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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

### Update on Ukraine Schemes

On 1 October 2024, changes were made to the Homes for Ukraine (HfU) scheme meaning that as of this date, hosts of *new* arrivals are not eligible to receive [thank you payments for hosting a close family member](#) in their home in the UK. This change applies to payment claims taking place from this date, irrespective of visa application dates. This change also applies to the [close family members of eligible minors](#).

Further to the changes announced on 1 October 2024, on 26 November 2024, Lord Khan of Burnley, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Faith, Communities and Resettlement wrote to all local authority chief executives. In his [letter](#), Lord Khan provides an update on the Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) scheme, changes to 'thank you' payments for both HfU and UPE from 1 April 2025, an update on eligible minors, local authority tariff funding for 2025-26, and when UPE will be open for applications.

### Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme

UPE will open to applicants at 09:00 UK time on 04 February 2025.

If you're a Ukrainian national, or the family member of a Ukrainian national, and are living in the UK with existing permission on one of the Ukraine schemes, you may be eligible to apply for UPE to continue living in the UK for up to a further 18 months. It will be free to apply. You will need to make an application online. If your application is successful, you will be able to continue to live, work and study in the UK and access public funds.

Further information can be found on the GOV.UK website, [here](#).

### UK resettlement schemes: funding instruction 2024 to 2025

The latest funding instruction for local authorities in support of the United Kingdom's resettlement schemes were released by the Home Office and can be found [here](#).

Funding instructions for healthcare in England in support of the United Kingdom's resettlement schemes 2024-25 were also released, and can be found [here](#).

### Housing Rights: Chartered Institute of Housing Autumn Newsletter

The [quarterly newsletter](#) from the Housing Rights website has been published and is full of articles relating to asylum seekers, refugees and housing issues. The headline news is 'The big questions facing Labour – what we know so far'.

The newsletter also includes articles on the following subjects:

- Refugee family reunion – what options are available?
- Barriers to safe housing for migrant women
- Latest on refugees fleeing world crises
- Refugee homelessness intensifies
- Hotels, military bases and barges
- 'No recourse' and migrant destitution
- Dangers of a digital-only immigration system
- Good news corner

### PILOT: World Jewish Relief – STEP Ahead programme

Following on from the STEP Ukraine programme, World Jewish Relief organisation is delivering a 12-week online course for refugees from all backgrounds. [Referrals are now closed](#).

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The course commenced on 25 November and was available to:

- Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP scheme)
- Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS scheme)
- Community Sponsorship Mandate Scheme
- Family Reunion
- UK Resettlement Scheme
- Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme
- Granted Refugee status after claiming Asylum

STEP Ahead is a pilot programme, testing an intensive, digital approach to supporting refugee employability and is also being used for research. Ipsos UK (an independent research agency) will explore how STEP Ahead runs and how people experience it. STEP Ahead builds on the success of STEP Ukraine, a similar MHCLG-funded digital programme for Ukrainians, which was also designed and delivered by World Jewish Relief.

For more information, or to learn about possible future opportunities similar to the STEP Ahead programme, please visit the World Jewish Relief [website](#).

#### Asylum Accommodation Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) report

In October 2024, the ICIBI published their inspection report: [An inspection of contingency asylum accommodation \(November 2023 – June 2024\)](#). This inspection examined the Home Office's use of contingency accommodation for asylum seekers.

The Home Office also published their response to the report, which you can read [here](#).

#### Asylum mental health: workstreams, tools and case studies

The Home Office Asylum Mental Health and Wellbeing Team have made available on GOV.UK a [booklet](#) which provides an overview of the workstreams, resources and case studies developed or endorsed by the team. The aim is to raise awareness about what is available and highlight examples of good practice measures, to support people seeking asylum's mental health and wellbeing.

If you would like to highlight good practice or if you have any queries, please contact [tip@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:tip@homeoffice.gov.uk).

