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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

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### **NRPF Connect: Recourse to Public Funds Online Checker launched**

Some councils can now check whether a person has Recourse to Public Funds (RTPF) through the online [Home Office RTPF Checker](#). Councils can access this through NRPF Connect where there will be a 'RTPF Checker' tab. Individuals' credentials will be required, for example passport number, in order to receive a statement of eligibility when making a decision to provide accommodation or financial assistance.

### **Safety of Rwanda bill**

The [Safety of Rwanda Bill](#) was introduced to Parliament on 7 December, stating that Rwanda is a safe country where irregular migrants can be lawfully relocated. The Home Secretary James Cleverly signed [a joint treaty](#) with his counterpart, Foreign Minister Dr Vincent Biruta, strengthening the UK and Rwanda's Migration and Economic Development Partnership and directly addressing the concerns of the Supreme Court. The agreement is part of the government's plan to ensure that illegal migrants can be lawfully relocated to Rwanda under its ambition to stop the boats.

See the Home Office press release [here](#).

### **Refugee Council Report: 'Rwanda plan and Illegal Migration Act will increase dangerous journeys and drive refugees underground'**

A new research report from the Refugee Council concludes that the government's Illegal Migration Act and Rwanda Plan will not act as deterrent to 'stop the boats' and is already leading to refugees disappearing from contact with support organisations.

Read the report in full [here](#)

### **Government releases new statistics regarding the Illegal Migration Act**

The Home Secretary released an update on [statistics](#) relating to the Illegal Migration Act which are valid until 2 January 2024. This is in addition to an update of overall [immigration statistics](#) that were published for the year ending September 2023.

This includes data relating to:

- small boats
- the asylum backlog
- asylum seekers on support
- asylum decision makers and headcount
- asylum decisions and interviews
- enforcement activities

### **Advice for Ukrainians to extend their visas**

The Government has issued information on how Ukrainians can extend their stay. There is separate guidance for:

[Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme](#);  
[Homes for Ukraine Scheme](#); and  
[general visa support](#)

## Refugee Council statement on age assessments

The Refugee Council issued a [statement](#) that age assessments of unaccompanied children using x-rays and MRIs are not fit for purpose. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), the Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium (RMCC), and the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) have voiced their concerns.

## ECPAT new project: Care for Every Child

ECPAT UK are running a new social work led project to support children and young people who were unlawfully accommodated in the Home Office run hotels for children, and who were denied support and assistance under child welfare legislation.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the project and referral criteria.

## Evacuation from Afghanistan 2021: Afghan and third country nationals

Operation Pitting Afghans or third country nationals will be given the opportunity to discuss their voluntary return options before any enforcement action is taken by the Home Office if they have continued to remain in the UK without leave to remain, not made arrangements to return, and not submitted a claim or application for leave to remain to the Home Office.

The [guidance](#) explains:

- how they will not be subject to immediate enforcement action
- how they can apply for assistance to return
- how they can seek further assistance

## UNHCR: Global Refugee Forum

The [Global Refugee Forum](#) took place between 13 and 15 December 2023 in Geneva. This quadrennial event invites Member States to take stock of their contributions to the Global Compact on Refugees and pledge for future actions.

Click [here](#) for a summary of pledges made by the UK government.

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## Migration

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### Changes to legal migration rules for family and work visas in 2024

On 4 December 2023 the Home Secretary unveiled [a new plan](#) to cut net migration. The Home Office [published more information](#) on 21 December, including some changes to what had initially been announced.

The new measures will impact health and care visas, the income threshold for overseas workers, and a replacement of the 20% salary discount for those that enter work on the Shortage Occupation List, among other things.

### Government approved English language test centres

The [list](#) of approved test centres has been assessed as meeting Home Office requirements under the secure English language testing arrangements. UKVI has recently updated this list. Approved providers in the UK are: LanguageCert, Pearson, Trinity College London and IELTS SELT Consortium. Outside the UK, approved providers are: LanguageCert, Pearson, PSI Services (UK) Ltd – Skills for English and IELTS SELT Consortium.

## **New Regulations regarding international students bringing family members to the UK**

On 2 January the Home Office [announced](#) new regulations that prevent some international students bringing family members to the UK in order to cut immigration figures. International students starting courses from January 2024 will no longer be able to bring family members to the UK on all but postgraduate research courses, and courses with government-funded scholarships.

## **Windrush Compensation**

In October 2023, the Home Office and UKVI released in [data](#) on claims and payments made under the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

The data focuses on:

- number of Windrush Compensation Scheme claims received
- breakdown of claims by country of residence
- breakdown of claims by country of nationality
- number of people referred by the Windrush Compensation Scheme to the claimant assistance provider
- value of Windrush Compensation Scheme payments made
- number of negative outcomes
- volume of tier one and tier two reviews and outcome volumes

The Windrush Application Forms continue to be available [here](#)

## **Praxis: Evidence submission to the Women and Equalities Committee on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on migrant women**

Praxis, a refugee and migrant support organisation, submitted evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry into women and the cost-of-living crisis, with a particular focus on migrant women and how they are affected by immigration policies and the imposition of No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).

