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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

### Overview of asylum and refugee resettlement in the UK

Oxford University's Migration Observatory has produced a [briefing](#) which examines asylum, refugee resettlement, and bespoke humanitarian schemes in the UK. The briefing focuses on asylum and resettlement schemes and includes overall data on bespoke humanitarian routes and how they compare with traditional protection pathways. Among other things, using data covering the period 2009 – 2023, statistical information is given on the number of asylum seekers, their nationalities, asylum success rates (including refusals and appeals) and financial details.

### Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) Pathway 1 Stage 2: Separated Families Pathway

The ACRS was formally opened on 6 January 2022 and is in addition to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). The Separated Families Pathway has been introduced for individuals who were evacuated to the UK in August 2021 under Operation PITTING, ACRS Pathway 1, where their immediate family members were not evacuated with them. These immediate family members may now be eligible to be brought to the UK to settle permanently.

You can make a referral to ACRS Pathway 1 Stage 2: Separated Families from 30 July 2024 to 30 October 2024.

To find out more about this pathway and check eligibility requirements, click [here](#).

### Ministerial Statement: Border Security and Asylum

On 5 September 2024, Home Office minister Dame Angela Eagle made a [written ministerial statement](#), which sets out the Home Secretary's plans to tighten the UK border, reduce small boat crossings and return individuals where a negative asylum decision has been received, among other things. She also updates Parliament on plans for the future of RAF Scampton. Due to the higher than estimated costs involved, it has been decided the site fails to deliver value for money and, the [Home Office will not use RAF Scampton](#) for asylum accommodation.

### Contract for Bibby Stockholm not renewed

Since August 2023, the Bibby Stockholm has been used to house asylum seekers, just off the Dorset coast. This article sets out the confirmation from Government that the contract for the use of Bibby Stockholm for housing asylum seekers has not been renewed beyond January 2025. For further details, click [here](#).

### NRPF Network – Web Tool

This is an online [tool](#) to help establish a migrant family's support options when they are destitute or at risk of homelessness and have no recourse to public funds.

The tool has been designed to help social workers and other council officers who are working with non-UK national families to establish what options will be available when a family is in need of accommodation and/or financial support.

### Chartered Institute of Housing Summer 2024 newsletter

Click [here](#) to read The Chartered Institute of Housing Summer 2024 newsletter, which covers the following:

- Refugees rough sleeping
- Refugees fleeing world crises
- Hotels, military bases and barges
- Latest news on the EU Settlement Scheme
- NRPF and migrant destitution
- News on help for migrants fleeing domestic abuse and on family reunion
- Dangers of a digital-only immigration system

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- Councils and housing associations working with asylum seekers and refugees
- News on recent court cases, and other brief news items

## Call for Evidence: age assessments inspection

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) has commenced an [inspection](#) of the Home Office's use of age assessments. The inspection will focus on the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of age assessments conducted by the Home Office, with a particular focus on the Illegal Migration Intake Unit, the Asylum Intake Unit and the National Age Assessment Board.

The Independent Chief Inspector invites anyone with knowledge or first-hand experience of an age assessment conducted by the Home Office to submit evidence to inform the inspection, both what is working well and what could be improved. The call for evidence will remain open until close of play 9 October 2024 and submissions should be emailed to [ageassessment@icibi.gov.uk](mailto:ageassessment@icibi.gov.uk)

## UASC: High Court judgement relating to ECPAT UK, Brighton and Hove City Council, Kent County Council and the Home Office

In July 2023, in a [case](#) brought by ECPAT UK, the High Court found that the use of hotels for unaccompanied children was unlawful. In a [subsequent judgement](#), the High Court found the Home Secretary's decision-making in relation to the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) irrational because it failed to accept and take account of its responsibility in Kent County Council's unlawful failure to discharge its duties to take all unaccompanied children into care.

In June 2024, the High Court has issued its final ruling in the case on the use of hotels to accommodate unaccompanied children. The [judgement](#), once again, emphasises that Kent County Council cannot derogate from its duties under the Children Act 1989 and that both the Home Office and Kent County Council should take all steps to ensure that the unlawful situation never arises again. ECPAT UK have issued a [press release](#).

## Reporting hate crime/incidents

[For a period during the summer of 2024](#) (30 July – 07 August), the UK experienced disorder as an estimated 29 anti-immigration demonstrations and riots took place across 27 towns and cities. Many of these were violent, with participants attacking mosques and hotels housing asylum seekers. Known far-right activists promoted and attended the riots. The Government and police responded quickly to end the disorder.