#### UASC - National Transfer Scheme (NTS) Statistics

Published statistics for the NTS up to the end of September 2024, which can be found [here](#), show that 10,788 children have transferred via the NTS between 1 July 2016 and 30 September 2024. NTS transfers into the East of England totalled 1,821 children between 1 July 2016 and 30 September 2024. Since 2016 and as a proportion of the NTS transfers, the East of England has completed the highest number of transfers of all 12 regions and devolved nations in the UK, equating to 17% of the national total.

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## Migration

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#### eVisa guidance

Right to Remain have produced detailed [guidance](#) for people who are helping others create a UKVI (UK Visas and Immigration) account.

Latest information on eVisas is available at [www.gov.uk/evisa](http://www.gov.uk/evisa) and [Media factsheet: eVisas – Home Office in the media](#)

Migrant Help are able to support vulnerable applicants with the transition to eVisas and can be contacted on [evisa@migranthelp.org](mailto:evisa@migranthelp.org) or 07483 170100.

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A number of local organisations have also been funded to provide support to vulnerable adults in the East of England. They are:

**Gladca**, Peterborough, East Anglia

**Parca**, East Anglia

**Noah Enterprise**, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire

**Gyros**, East Anglia

**NCLS**, Norfolk, East Anglia

**PBIC**, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire

**Communities 1<sup>st</sup>**, Hertfordshire, South Cambridgeshire, Luton, Central Bedfordshire

**RAMFEL** – Essex

**Ultimate Counselling CIC** – Essex

**Southend CAB** – Essex including Thurrock

List of all funded organisations across the UK can be found here: [eVisa: community support for vulnerable people - GOV.UK](#)

The Home Office has also updated guidance on residence documents: information for financial providers. Details can be found here: [Residence documents: information for financial providers - GOV.UK](#)

## Residence based voting rights

In September 2024, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council unanimously voted to pass a motion calling on the Government to extend the right to vote to all residents in local elections. The motion emphasises that over one million people across the UK have no right to vote at all simply because of their nationality.

The not-for-profit organisation [Migrant Democracy Project](#) (MDP) supports migrants' democratic participation across the UK and the campaign for Votes for All is encouraging councillors to put forward MDP's motion for residence-based voting rights in their local authority and thereby support all their residents to have a democratic say where they live. MDP are calling on the Government to implement a residence-based voting rights system for all elections.

## Migrant Help: Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse Information

Migrant Help has information available in a range of languages from the NHS on an individual's legal rights and how to access help for past or current sexual assault or abuse. These useful documents can be located [here](#).

## East of England Strategic Migration Partnership (SMP): Migration Glossary of Terms

The East of England SMP have produced and published a Glossary of Terms [document](#), which you may find to be helpful.

## Suffolk Refugee Support Autumn Newsletter

Suffolk Refugee Support (SRS) have recently published their autumn [newsletter](#), which sets out the details of activities and events organised for their refugee cohort. The newsletter also includes a link to the charity's [annual report](#).

## The Migration Observatory: UK migration data

The [latest Office for National Statistics \(ONS\) data](#) on immigration and asylum statistics were released at the end of November. The migration data has been revised upwards again but shows a downward trend in net migration following visa restrictions.

The ONS data suggest that net migration peaked at 906,000 in the year ending June 2023 and decreased just under 20% to 728,000 in the year ending June 2024. These numbers are higher than expected because ONS has made the latest in a series of upwards revisions of its previous statistics. For example, it now believes that net migration in calendar year 2022 was 872,000. This compares to a first published estimate for calendar year 2022 of 606,000 published in May 2023. The revisions result from ONS receiving more complete travel data, and adding tens of thousands of Ukrainians who had been missed in the data due to an error (43,000 people in the year ending June 2023).

Read more of this summary from The Migration Observatory [here](#).

