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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

Kind UK: Third Sector Statement for Local Authorities on the Illegal Migration Act 2023

This [statement](#) was drafted collaboratively and is endorsed by several charities supporting asylum seekers and refugees. It focuses on the impact the Illegal Migration Act 2023 will have on people seeking asylum and local authorities, providing recommendations for local authorities on how they can prepare for and mitigate these impacts.

New Illegal Migration Act measures and age dispute assessment tests

Legislation signed on 11 September includes changes to the asylum decision making process. This will see updated criteria for caseworkers assessing claims by setting out that factors such as the destruction of, or failure to produce an identity document, as well as refusal to disclose information required to access an electronic device like a phone passcode when asked, should be considered when assessing claims.

Separately, secondary legislation laid by the Ministry of Justice will, if approved by Parliament, authorise the use of x-rays in scientific age assessments.

Read the article in full, [here](#).

15,000 Afghans housed or matched to a property

The government has ended the use of bridging hotels for people evacuated from Afghanistan. All 55 hotels used to house around 8,000 Afghans at the end of March were no longer being used as bridging accommodation by 31 August. This followed a significant cross-government effort to help families find homes, working closely with Local Authorities and third sector partners.

To read the story in full, please click [here](#).

Guidance: Afghan citizens resettlement scheme

The UK formally opened the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) on 6 January 2022. The scheme prioritises the following individuals: those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, women's rights, freedom of speech, and rule of law; and vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT+). Eligible people are prioritised and referred for resettlement to the UK through one of 3 referral pathways.

This [guidance](#) has been updated to reflect there is no longer a 1,500-allocation cap on places for ACRS Pathway 3. Year 1 of Pathway 3 is now also referred to as the 'first stage' within the guidance.

Government consultation: Cap on safe and legal routes for refugees

The government is giving local authorities an opportunity to influence the cap on safe and legal routes. This UK-wide consultation seeks to better understand the capacity of local authorities to accommodate and support vulnerable and at-risk people coming to the UK via safe and legal routes, with a view to the UK taking only as many refugees as local communities can support.

Read this Home Office news story in full [here](#)

From Safe Homes to Sponsors: Lessons from the Ukraine Hosting Response for Refugee Sponsorship Programmes

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This Migration Policy Institute (MPI) [policy brief](#) examines how private hosting initiatives for displaced Ukrainians have been implemented in a range of European countries. It situates these programs within the broader evolution of private welcoming and sponsorship initiatives in Europe, identifying key successes and limitations. It offers recommendations that could help civil society and governments further develop hosting initiatives and refine refugee resettlement and community sponsorship programs.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks: Homes for Ukraine

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have added new information to the guidance, outlining further checks on sponsors who have recently lived overseas; an additional safety requirement for accommodation; and what councils should check in cases where the accommodation provided is on a farm.

To read in full, please click [here](#).

Driving and public transport: Homes for Ukraine

The government have updated the existing [guidance](#) to reflect that people from Ukraine can drive in the UK without exchanging their Ukrainian driving licence for up to three years after becoming a resident.

Autumn Housing Rights Newsletter

See below for the main articles and topics included in this quarter's [issue](#):

- Government is forcing hundreds of new refugees to sleep on the streets
- The Illegal Migration Act becomes law – what next?
- Will the Illegal Migration Act save money – or will it cost more?
- Labour's alternative to the Act – will it be better?
- Small boats, deportations to Rwanda and "safe and legal" routes
- Home Office backs away from the lessons from the Windrush scandal
- Refugees from Afghanistan become homeless as they are forced to leave hotels
- Latest news on refugees from Ukraine
- Asylum claims – the backlog stabilises but doesn't fall
- More ways to deter asylum claims: withdrawals, refusals, detentions, ankle tags and prison sentences
- Asylum accommodation – hotels, HMOs, barracks, cruise ships, barges and tents
- Asylum-seeking children receive appalling treatment

Refugee Council: 'Safe passage for people impacted by the violence in Israel and Palestine'

UK refugee charities call on the Government to be ready to put in place emergency pathways for those seeking refuge from the conflict in the Middle East.

Organisations including the Refugee Council, Safe Passage International, Doctors of the World, Helen Bamber Foundation and City of Sanctuary are supporting the call for a co-ordinated and emergency response to the plight of those having to flee their homes. They urge the UK Government to lead the way by putting in place:

- medical evacuation for people in need of specialist care
- an emergency family reunion scheme modelled on the approach introduced in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- an emergency refugee protection visa
- facilitated travel for UK nationals and those with the right to enter the UK
- prioritising cases of Israelis and Palestinians already in the UK asylum system

Access the proposal in full and Refugee Council briefing paper, [here](#)



Refugee Council: ‘Thousands of new refugees face destitution and homelessness after being told to leave their accommodation at short notice’

Recent government policy changes to the process for newly recognised refugees mean that people granted refugee status will now have just seven days to leave their accommodation, making it virtually impossible to secure housing and financial support, and placing unnecessary pressures on local authority homelessness services.

