

Agenda

West Yorkshire Sub Regional Migration Group Meeting

Tuesday 2 February 2022, 14:00 – 16:00pm

14:00	1. Welcome, introductions and apologies	Chair	
14:05	2. Minutes of the last meeting – 5 Oct 2021 Matters Arising/Action log	Chair	Attached
14:15	3. Living The Weathers Report	MY	Verbal
14:30	4. Statistics – update on progress	MY	Verbal
14:35	5. Police-led discussion – how can West Yorks police support you and your organisation?	BA	Verbal
14:45	6. Resettlement and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)	MY	Attached/ Verbal
14:50	7. Refugee Integration Yorkshire & Humber (RIYH) research	MY	Attached/ Verbal
14:55	8. Integration and cohesion	MY	Attached
15:00	9. Hong Kong British National Overseas (BNO)	MY	Attached
15:05	10. EU & EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)	MY	Attached
	11. Asylum		
15:10	• Home Office	Home Office	Attached/ Verbal
15:20	• Mears	Mears	Attached
15:30	• Migrant Help	Migrant Help	Attached
15:40	• Statistics and recent developments	MY	Attached
15:50	12. Other updates		
	• For information: Latest Policy update	MY	Attached
15:55	13. Any other business	Chair	

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 11 May 2022, 2.00 - 4.00pm

AGENDA ITEM: 2

WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG: FEBRUARY 2022



Redacted Minutes of the West Yorkshire Sub Regional Migration Group meeting that took place on 5 October 2021

Attendees

Cllr Mary Harland (Chair)	Leeds City Council
Murad Ali	West Yorkshire Police
Nicki Batley	Mears
Pria Bhabra	Leeds
Sarah Botterill	Migration Yorkshire
Jane Callaghan	Wakefield Council
Cllr Maureen Cummings	Wakefield Council
Emma Fitzpatrick	Mears
Ben Foord	Migration Yorkshire
Kirsten Fussing	Calderdale Council
Rachel Goodall	Refugee Action
Becky Hellewell	St Augustine's Centre
Marsela Hoxha	Migrant Help
Kate James	Migration Yorkshire
Gary Jeffers	Home Office
Vicky Ledwidge	Migration Yorkshire
Hiron Miah	Bradford Council
Sarah Richardson	Calderdale Council
Adam Smith	Home Office
Cllr Aubrey Smith	Calderdale Council
Kate Smith	Women Centre
Ally Swadling	PAFRAS
Emma Taylor	Wakefield

Apologies

Bev Adams	West Yorkshire Police
Ian Day	Bradford Council
Bill Dennis	Private attendee
Michael Martin	Home Office
Sarah Mitchell	Kirklees Council
Cllr Carole Pattison	Kirklees Council

1.0 Welcome, introductions and apologies

1.1 The chair welcomed attendees and introductions were made.

2.0 Minutes of the last meeting held on 9 June 2021

2.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 The action log was reviewed and updated.

4.0 Resettlement and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

4.1 Update on Afghan Resettlement

- The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme was established 1 April 2021 and provides support to service users for 12 months.
- 196 service users had arrived in local authority housing since July 2021 at the time of the meeting.
- Migration Yorkshire is co-ordinating the scheme for our Yorkshire and Humber local authority partners. All 15 authorities in Yorkshire and the Humber have signed up.
- Afghan families leaving quarantine hotels have been moved to 'holding' or 'bridging' hotels.
- Service users remain in bridging hotels until suitable accommodation can be found by local authorities that have pledged to accept families.
- This has slowed down the UKRS but we are still having arrivals
- A webinar on Afghan resettlement was hosted by MHCLG for local authority chief executives on 28 September 2021. A new Afghan resettlement scheme has been announced, the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). The intention is for 20,000 service users to be resettled nationally, with 5,000 of those happening in the first year. This scheme will be modelled on the Syrian resettlement programme.
- Queries on the scheme can be sent to annie.lancashire@migrationyorkshire.org.uk