## Research

### **The Bell Foundation: Education for late arrivals**

Examining education provision for displaced young people arriving in the UK late in the education system. Refugee Education UK (REUK), with support from The Bell Foundation, conducted research on access to education for late arrivals – young people, aged 13-19, who have been forcibly displaced from their home (for reasons including war, conflict, persecution and trafficking) and who arrive in the UK late in the education system.

The full report and further information can be found [here](#).

### **Housing injustice facing migrants, sanctuary seekers and trafficking survivors intensifies at transition points**

New research concerning housing injustice has recently been published by [Commonweal Housing](#). The report, conducted by housing and migration specialist Professor Phil Brown and commissioned by Commonweal Housing, explores the housing injustice faced by migrant groups, people seeking sanctuary – refugees and asylum seekers – and survivors of human trafficking. It highlights the challenges these groups encounter accessing settled accommodation amid a shortfall of affordable housing and financial barriers stemming from low income or unemployment. Read the full report [here](#).

### **Held back: Poverty of LGBTQI refugees in the UK: An insight into the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ refugees in the UK**

This Micro Rainbow [report](#) *Held Back* draws from a sample of 98 LGBTQI refugees, some of whom have been in the UK for more than 20 years, and some who have been in the UK less than a year. In-depth interviews with 10 LGBTQI refugees were also conducted to explore their experiences in more detail. The report delves into work and employment in detail, with one of the key findings of the report being that the majority of LGBTQI refugees in the UK struggle to access dignified and appropriate work once they receive their refugee status.

The report found that 91% of the LGBTQI refugees who contributed felt safer in the UK than they did in their home countries, enjoying many of the fundamental freedoms offered by the UK. However, austerity measures, the 'hostile environment' policy, and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis were found to have exerted considerable impact on the lives of LGBTQI refugees in the UK. Poverty and access to housing, education and employment are all key inhibitors. Meanwhile, discrimination remains a significant concern, as is the poor mental health of LGBTQI refugees. In the 2024 report 53% of respondents indicated mental health needs, compared to a much lower 28% of respondents in 2013. These factors have limited the ability of refugees to flourish, and their LGBTQI identity introduces an additional layer of complexity.

Read more about Micro Rainbow's report and findings [here](#).

### **Iranian Nationals Irregular Migration – Research being undertaken by Ipsos UK on behalf of the UK Home Office**

The independent research organisation Ipsos UK have been commissioned by the UK Home Office to conduct research to gather a better understanding on the irregular migration routes used by Iranian nationals. The

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research has been commissioned to address the evidence gap surrounding understanding of Iranian nationals' journeys to the UK through irregular means. The research will inform operational and policy work that will support collaboration with key countries and help the understanding of irregular migration flows to the UK.

Ipsos UK would like to invite people who have experiences relevant to this research to give their views in an anonymous, confidential and voluntary way. If you would like to help with this research, please contact Florence @ [UK-PA-IMRFRESEARCH@ipsos.com](mailto:UK-PA-IMRFRESEARCH@ipsos.com) or Emma.Bowkett@ipsos.com.

#### **UNHCR report 'An uncertain future, a journey through the move on period'**

This UNHCR report, '[An Uncertain Future](#)', presents the voices of newly recognised refugees and the insights of the organisations that support them during the move-on process. In the UK the 28-day transition period from asylum seeker status with asylum support and housing, to refugee status with mainstream benefits and their own accommodation is known as the 'move on' period. This period includes many challenges such as looking for employment and housing, navigating government services and learning a new language among others. Based on the perspectives of the individual they spoke with, the UNHCR make a number of recommendations to the UK Government to aid them as they seek to make improvements to this process.

#### **Rape Crisis England & Wales Not Safe Here**

Rape Crisis England & Wales have published a report in October 2024 concerning 'The systemic failures to protect women and children from sexual violence and abuse in asylum accommodation'.

The 108 page document includes firsthand accounts from victims of sexual violence and abuse and can be read [here](#).

