

## UK Migration Statistics and Trends

1. [Net migration figures](#) are as follows [for the year ending June 2019, published November 2019]:
  - 609,000 - Immigration
  - 397,000 - Emigration
  - 212,000 - Net migration
2. Official commentary from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) describes broadly unchanging levels of net migration, immigration and emigration, but with changes related to reasons for migration:
  - Net migration has been relatively stable since the end of 2016
  - Although EU migration to the UK fallen since 2016, non-EU migration has gradually increased.
  - Immigration for work has fallen as fewer EU nationals come to look for work, yet visas issued for non-EU skilled work have increased.
  - Immigration for study has increased as non-EU university applications reached their highest level ever. [Source: [ONS](#)]

## Asylum Contract

3. Migration Yorkshire continue to facilitate regular meetings between Mears, Migrant Help, the Home Office and Local Authorities across the region. These meetings aim to ensure the contract is managed positively for partners, communities and dispersed asylum seekers across our region.
4. Current issues remain around the use of ‘temporary or alternative’ Initial Accommodation. Migration Yorkshire, Home Office, the contract providers, local authorities and local health authorities have been meeting regularly to monitor specifically this aspect of the service delivery and ensure service user needs are identified and met.

## UK Immigration Policy, Law and News

5. The [Queen’s speech](#) has set out the legislative plans of the new Conservative government, outlining broad immigration plans. The previous immigration bill ([see our post-Brexit immigration policy briefing](#)) will be revived to end free movement. A points-based immigration system for skilled workers from 2021 will include points allocated in 3 categories: exceptional talent/entrepreneurs/investors; skilled workers with a job offer; sector-specific workers [no route to settlement]. There’ll be new routes prioritising scientists, researchers and health professionals, and the quota for seasonal agricultural workers will increase from 2,500 to 10,000 to fill shortages. Other notable announcements were that EU nationals’ access to benefits will be the same as non-EU nationals and that the NHS immigration surcharge will be increased for people coming to the UK for more than 6 months. [Source:Gov.uk]

6. Kevin Foster, MP for Torbay, has been appointed as the [new Immigration Minister](#) by the new Conservative government. [Source: Home Office]
7. The nationality fee for children to apply to register as British Citizens has been found to be unlawful by the High Court. The [Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens](#) (PRCBC) successfully argued that the fee prevents children, who were born in the UK or have been in the UK for the majority of their lives, from accessing British citizenship. The judgment requires the Home Office to review the fee. [Source: PRCBC]
8. Recent case law has confirmed that people who come to the UK under refugee family reunion [aren't legally considered refugees](#) under the UN Refugee Convention. This means that those individuals aren't protected from having that status withdrawn. Family reunion visa holders are not legally considered refugees but can still benefit from similar rights and entitlements. [Source: Free Movement]
9. The Home Office has conceded it acted unlawfully when it imposed a [blank study restriction](#) on people who are 'appeal rights exhausted' (ARE). This means a decision will now be based on 'the person's individual circumstances on whether to restrict the right to study for refused asylum seekers. The Home Office will review its Immigration Bail policy to reflect this change. [Source: Duncan Lewis Solicitors]
10. Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU) has released a new [report](#) "Not so straightforward" about the experiences of children in care and care leavers affected by Brexit immigration changes, specifically those who may be eligible for EUSS. [Source: GMIAU]

## Asylum

11. The Home Office has published its latest [asylum and protection statistics](#) covering asylum, resettlement and UASC. The UK offered protection - grants of asylum, HP, alternative forms of leave and resettlement - to 19,480 people, up 28% compared with the previous year. There were notable increases in grants to Iranians (up 1,348), Sudanese and Eritreans. There were 3,546 applications from UASC, over a quarter more than the previous year. Eritrea remains a top nationality at nearly 19%, followed by Sudan, Iraq, Iran, Vietnam and Afghanistan. [Source: Home Office]
12. Some asylum seekers who were held in immigration detention between 2014-2017 may be able to claim compensation after courts found that it was unlawful for the Home Office to detain asylum seekers while their cases were still being considered for transfer to other EU countries under the [Dublin system](#). [Source: the Independent]
13. Asylum Matters have [published new resources](#) for organisations supporting asylum seekers outlining the providers' contractual obligations under asylum support (AIRE) and accommodation (AASC) contracts and explaining the requirements of the services. Migration Yorkshire have also recently published briefing papers on both contracts. [Source: Asylum Matters]
14. The Home Office's [Assessing Destitution](#) policy for asylum support applications has been published providing guidance for Home Office caseworkers to assess destitution evidence. The previous policy had been archived over 2 years ago. [Source: Home Office]