4.2 Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)

- An update was provided regarding unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

5.0 Refugee Integration Yorkshire & Humber research

5.1 Kate James at Migration Yorkshire presented slides on results of opinion polls carried out as part of the Communities up Close and Refugee Integration Yorkshire and Humber projects. Key points noted are as follows:

- The first poll was carried out in July 2020 and the second was done in December 2020.
- For each poll ICM Unlimited interviewed a sample of around 2,000 adults aged 18+ who live in Yorkshire and Humber via an online survey.
- 46% think Yorkshire and Humber is welcoming to refugees and people seeking asylum; 33% think it is not welcoming.
- Migration Yorkshire will be sending out individualised reports for each local authority, summarising the responses from residents in that area.

- Migration Yorkshire is happy to have a conversation with each local authority to discuss the results of the opinion poll as soon as they have shared the data.
- A copy of the slides that were presented is available here:



CUC & RIYH polls
for SY sub-regional :

- National polls suggest a gradual softening of attitudes towards migration and Migration Yorkshire will continue to monitor this data.
- It was suggested that the shortage of HGV drivers and labour shortages in other industries could impact future poll results.

5.2 Other research activity:

- ‘Living the weathers and other stories’ is a research paper that was recently published by Migration Yorkshire. It explores the experiences of people with a refugee background who have settled in Yorkshire and Humber.
- ‘Sketches of Hope’ is an illustrative booklet containing the drawings of research participants, presenting their take on an aspect of integration.
- There is a lot of research activity currently underway by multiple organisations as part of this project and local authority, VCS and other partners may be contacted as part of this.
- Qamran Hussain at Migration Yorkshire is currently undertaking a consultation and review of data and statistics that Migration Yorkshire produces, to understand what is working well and where the gaps and opportunities may be. The findings of this consultation will be available in early 2022.

6.0 Integration and cohesion

- ### 6.1
- Solidaritech has completed recruitment and is now fully operational. The organisation helps to improve digital inclusion by refurbishing donated technology and giving it to service users in need.
 - It is hoped that the new refugee integration services in Sheffield and Wakefield will begin supporting service users in the coming weeks.
 - According to the latest Home Office statistics, over the past seven years Yorkshire and Humber has welcomed the most refugees in England under resettlement programmes.
 - Hull has the first ‘CCG of Sanctuary’ in the UK, so healthcare joins the city and university in holding Sanctuary status. Also, Hebden Bridge Picture House, Calderdale has become the first ‘Cinema of Sanctuary’ in the UK.
 - Migration Yorkshire is now producing a weekly ‘migration news roundup’, from a wide range of sources and covers inspiring stories, international news, UK borders and migration policy, specific migrant groups and cohesion and integration. It is available at www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/MYroundup

7.0 Hong Kong British National (Oversees)

- 7.1**
- From 31 January 2021, Hong Kong citizens with British National (Overseas) status, and their family members, have been applying for a Hong Kong BN(O) visa enabling them to live, work and study in the UK.
 - Government statistics show that, as of 30 June 2021, nearly 65,000 applications for the BN(O) visa were made and over 47,000 were granted. Now, the grant rate is 99%.
 - Migration Yorkshire produced a briefing in November 2020, which was updated and circulated in May 2021, covering the rights of BN(O) visa holders for employers and landlords, which is available on the Hong Kong Hub [here](#).
 - Work has begun on the regional coordination of the welcome programme.
 - Migration Yorkshire continues to gather information on settling patterns and experiences of migrants who arrive via this route. So far, there are reports of new arrivals from Hong Kong in Leeds, Sheffield, York, Wakefield, Hull, Harrogate, North East Lincolnshire and Doncaster.
 - Surveys and reports indicate that the biggest challenges for service users are jobs, school places and the availability of private rented accommodation.
 - For more information please email ewa.jamroz@migrationyorkshire.org.uk