#### **Creating Stable Futures - Outcomes for Children affected by Trafficking**

This 12-month study sought to identify ways that the current support system could be improved to ensure better outcomes for young people who have experienced human trafficking, modern slavery and/or exploitation. It was conducted by the Helena Kennedy Centre at Sheffield Hallam University, the Applied Social Research at the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) and Every Child Protected Against Trafficking (ECPAT UK).

The final report detailing the findings of the research and a tailored framework, anchored in the words of young people in the form of a Positive Outcomes Framework, can be found [here](#).

#### **Young Roots: Good Decision Making in Age Assessments**

When young people arrive in the UK to seek safety, their age may be questioned, especially in the absence of formal identification. They may be interviewed and assessed by different professionals trying to decide how old they are, including by the Home Office, by Social Workers working for local authorities, and - since the introduction of the National Age Assessment Board – by Social Workers employed by the Home Office.

Through the experience of supporting young asylum-seekers and refugees, Young Roots noticed that there is a wide variation in methods and quality of decision-making in assessments they came across in their work. As a result, Young Roots partnered with Immigration Social Work Services (ISWS - who provide specialist training and consultancy services for professionals working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and are experts on age assessment best practice), and Public Law Project (PLP - an independent legal charity of researchers, lawyers, trainers, and public law policy experts), to produce this research that examines in detail how age is being determined by local authorities.

The [report](#) offers a range of recommendations based on the research findings to help improve age assessment decision making, support Social Workers to produce better quality assessments, and enable a fairer experience for young people undergoing this process.

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## Events and Training

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### Free Online Training Courses for Community Groups

Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum (CECF) are offering free, informative online learning sessions from October 2024 – February 2025.

The topics covered include:

- Fundraising: how to increase income diversity for community groups,
- Resilience: how to build community group resilience and
- Next Steps: for community groups to help decide which direction to move in or which needs to meet.

See their [poster](#) for further information.

### Children Caring on the Move (CCoM) Training

This is a new training resource which is FREE to access and has been developed based on the findings from a [leading research project](#) with separated migrant children. We hope your practitioners will find it useful for their CPD.

This course is suitable for social workers, senior practitioners, personal advisors and any other practitioners who are involved in the care of separated migrant children (including foster carers and support workers).

The course encourages professionals to:

- Consider the meanings and complexities of 'care' for separated migrant children.
- Understand how different perspectives on 'childhood' influence their views on care.
- Reflect on professionals' and social care practitioners' views on care.
- Reflect on unaccompanied young people's perspectives of care.
- Critically reflect on their own values and experiences of care practices and caring relationships with separated children.

[Follow this link](#) to explore the course.

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## Funding

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### Hertfordshire County Council: Small Grants Funding Opportunity

Hertfordshire County Council is open to discussing projects for the next financial year (April 2025 onwards) and are interested in learning about innovative projects that they may be able to support. If you would like to discuss plans for supporting refugees and asylum seekers in Hertfordshire, please get in touch with Zarrine Dye. [zarrine.dye@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:zarrine.dye@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

### Cambridge City Council: Small Grants Funding of £5,000 and Under

Community groups can apply for a grant of £5,000 and under to support activities that will reduce social and/or economic inequality for Cambridge residents with the greatest need.

Funding can be applied for:

- activities that help people be more active
- activities that improve access to arts and culture
- activities that bring communities together

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- activities that reduce poverty
- activities that reduce loneliness and social isolation

There will be two funding rounds for activities taking place in 2025/26, but you can only apply to one funding round. Round one launches on 26 November 2024. The deadline to apply is 14 January 2025. Please visit Cambridge City Council's [website](#) for more information and details on how to apply.

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## Jobs

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### **Suffolk Refugee Support: Advice Service Manager**

Hours: 35 hours per week

Salary: £36,000

Application closing date: 9 January 2025, 12 noon

It is a permanent position.

If you are interested, click [here](#) for further details.

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