Over 140 organisations including the Refugee Council, NACCOM, Shelter and Crisis have also highlighted in an open letter to the Government that the changes are placing huge pressure on the voluntary sector, with demands for support going unmet due to the significant number of refugees already made homeless by government policies.

You can access both the article and the open letter, [here](#)

Funding for councils: Homes for Ukraine

The guidance has been updated to reflect announcement of UK-wide funding for local authorities and devolved administrations for the 2023/24 financial year.

Within England the funding will be administered via a top up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) in line with the existing grant conditions. To reflect broader pressures on local authorities alongside those arising from the Ukrainian cohort, in England, 66% of the funding will be allocated using the HPG formula, on the same basis as the core HPG allocation for 2023/24. The remaining 34% will be allocated based on the Homes for Ukraine arrival numbers reported for each LA as of 4 April 2023, as the closest date to the beginning of this financial year for which arrival numbers are published.

Homes for Ukraine education and childcare funding will not continue in the 2023-24 financial year. However, funding that has not been spent in 2022-23 can be carried over to the 2023-24 financial year. If funding remains unspent by 31 March 2024, the department will take action to claw back unspent money.

To read in full, please click [here](#).

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and leaving care: funding instructions

A further temporary amendment has been made to the terms under which local authorities can claim Home Office funding in respect to their costs of supporting UASC. This [annex](#) should be read in conjunction with the [funding instructions](#).

The annex sets out that an additional £6,000 will be paid to local authorities where UASC transfer from a hotel temporarily accommodating them, or from a Kent County Council care placement, within five working days from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Migration

UNHCR: ‘Great British Welcome’ Photo Series

A Great British Welcome tells the story of how communities across the UK welcome people who have been forced to flee their homes. Stories are told by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and photographed by Andrew Testa.

Stories covered:

- ‘A Rohingya refugee pursues her passion for nursing in Bradford’.
- ‘Selling bread and running stalls empowers London’s refugees’
- ‘Scottish island community is a rainy haven for refugees who are giving back’.

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- 'Food, friends, and fun are the perfect ingredients for a warm Welsh welcome'.
- 'Refugees rock, release and make friends at climbing centre in Liverpool'.
- 'For refugees, Manchester's art and creativity make it a home'.
- 'In Norwich, a refugee teacher helps forcibly displaced children to belong'.
- 'Refugees take steps and tell stories as part of a walking community'.
- 'Refugees take centre stage'.
- 'Refugees find their voice, and a community, in acclaimed choir'.

Read the series in full [here](#), and learn more about the Great British Welcome exhibition in Central London below, under 'Events and Training'.

New Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

ECPAT UK welcomes the announcement of the appointment of the new UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, following 18 months without anyone in post. During that time the UK Government made significant changes to the way victims of modern slavery and trafficking are treated, including the implementation of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and the passing of the Illegal Migration Act 2023.

Read the ECPAT UK announcement in full [here](#), and the Home Office press release [here](#).

Where Are All the Climate Migrants? Explaining Immobility amid Environmental Change

This Migration Policy Institute (MPI) publication focuses on the reasons why "the vast majority of people living in places highly vulnerable to climate change do not migrate". The reasons set out are based on some individuals' ability to adapt in place, others not having the capability to move, with many reluctant to leave their homelands due to a sense of feeling "irrevocably bound".

Access the publication in full [here](#)

UK government support for Chagossians

This [page](#) provides information on UK government support to people born on the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) / Chagos Archipelago and their descendants.

It has been updated to include new guidance for Chagossians who British citizens are covering pre-departure information, and information about arriving in the UK.

Refugee Employability Programme (REP)

The Home Office have launched a new initiative - the Refugee Employability Programme (REP), for the specific needs of refugees, to give them the support they need to find work and build their lives in England.

The £52 million Programme aims to overcome the barriers faced by refugees to integrate into local communities and society, including language and cultural differences, and speed up their contribution to the UK economy. Afghans resettled in England under either ACSRS or ARAP will also be eligible to apply to the programme.

It provides three types of support:

Employment support: CV writing classes, sector specific training, interview practice

English language: English Language classes, including English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL), invitations to formal and informal conversation clubs, and lessons to support learning capacity such as literacy

Integration support: community groups, healthcare, childcare



For more details on eligibility criteria and how to apply, please click [here](#).

REP Referral Forms - now online

The referral forms for REP are now live on their website.

There are two forms:

- Self-referral form – for individuals to apply for the service
- Partner referral form – for organisations to direct any referrals through here.

You can also email: rep-eastofengland@getsetuk.co.uk

N.B. A paper referral form is also available via email by getting in touch with the above email address.

For more details, please click [here](#).

Migrants' Aspiration Programme for Hongkongers

The Migrants' Aspiration Programme (MAP) is a Migrants' Rights Network programme in collaboration with Hongkongers in Britain which aims to support participants' development as community and political leaders. The programme builds on the success of MRN's previous Migrants' Aspiration Programme which ran from Jan 2022 until Feb 2023.