8.0 EU & EU Settlement Scheme

- 8.1**
- The latest statistics are now available for the EU settlement scheme.
 - There have been a high number of requests for administrative reviews to the Home Office, which are used to challenge a refusal or incorrect grant of status, and this is causing delays in decisions being made.
 - A number of reports on the experiences, delivery and the impact of the EU settlement scheme have been published covering complex cases, Roma communities and role of local authorities. Queries about this can be raised with ewa.jamroz@migrationyorkshire.org.uk

9.0 Asylum

9.1 Home Office update:

- The Home Office gave an update on the use of hotels across Yorkshire and Humber.
- Hotels currently in use in West Yorkshire are the Metro Inn Kirklees, The Rock Hotel Calderdale, Mercure Hotel Leeds, Holiday Inn Express Leeds, Britannia Hotel Leeds and the IBIS Hotel Leeds.
- There has been double the number of arrivals across the English Channel so far this year than in the whole of 2020.
- The focus of the Home Office remains on accommodating service users in suitable countries when they arrive in the country and meeting statutory obligations.
- There have been some challenges in identifying new contingency accommodation sites but stand up of these sites must continue so that service users can be moved out of immigration detention centres.
- There is a backlog of service users awaiting decisions. The Home Office is recruiting additional staff to address this.

- The Home Office is focussing on dispersing service users from the south of England and London into other regions, and then dispersing them in-region.
- Procurement of family accommodation is being prioritised, particularly for families with school-aged children.
- Details were provided on the Home Office missing person and absentee reporting process for initial accommodation. A missing person is considered to be someone that is vulnerable, coerced into leaving their accommodation or may not have left of their own free will. Others are absentees.
- Operation Riverboat in Yorkshire & Humber is aimed at helping the police to conduct better investigations into these missing people and sharing of intelligence.
- It was noted that information regarding missing persons and Operation Riverboat is restricted as it is part of an ongoing police investigation.
- Human trafficking awareness training is delivered to service users by the police and Mears.
- The Home Office is working with Mears to improve the processes for reporting missing persons from contingency accommodation. It is hoped this will prevent future delays in these incidents being communicated to local authority colleagues.
- Predominantly Vietnamese and Albanian service users are going missing from contingency accommodation.
- It is not clear how successful police are at finding these missing persons.
- Gary Jeffers gave thanks from the Home Office to all partners including VCS organisations that have been involved supporting service users in contingency accommodation.
- The Home Office has an issues log that is held and updated by Migration Yorkshire. If local authorities have any issues or concerns, then they are advised to raise these through the log. Migration Yorkshire then raises these issues with the Home Office and tracks their progress.
- Procurement of dispersal accommodation is still considered to be the primary route out of the need for contingency accommodation.
- There are conversations ongoing with other local authorities in NEYH about then engaging in dispersal. The Home Office will inform partners as soon as any agreements are made.
- The Home Office is in regular contact with Mears to understand their procurement pipeline and support them to increase their rate of procurement.

9.2 Family reunion:

- Family reunion is the main route for service users to apply for visas to allow their spouses and children under 18 years of age to join them in the UK.
- The Home Office has 60 days from receipt of an application to make a decision on it.
- In the UK there are no specified stipulations regarding a service user's wealth or size of accommodation. The only requirement is that there must be substantive relationship to support the application.

- There is currently no visa application centre in Afghanistan so people are travelling to other areas, predominantly Islamabad, to submit their applications. It is not clear whether these people travel back to Afghanistan after submitting their applications.
- There have been a significant number of applications from Afghan nationals located outside of Afghanistan since the takeover of the country by the Taliban.
- The Home Office will be adding an additional paragraph in the family reunion visa issue letter, advising service users to contact their local authority as soon as possible if they require additional support. It is hoped that this will address difficulties faced by local authorities regarding short-notice arrivals.
- The biggest issue for local authorities around family reunion is homelessness.
- The Home Office is working with British Red Cross on how to facilitate necessary information sharing with local authorities, whilst protecting service user data in line with GDPR requirements.
- This is the last time that Adam Smith will be in attendance at this meeting as he is moving into another role. Thanks were given for his support over the year.