Access their submission in full [here](#)

## **66% increase in Immigration Health Surcharge**

The 66% increase in the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) that was [announced](#) by the Government in July of last year will be implemented on 6 February 2024. The surcharge will be increased from £624 to £1,035 per person per year for adults and from £470 to £776 per person per year for children under 18, students and their dependants, and applicants for the Youth Mobility Scheme.

The Home Office published a detailed [equality impact assessment](#) on the increase in October 2023, setting out why the increase is being implemented, including the basis for the increase.

Read this Electric Immigration Network (EIN) article in full [here](#)

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## **Research**

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### **Migration Policy Institute (MPI): The Top Ten Migration Issues of 2023**

Read MPI's article on the top 10 migration issues of 2023 [here](#).

### **Migration Policy Institute (MPI): What Causes Compassion Fatigue towards Refugees?**

MPI has published a [report](#) exploring how and why public support for refugees ebbs and flows. The report examines three international case studies of refugee influxes – Syrians in Turkey, Venezuelans in Colombia and

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Ukrainians in Europe. It highlights factors that have contributed to initial widespread solidarity, ways in which support has been sustained over time, and when and why it begins to fade. The report concludes by drawing lessons from these case studies on what policymakers can do to better anticipate and address compassion fatigue.

### **COMPAS: Research on state responses to the Ukrainian and Afghan crises**

COMPAS has published a [comparative report](#) on the Afghan and Ukrainian Refugee Crises in Canada and the UK, examining the two states' responses to the crises.

### **COMPAS: Why are the latest net migration figures not a reliable guide to future trends?**

On 14 December, COMPAS released a [report](#) which examines how different types of immigration contribute to net migration in the long term and what levels of net migration the UK might expect in coming years. Drawing on analysis from the Migration Observatory and the Centre for Economic Performance, the report examines why the gap between current and projected future net migration is so large.

### **Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) Report - Making strides: Refugees' employment trajectories in Yorkshire and the Humber**

IPPR have produced a [report](#) which presents the findings of a research study looking at the employment experiences of refugees and people with humanitarian leave living in Yorkshire and the Humber. The report provides a number of policy recommendations.

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## **Events and Training**

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### **COMPAS events**

This [series](#) of COMPAS seminars focuses on migrants' access to the welfare state. Seminars are held in person at The Hub, Kellogg College, and remotely on Zoom.

To join in person, you must register in advance [here](#).

To join online via Zoom, you must register in advance [here](#).

#### Seminars

- **25 January: 'Cost-of-living' Crisis For All; Help Only For Some**, Ilona Pinter, LSE Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion
- **1 February: Perspectives on How the NRPF Policies Impact Different Cohorts of People and Reinforces Inequalities**, Panel TBC
- **15 February: Lived Experience Panel - Hearing From Experts by Experience**, COMPAS Understanding Migrant Destitution Experts by Experience Advisory Board & NACCOM Network Community Researchers. The panel will be supported by Lucy Leon, COMPAS and Finn McKay, NACCOM Network
- **29 February: Open for the Childless Skilled Only: the UK's Post-Brexit Migration Regime in the European Context**, Professor Traute Meyer, University of Southampton
- **7 March: Towards a History of the Immigration-Welfare Nexus in Britain**, Dr Eve Dickson, UCL Social Research Institute

### **Webinar: Public Policy Exchange**

**23 January 09:30-11:00: Ukrainian Refugees in the UK: Has Britain Adequately Provided for Them?**

Find full details on the expected audience, outcomes, and registration [here](#).

## In Person Event: Norwich City of Sanctuary's Annual Celebration Party

**5 February 18:00-20:30, Norwich Arts Centre, 51 Saint Benedict's Street, Norwich, NR2 4PG**

*"This is a chance for our network to come together at the start of 2024 to spend an evening with like-minded people who share our message of welcome. Discover the organisations that have achieved a Sanctuary Award over the past year. Enjoy some international music, live performances, some tasty nibbles, and most importantly... a good time! **Register for a free ticket [here](#)**"*

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## Funding

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### Funding Sites to check

Recipients of this bulletin are advised to regularly check sites such as [Grants Admin](#) which lists many available funds, the [Barrow Cadbury Trust](#) who take requests *on spec*, the [Paul Hamlyn Foundation](#) who also take requests *on spec*, and the [Blue Thread](#).

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## Jobs

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### Suffolk Refugee Support (SRS) are recruiting an Operations Manager

SRS are looking for an Operations Manager to join their team based in Ipswich. This role will help provide a strategic lead for the organisation and ensure their groups and activities are successful, meeting the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Suffolk.

**Hours: 28 hours per week**

**Salary: £25,017 per annum for 28 hours a week (pro rata from £31,272 per annum FTE). *With likely pay rise in April 2024.***

**Application closing date: 31 January 2024**

**Interview date: 6 February 2024**

Click [here](#) for full details of the role and to access an application pack.

If you have had this passed on to you and you want to receive e-mail updates yourself, you can subscribe by emailing [humeira.yaqub@eelga.gov.uk](mailto:humeira.yaqub@eelga.gov.uk)

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