[Hate crimes](#) (or incidences) should always be reported to the police.

A hate crime (or incident – where no crime has been committed) is any crime that is targeted against a person because of their:

- Disability
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity

Hate crimes or incidents should be reported to the police. Call 999 to report a crime that is in progress or if someone is in immediate danger.

If the crime isn't an emergency, call 101 or contact your local police.

## UK government: addressing reasons for illegal migration

This government [press release](#), issued on 18 July 2024, introduces the UK government's commitment to address the reasons for illegal migration. With a funding package of up to £84 million, plans are to work with international partners to address the reasons why people flee their homes and to tackle illegal migration and organised crime at source. The funding will also support projects across Africa and the Middle East to improve education and

employment opportunities as well as initiatives that will help build resilience to global shocks like conflict and climate change, which are two of the leading causes of irregular migration.

## Olympic and Paralympic Games 2024

This UNHCR [article](#) celebrates the 2024 Paris Olympics, which featured the largest Refugee team (37 athletes) and the first medal for a Refugee Olympic Team athlete.

A [Refugee Team](#), made up of eight athletes and one guide runner, also competed in the Paralympic Games. The team, based in six countries, competed across six sports.

## A Great British Welcome

This UNHCR [project](#) shares the stories of how communities across the UK are warmly welcoming refugees and asylum seekers, helping them to rebuild their lives in a new home through integration and friendship. The photo series from the project can also be found [here](#).

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## Migration

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### eVisa and the transition to digitalisation

An eVisa is an online record of a person's immigration status, including the conditions of their permission to enter or stay in the UK. UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) are developing a digital immigration system. This means they are replacing physical documents with an online record of individuals' immigration status.

The Government is urging all those across the UK who use a physical immigration document to take immediate action to transition to an eVisa, as part of plans to digitise the UK border and immigration system. The [guidance](#) was recently updated to advise migrants to keep their Biometric Residence Permit cards (BRPs).

In addition, up to £4 million of support will be provided to a UK-wide network of voluntary and community sector organisations to enable valuable and independent support for vulnerable customers. The four national grant funded bodies have been confirmed as **Migrant Help, Citizens Advice Scotland, the Welsh Refugee Council, and Advice NI**, which are all now offering immediate, free support for vulnerable individuals in their transition to an eVisa. Dozens of community-based organisations, spread across the UK, will join the network of organisations actively offering support in the coming weeks. Details of these organisations and how to contact them will be published on gov.uk in due course.

Information on how to set up access to an eVisa can be found [here](#).

Further details are provided in the Government's [News story](#) in which it is also confirmed that a targeted advertising campaign will launch in autumn 2024, building on existing communications activity to raise awareness of the transition to eVisas amongst those affected.

### Consultation: Healthy Start Scheme

Healthy Start is a scheme which, if you are over 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4 years of age, can help you buy healthy foods such as milk or fruit and get free vitamins. To qualify, you need to be claiming certain benefits\*.

The government is seeking views on whether the eligibility for the Healthy Start Scheme should be extended to include others who are prevented from accessing public funds due to immigration controls. Consultation closes at 11:59pm on 23 October 2024. To take part, click [here](#).

\*(If you have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), but your child is a British citizen under 4 years old and your family earns £408 or less per month, you may be able to claim. See [here](#) for details).

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## Pre-settled status

On 07 August 2024, the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Network published an [overview](#) of recent updates which have impacted the rights of pre-settled status holders in UK. These include the automatic five-year extension of pre-settled status, changes to how immigration status is viewed by employers and landlords, the widening eligibility for Universal Credit for some people with pre-settled status who do not have a qualifying right to reside, and ongoing litigation as to whether people with pre-settled status may be eligible for homelessness assistance. Further information and details of developments, the impacts and considerations for local authorities can be found [here](#).

## Migrant Help: EUSS Adviser

As part of an additional two year funding package provided by the Home Office, Migrant Help are working to assist in reaching and supporting vulnerable or at-risk EU citizens and their families to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. Migrant Help are also able to help clients wishing to transfer from Pre-Settled status to Settled status once 5 years residency in the UK has been completed. For more details on whether you qualify for support and how to receive support, click [here](#).