9.3 Mears update:

- Procurement of new dispersal accommodation continues to be challenging and there is ongoing pressure on the existing dispersal accommodation estate.
- Capacity at Urban House has recently increased from 230 service users to 257.
- There are currently 691 service users in contingency accommodation in West Yorkshire.
- Outbreaks of COVID at Urban House have been well-managed, following implementation of the COVID-19 outbreak management plan.
- Mears has been working with VCS organisations to facilitate a return to face-to-face support at initial accommodation sites.
- Mears gave thanks to partners that continue to provide wraparound support for service users in contingency accommodation.
- VCS colleagues have concerns about their ability to support increasing numbers of service users without further funding. There is no funding available to the VCS from the Home Office, but the Home Office has recommended to ministers that funding should be allocated to help with supporting asylum seekers. The Home Office will continue to push for this and will provide an update in due course.
- Focus groups continue to be held with service users to understand where improvements can be made in contingency accommodation.
- Mears is currently exploring ways of using their staff 16-hour volunteering allowance to support VCS organisations.
- To support roll-out of COVID vaccinations in contingency accommodation sites, Mears has prepared a range of translated resources for service users.

- There are 136 service users in West Yorkshire with a planned departure date up to 5 October 2021 that have received discontinuation of support due to a negative asylum decision.
- Mears is in the process of refreshing people's understanding of modern slavery and trafficking. Awareness sessions have been organised with Kirklees, Bradford and Wakefield. Work is currently being planned with Leeds and Calderdale. Hotel security staff have been invited to these sessions.
- The Mears Foundation opens for applications for grants twice per year to support local projects.

9.4 Migrant Help update:

- There has been a high number of arrivals of new service users to the region.
- As soon as new contingency accommodation is stood up, Migrant Help works with Mears to ensure that communication channels are established, i.e. contact numbers for service users or hotel reception number, etc, and that appropriate support is put in place.
- Migrant Help has prepared an updated written briefing for new arrivals and is available in 10 languages.
- Migrant Help staff continue to work from the local office and offer face-to-face support when necessary.
- Mobile phones are sourced for service users without mobile phones in hotels so they can be called to complete the support forms and briefings and contact Migrant Help for support when required.
- Leaflets have been produced and translated in 10 languages that contain a free local telephone number and email address for Migrant Help's local office in Wakefield.
- Aspen cards are issued to service users in initial accommodation and contingency accommodation that are eligible for additional payments. Migrant Help received the lists weekly from HO.
- It was noted that service users on full board that have been granted S95 support should receive £8 per week via ASPEN card that will be issued to them by Migrant Help. Where this does not happen, colleagues should email Migrant Help at iaadminwakefield@migranthelpuk.org with the port reference for the service user so that it can be escalated to the Home Office.
- Wait times for the First Response Centre telephone number are improving and the average wait time in July was 14 minutes.
- The average wait time to speak to the EAGL team in July was five minutes, 11 seconds.
- Migrant Help can request HC2 forms for service users on Section 95 support after a couple weeks from support being granted so they can access healthcare. These forms are not needed for service users on Section 98 support as health provision is available for each contingency site.
- There will be some organisational changes at Migrant Help and Tesfay Waldemichael will become the head of operations and partnerships for the north of England including Yorkshire & Humber. Marsela Hoxha will be

taking up the same role for the south of England and as a result, will no longer be attending these meetings.

- Thanks were given to Marsela for her support to the region and best wishes for her new role.