## EU Nationals and Brexit

15. The UK did not leave the European Union on the 31st October 2019 and was granted a further extension of Article 50 until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. Following the election of the Conservative government, a new Brexit Bill is to be debated 7-9 January where amendments might be added, before going to the Lords for approval, then the European Parliament for ratification. The legislation will stop any extension to the transition period beyond 1 Dec 2020. [Source: [BBC](#)]
16. [Official statistics](#) were published for Quarter 3 of 2019 for the EU Settlement Scheme, providing new local breakdowns such as by nationality and outcomes (settled vs pre-settled status) per local authority. Applications in Y&H more than doubled since June, and while Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield and Hull have had most applications. Wakefield, Bradford and Leeds had the highest % of applications relative to their EU population size. [Source: Home Office]
17. The Home Office continue to publish monthly statistics on the EUSS with data for [November 2019](#) the latest published. Applications fell to just under 150K, a 75% drop from the previous month. Grants of pre-settled status continue to increase compared to settled status, now at 52%. [Source: Home Office]

## Trafficking and Modern Slavery

18. [The High Court has ruled](#) that the Home Office practice of awaiting the outcome of an asylum claim before deciding whether to grant discretionary leave to remain for individuals who had received a positive conclusive grounds decision on their trafficking case, is unlawful. The Home Office policy meant individuals relied on asylum support for long periods rather than be able to undertake employment, study or access mainstream support. [Source: Free Movement]
19. Home Office policy on processing [reconsideration requests of trafficking decisions has been found to be unlawful](#) following a successful legal challenge. Previously, requests for a reconsideration of a trafficking decision could be ignored if it came from sources other than the 'First Responders' or NRM-contracted support providers, meaning legal representatives making requests with newly obtained specialist evidence could be ignored. The Home Office is in process of amending their [guidance](#). [Sources: Free Movement, Home Office]

## Cohesion and Integration

20. A recent poll suggests that [Public attitudes towards migration](#) are more positive than before the EU referendum. Results showed over half (54%) want to see migrant numbers reduced, down from 66% in June 2015. Other findings include: 47% believe migration has had a positive impact on Britain, with 29% seeing it as having a negative impact. 67% believe migration puts pressure on public services like housing, and 61% believe that too often migrants don't integrate or follow British customs. [Source: IPSOS Mori]
21. Eurocities have published [guidance for the integration of young migrants and refugees](#)

[in Europe](#) with recommendations for councils, which include involving young people in mainstream education as early as possible, focusing on long term goals in employment planning, better use of technology for language support, opportunities for social interaction in 'safe spaces' and better support during transition to adulthood. [Source: Eurocities].

22. The [Local Inclusion Action Tool](#) is a new resource developed by OECD, Migration Policy Group (MPG), to help towns and cities promote migrant inclusion and can be used by local authorities and other services. [Source: LIAT]

### **Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)**

23. The government have re-introduced [legal aid for immigration and nationality law](#) matters for unaccompanied and separated children in care. This will also cover children under the care of local authorities, who might be applying through the EU Settlement but have complex cases, as well as any non-asylum immigration matters. [Source: Coram]

### **Refugee Resettlement**

24. The latest published refugee resettlement data covers up to the end of September 2019. In the last quarter 1,288 refugees were resettled in the UK under the VPRS and VCRS.

25. Yorkshire and Humber (including Bradford) has now accepted 1,911 on the VPRS scheme in total.

26. Nine Local Authorities in Yorkshire and Humber have agreed to resettle around 167 individuals (children and their families) under the government's Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (3,000 individuals from the Middle East & North Africa region). By the end of September 2019, 398 individuals had been resettled in this region under VCRS (some of these additional individuals have been agreed by LAs as family linked cases).

### **Voluntary Sector Engagement**

27. Migration Yorkshire recently held a VCS Engagement day on the November 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019 following on from our previous event in May 2019. 120 attendees from 58 organisations attended the two engagement days in May and November. The main focus of discussion at both was the AASC and AIRE contracts, with the latest day leading to 63 action points for the Home Office, Mears, Migrant Help and Migration Yorkshire.

28. Migration Yorkshire has also been working with the VCS to establish stronger engagement at the sub-regional migration group meetings. A VCS-led Steering Group was established and met four times to agree a role description for VCS representatives at sub-regional meetings. A nomination process took place across South and West Yorkshire, with Humber to follow. Additionally, four representatives have been agreed for SMG on a thematic basis, rather than regional.

29. Workshops to review the terms of reference and attendees took place on the request of Barnsley and Bradford local authorities. This led to the establishment of a new VCS operational group in Barnsley, to link in with strategic multi-agency meeting, and revised terms of reference and agenda in Bradford.
30. A draft strategy for engagement with the VCS in 2020 is underway, leaning on feedback from the engagement days and VCS representatives. Please contact Vicky Ledwidge for more information.

### **Asylum numbers in Leeds**

31. As of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019, the number of supported asylum seekers on Section 95 support in Leeds was 862. This includes 816 in supported accommodation and 46 in receipt of subsistence only support.
32. This is publicly available data and can be found online on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

### **Migration Yorkshire Events & Training**

33. Migration Yorkshire offers an annual 'Introduction to Migration' training session as part of our services to Local Authority partners each year. The session for Leeds for 2019-20 took place with positive feedback, and new sessions will be arranged for the forthcoming financial year.
34. Migration Yorkshire continues to deliver training under the Refugee Integration Yorkshire and Humber project, targeting key services in the Y&H region. 25 sessions were delivered between April-December 2019 with a further 25 planned for 2020.

**Stefan Robert**  
**January 2020**