## East of England Strategic Migration Partnership: Migrant and Refugee Health Inequalities project

Funded by UK Research and Innovation and led by the Anglia Ruskin University, this [project](#) will help researchers examine the impact that factors such as poverty, precarious employment and insecure accommodation have on the health and wellbeing of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The project will run until 2027 and the East of England Strategic Migration Partnership will lead on supporting the project in the region.

## Beyond the Headlines: Why Rising Migrant Destitution in the UK Needs an Urgent Policy Response - COMPAS

COMPAS is the University of Oxford's Centre on Migration, Policy and Society and conducts high quality research, develops theory and facilitates knowledge exchange in the field of migration. This COMPAS [article](#) focuses on the UK's current immigration policies and the way in which the current policies create destitution by design for both newer and long-term migrants. It also introduces a new [study](#) which aims to provide an evidence base on support for precarious migrants – those living in and at risk of destitution. COMPAS aim to work closely with local authorities to inform and improve policy and practice, as well as influence central government.

## Welcoming Futures project - COMPAS

The COMPAS 'Welcoming Futures' [project](#) hopes to bring about a more equal society by working to better the wellbeing of, and provide more opportunities for migrants and communities across the UK. It aims to do this by improving the way integration and welcoming work is structured, and by approaching this problem in partnership with influential stakeholders who work in different capacities in this field.

## Migrants in the UK: An Overview

The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford has published a [briefing](#) which provides an overview of the UK's migrant population. Using data from the 2021/22 Census, the briefing looks at how many migrants there are in the UK, where they live, and where they are from.

## Race inequalities in maternity and antenatal care

The Equality and Human Rights Commission have published an [article](#) regarding the use of equality data in tackling race inequalities in maternity and neonatal care in England. The article explains how collecting and using equality data can promote patient safety and support service improvements. This will benefit service users, particularly women and birthing people from ethnic minorities, as well as their babies.

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## Events and Training

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### Free Movement: upcoming webinars and workshops

Free Movement run regular short webinars and workshops on a variety of topical immigration law and practice issues. Top lawyers and other experts support and deliver the training sessions, which always end with a Q&A. Click [here](#) to learn about future webinars and workshops being offered by Free Movement.

### Barnardo's Virtual Youth Space

The charity Barnardo's offer a [Virtual Youth Space](#) for young people (aged 10-17) from Ukraine and Afghanistan to have fun, make friends and informally practice their English skills. Sessions are led by Barnardo's staff from their Refugee Family Helpline and include playing games and chatting about different topics. Interpreters are also available.

#### When:

- The Ukrainian Youth Space is held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month at 18:00. Register your interest [here](#)
- The Afghan Youth Space takes place on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of every month at 18:00. Register your interest [here](#)

### Modern slavery training resource

Modern slavery is a serious and often hidden crime. It includes slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. This [Government resource](#) is designed to share examples of training products available to public sector professionals and other individuals that might come across victims to help raise awareness, better spot the signs and increase confidence in reporting modern slavery when potential cases are encountered.

### Migration and the Making of Britain exhibition

On 12 September 2024, the Migration Museum in London opened a new free [exhibition](#), 'All Our Stories: Migration and the Making of Britain'. It explores the reasons people migrate, experiences of arriving and settling, and questions of identity and belonging.

#### Details:

Migration Museum  
Lewisham Shopping Centre, London SE13 7HB  
12 September 2024 – 20 December 2025  
Free admission – no booking

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## Funding

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### Luton Citizens' Fund

The Luton Citizens' Fund provide grants of up to £3,500 to not-for-profit groups who deliver projects or services in Luton. The [fund](#) is administered by the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation on behalf of Luton Council.

A '[Meet the Funder](#)' event is being held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 13:30 at Hats Factory Arts Centre.

The deadline for applications is Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October at 12noon.

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## Jobs

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### Migrant and Refugee Health Inequalities project – Community Co-Researcher

The project is looking for someone who has lived experience of migrating to the UK within the last ten years to join them as a Community Co-Researcher.

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## Details and how to apply:

The role is part-time, involving up to 39 hours on a flexible basis over the next 2 and a half years.

For further information and details on how to apply, please contact Gill Searl [gill.searl@eelga.gov.uk](mailto:gill.searl@eelga.gov.uk) or Farsh Raoufi [999farsh@gmail.com](mailto:999farsh@gmail.com)

## Bedford Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support (BRASS)

BRASS supports refugees and asylum seekers in Bedfordshire and currently have [vacancies](#) for:

- Volunteer ESOL Tutors
- Social Events/Activities Volunteers.

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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