9.5 Migration Yorkshire statistics and recent developments:

- Migration Yorkshire's briefing on the Nationality and Borders Bill has now been published and is available on the Migration Yorkshire website.
- Migration Yorkshire has been reviewing the number and method of arrivals of asylum seekers. There has been an increase in arrivals by small boat, but this does not necessarily mean there will be an increase in asylum applications.
- Regarding the Interviewing within hotel accommodation project, there are some issues with identifying service users that are suitable to go through the process, so the pilot is currently on hold. The Home Office will provide an update when more information is known.
- It was noted that Government statistics do not contain details of service users on Section 4.
- Cluster table data is restricted and not for wider circulation.

10.0 Other updates

10.1 The Policy update August 2021 enclosed within the meeting papers provides an overview of the latest statistics, policy and research on migration issues affecting partner organisations in Yorkshire and Humber.

11.0 Any other business

11.1 Nothing to report.

12.0 Date of next meeting

12.1 Wednesday 2 February, 2.00-4.00pm
Teleconference

Ben Foord, Migration Yorkshire
12 October 2021

AGENDA ITEM: 2

WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG:

FEBRUARY 2022



ACTION LOG - WEST YORKSHIRE SUB REGIONAL MIGRATION GROUP

Chair: Cllr Mary Harland

Date created: 05/10/2021

Last updated by: Ben Foord

Date last updated: 05/10/2021

	Open action
	Open for monitoring
	Closed

No:	Date raised	Action	Action owner	Response/ progress	Date closed
1	05/10/2021	Gary Jeffers to confirm whether a briefing note from the Home Office about changes to the data that is provided can be shared.	GJ		
2	05/10/2021	Adam Smith to raise with Red Cross that local authorities are interested in being involved in meetings with the Home Office and Red Cross re looking at how to facilitate necessary information sharing with local authorities, whilst protecting service user data in line with GDPR requirements.	AS		
3	05/10/2021	Vicky Ledwidge to share the latest EUSS data with meeting attendees.	VL		
4	05/10/2021	Kate James to share findings from the question that was asked about COVID in the July 2020 opinion poll, carried out as part of the Communitiesup Close and Refugee Integration Yorkshire and Humber projects.	KJ		

5	05/10/2021	Vicky Ledwidge to share the Migrant Help Wakefield email address with VCS colleagues and Emma Fitzpatrick to share it with Mears staff. This address should be used to escalate issues with service user ASPEN cardpayments - iaadminwakefield@migranthelpuk.org	VL, EF		
6	09/06/2021	Gary Jeffers to progress the request for an estimate of volume of property procurement at a local level to help the VCS plan their delivery.	GJ	C/F	
7	09/06/2021	Emma Fitzpatrick to provide Migration Yorkshire with information detailing the ECP process. Migration Yorkshire will then share this with meeting attendees.	EF	C/F	
8	09/06/2021	Vicky Ledwidge to clarify with Gary Jeffers why full asylum data including numbers of services users on Section 95 and Section 98 are not always shared and Gary Jeffers to chase the data ask request again.	VL, GJ		
9	09/06/2021	Gary to raise VCS concerns with Mick Martin re there being enough information and time provided to support organisations to plan ahead re negative cessations, and whether service users with negative decisions will be COVID vaccinated prior to leaving supported accommodation.	GJ	05/10/21 - There are currently no plans for service users with negative decisions to receive COVID vaccinations before moving on.	05/10/2021
10	09/06/2021	Marsela Hoxha to share a copy of the new Migrant Help service user briefing with meeting attendees.	MH	Complete.	05/10/2021
11	09/06/2021	Mears to share the calendar of Refugee Week activities at all IA and IA contingency sites with meeting attendees.	EF	Complete.	05/10/2021
12	09/06/2021	Migration Yorkshire to share an updated cluster table with amended figures.	VL	Complete.	05/10/2021

AGENDA ITEM: 6

WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG: FEBRUARY 2022



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supporting local migration services

For information: Members are asked to note the report.

