will be announced [here](#) in Autumn 2021. If you want to ask any questions, please reach out to Hannah: hannah@thebluethread.org.uk

Jobs

Youth Sports and Activities Coordinator – Suffolk Refugee Support

Suffolk Refugee Support are seeking an enthusiastic individual to plan, develop and deliver a weekly football group to male refugees and asylum seekers. You will also help to run a new weekly youth club. You must have excellent communication skills and previous experience of delivering services.

The post will be based mainly offsite at sports and youth club venues, plus the Ipswich town centre office. The successful applicant must have some flexibility over their working times and be able to provide activities in the evenings. Due to the nature of the role Suffolk Refugee Support require a male* only (*Permitted under Schedule 9, part 1 of the Equality Act 2010).

For further details and an application pack, click [here](#). Application deadline: **Thursday 21 October at 12 noon**



Employment and Training Advice Worker – Suffolk Refugee Support

Suffolk Refugee Support are looking for an enthusiastic, passionate and experienced individual to join the employment and training team.

This is an exciting opportunity to help refugees living in Suffolk gain the skills needed to find, maintain or upgrade employment, in order to help improve their quality of life. Two days of this role will be focused on meeting the employment and training needs of Afghan families who have recently arrived in the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP)

For further details and an application pack, click [here](#). Application deadline: **Friday 29 October at 12 noon**

Independent Child Trafficking Guardian – Barnardo's

Barnardo's National Counter Trafficking Service has four services in various areas across England and Wales. This includes the Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service (ICTG Service). The ICTG Service is growing in 2021/2022 and is pleased to announce some exciting roles to join a passionate and experienced national team.

Guardians work in the best interests of children to be an independent source of advice for children who have been trafficked, to speak up on their behalf and help them orientate around social welfare, immigration and criminal justice systems.

Posts Available:

- Midlands – covering Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and surrounding areas
- South - covering Essex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Surrey and surrounding areas
- London - covering the South of London
- Cymru/Wales

Location of Post: Home Based with extensive travel around the regions as stated above.

For further details and to apply, please click [here](#)

Application deadline: **Sunday 24 October**

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