The Greater London Authority (GLA) launched the Hong Kong Community Fund in 2023 with the aim of supporting Hongkongers in London and to help them build a sense of belonging in their new communities. MRN was successful in application for funds and has launched their free six-month training for any Hong Kong migrant in the UK looking to lead and make a difference.

To read in full, please click [here](#).

New immigration application fees from 4 October 2023

The government has published the new application fees previously announced earlier this year. The statement describes the increase as being made "to pay for vital services and allow more funding to be prioritised for public sector pay rises". The explanatory memorandum provides a bit more detail: "an increase of 15-20% is being sought across a range of different immigration and nationality products and services in order to significantly contribute to wider Home Office funding objectives". The memorandum summarises the changes as: The immigration health surcharge increase from £624 to £1,035 per year will be introduced later this autumn.

Read full article [here](#).

Events and Training

In Person Meeting: Supporting Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Groups with Perinatal Mental Health Support in Essex

This meeting is for service users, community groups and agencies supporting and working with different community groups in Essex. The meeting will provide an opportunity to network, share experiences and discuss the access available to perinatal mental health services for Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Groups and ask any other questions you may have relating to past or recent experience of clients / people you support accessing perinatal mental health services.

DATE: 2 November 2023

LOCATION: Thurrock CVS, The Beehive Resource Centre, West Street, Grays, Essex RM17 6XP

Click [here](#) to book your place.

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A Great British Welcome: a portrait exhibition

A Great British Welcome is a powerful portrait series showcasing individuals, communities and organisations who are welcoming people forced to flee and helping them settle into life in the UK. The outside exhibition is free to view and open now at More London.

DATE: 12 October 2023 - 8 November 2023

LOCATION: More London, Tooley Street, SE1 2DA

Find out more, [here](#)

Virtual Training: Psychological First Aid

This training, delivered by Dzmitry Karpuk, a Family and Systemic Psychotherapist who has considerable experience of working with refugees and asylum seekers, is open to caseworkers assisting asylum seekers, resettled refugees and Afghan families across the East of England.

This session is primarily for caseworkers who attended Vicarious Trauma Training.

Aim of the workshop:

To develop an understanding of how to support the Refugee & Asylum seekers (RAS) population (families, adults and children) in distress by using basic skills of Psychological First Aid

DATE: 8 November 2023

LOCATION: MS Teams

This training is now fully booked but please let us know if you would like to be placed on our reserve list (humeira.yaqub@eelga.gov.uk)

Funding

There are no open funding opportunities at this time

Jobs

Persian Advice Bureau are recruiting an Immigration and Asylum Law Level 2 Senior Caseworker with Supervisor Status

Persian Advice Bureau is a registered charity assisting Asylum Seekers and Refugees since 2015. Job Overview An opportunity has arisen for a Level 2 IAAS Immigration Senior Caseworker with Supervisor status to join our specialist team. The successful Senior Immigration Caseworker will be responsible for dealing with a range of Immigration Law, Human Rights and Asylum matters. Owing to the nature of the clients, the quality of work produced is high level, and the successful candidate must be up to date with legal developments and practice.

START DATE: Immediate

JOB TYPE: Full-time

SALARY: £29,000 to £35,000 per year depending on experience

To apply for this role, please email your CV and cover letter to info@persianadvicebureau.co.uk

Access the job advert in full [here](#).

Women's Specialist Abuse Practitioner



The Magdalene Group are seeking to employ a Women's Specialist Abuse Practitioner to provide gender and trauma-informed support to women experiencing sexual violence and domestic abuse who will be facing multiple barriers including homelessness, poor mental health and substance use.

The post-holder will be based within the Doorway Women's Service, working closely with different agencies providing support for women to access specialist support from other agencies. Previous experience and/or knowledge of working in a trauma informed way is essential.

Due to the nature of the role, it is a General Occupational Requirement that this position be filled by a female. (This role is exempt under the Equality Act 2010, Schedule 9, Part 1.)

Salary: £26,000-£27,500 per annum fte.

Application closing date: 9am on Monday 13 November

Interviews: Thursday 23 November and Friday 24 November 2023.

For more details on how to apply and to access this job advert in full, click [here](#)

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Advocate

The Magdalene Group are advertising this new and exciting role of a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Advocate, who will deliver a new initiative to improve the safety of women and girls at night in Norwich. This role will be pivotal in developing and delivering training to nighttime economy (NTE) businesses and helping make venues safe spaces for women and girls. Partnership-working will be crucial with not only businesses in the NTE but also a range of multi agencies working together to promote the safety of women and girls.

Salary: £26,000- £27,500 per annum fte.

Application closing date: 9am on Monday 20 November 2023.

Interviews: Thursday 30 November and Friday 1 December 2023.

For more details on how to apply and to access this job advert in full, click [here](#)

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