Resettlement, Relocation and UASC

Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Relocation Scheme (ACRS) scheme

1. Migration Yorkshire are co-ordinating the schemes for our Y & H local authority partners, as we have done for the resettlement programme. Over 650 individuals are expected to have arrived into Local Authority housing from April 2021-March 2022 (figures do not include Bradford). Information about the ARAP scheme can be found on the Home Office websites:

[Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy: further information on eligibility criteria, offer details and how to apply - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy)

2. The new Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) formally started on the 6th January 2022. Further information can be found here: [Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme)
3. 6 bridging hotels have been stood up in our region in Scarborough, Selby, Leeds, Rotherham, Bradford and Doncaster, totalling over 650 individuals.
4. 'Wrap-around' support is being provided in the bridging hotels by the local authorities, Horton housing and the Refugee Council.
5. Resources have been provided through Home Office Funding Instructions (F.I's) for the Wrap-around support in hotels, ARAP and ACRS. The F.I's allow for 3 years support for the families.
6. There have been significant challenges in responding to increasing asks from the HO, regarding our regional response, particularly around holding hotels, pledging additional numbers and finding additional suitable housing. All regional local authorities have been working extremely hard in response to this call and the HO have acknowledged this and sent their thanks and appreciation of all the efforts made.

Refugees Resettled under UKRS (UK Resettlement Scheme)

7. While the UKRS programme continues, there is some disruption due to the ARAP/ACRS schemes and we expect to see the Local Authority pledges for this year go down due to pressures on finding available and suitable housing.
8. Approximately 235 individuals are expected to arrive under UKRS (figure excludes Bradford) have arrived in or region in 2021/22.
9. Migration Yorkshire have worked closely with these LAs and the Refugee Council to ensure robust support plans are in place for self-isolation on arrival, testing and meeting all the tracing requirements. Flexibility around arrival

dates due to Covid-19 restrictions has been required, as flights and other details change.

10. Whilst no new announcement has been forthcoming regarding the numbers and F.I's from the Home Office for 2022/23, it is expected shortly and assumed will mirror the 3 year support as set out in the ARAP/ACRS F.I's.

Children and Families Wellbeing Project

11. The Children and Families Wellbeing Project was developed in 2018 by Migration Yorkshire, local authorities and VCS in Y&H. It aims to address the complex trauma faced by some young resettled refugees which is having an impact on their family life, school attendance/behaviour and ability to integrate.
12. The evaluation of the project is now available from Migration Yorkshire. The evaluation highlights the impact of the project, the need for this type of specialist support and has many case studies that make compelling reading. A copy of the report is available on [Migration Yorkshire's website](#).

Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)

13. Whilst the HO have announced that new arrivals will come with ILR, this, as yet, has not started and refugees continue to arrive with five years leave to remain. Each family has to apply for ILR (Indefinite Leave to Remain) at the five year point. Migration Yorkshire have worked with Legal Aid Solicitors and Refugee Council to develop a regional co-ordination project to support each individual and family to make the application. This is to ensure that resettled refugees do not find themselves without status (and the consequences of that) in our region.
14. Should you require further information regarding the ILR process for resettled clients please contact Muhammad:
Muhammad.nayyer@refugeecouncil.org.uk

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

15. The information within this paper is restricted.

Welcoming Young Refugees

16. We continue to work with local authorities to promote best practice across all areas of supporting UASC for the first year of RIYH. We are however only providing limited service at the moment as we are still recruiting to cover staff who went on maternity leave and other who left the organisation. We offer ongoing support and training on a regional basis as well as providing useful resources to carers and practitioners across all the 15 LAs.

Charlotte Cooke
Delphine Jacobs
Migration Yorkshire
21 January 2022

AGENDA ITEM: 7

WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG: FEBRUARY 2022



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For information: Members are asked to note the report.

RIYH research and statistics

Statistics

1. Following our statistics review, options for software to share data and statistics in a visual, interactive and accessible format were further explored. ArcGIS has been employed to develop outputs; unfortunately, LCC IT were not able to deploy PowerBI with functionality to share outputs with external partners in time.
2. Dashboards including data about resettled refugees, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, S95-supported asylum seekers, and the EUSS have been developed and are planned to be released in late February 2022 with quarterly updates as Home Office data is released. Other dashboards including wider migration indicators will soon follow with annual updates.
3. We facilitated a migration-focussed consultation on Census 2021 outputs in collaboration with the ONS in October 2021. Partners from a range of specialisms and sectors in the regions attended.

Research

4. Data collection for the research programme under RIYH is ongoing; you may be among those asked to get involved in an interview about housing for refugees (by Phil, Jamie or Santokh at the University of Huddersfield, or Akosiwa and colleagues at Migration Yorkshire), initial assessments for ESOL learners (by Naeema at Leeds Beckett University), professional bodies for skilled workers (by John at Leeds Beckett University), or about social mixing and isolation (by Tesfalem and colleagues at Migration Yorkshire, with Lucy and Amreen from IPPR).
5. Migration Yorkshire held an open meeting of the [Yorkshire and Humber Migration Research Network](#) in October 2021. This network aims to bring together people with an interest in migration research from across the region, to encourage information sharing, networking and collaboration. The event provided the opportunity to hear five presentations by researchers working on migration issues in our region, including: community-based participatory research, the Arab community's experience of Sheffield public libraries and Chilean refugees who arrived in the 70s. The meeting was attended by 60 people and also invited reflections from practitioners working in related fields. A linked group of postgraduate researchers working on migration is meeting regularly, who are from Higher Education institutions in Yorkshire and

Humber. For more information contact kate.james@migrationyorkshire.org.uk (for the research network) and Tesfalem.yemane@migrationyorkshire.org.uk (for the postgraduate group).

6. We support other local researchers and research studies in an advisory capacity, including two that are working with peer researchers: the [MIMY project](#) (on the integration of young adult migrants in South Yorkshire) at Sheffield University, and the [Transnational Families in Europe project](#) linked to the University of Leeds. We are also supporting the [LIMITS project](#) at Leeds University that is concerned with low skilled migration after Brexit. If you have expertise on issues facing young adult migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and a view about integration policy, [please consider completing this survey](#) being run by colleagues on the MIMY research project at the University of Sheffield (deadline end of Jan).
7. Researchers from Migration Yorkshire and our partner research organisations contributed to workshop sessions during the Yorkshire Integration Festival in November 2021:
 - *How can 'integration' happen online? Challenges and opportunities in a Covid-impacted world* - Lucy from IPPR presented their work that linked to the [Jump starting integration](#) report and this [Inclusive Cities blog on connecting communities](#), alongside colleagues from the Refugee Integration Service in Hull and Solace
 - *Impacting Integration: how and in what ways can we shape our understanding of integration in order to improve perceptions and policy?* - run by Phil and colleagues from the University of Huddersfield
 - *Local communities: what do they think about migration and integration? Insight from local research* - a shared panel chaired by Naeema from Leeds Beckett University, with contributions from Denis at Oxford University – whose work was based on a project on [public attitudes to labour migrants during the pandemic](#) – and Kate at Migration Yorkshire with Lucy from IPPR discussing the [Communities up Close project](#)
 - [Living the Weathers and other stories](#) - including presentations by Migration Yorkshire researcher Vanja and community researchers Akosiwa and Tesfalem.
8. For anyone interested in migration but without much time to search for updates, in August Migration Yorkshire launched the [Migration news roundup](#), a weekly selection online of stories about migration-related policy, research and statistics. Do check out the webpage each Monday (or follow our reminders on twitter [@MigrationYorks](#)) for an overview of what's been happening locally, nationally and internationally.

Pip Tyler
Qamran Hussain
Migration Yorkshire
January 2022

AGENDA ITEM: 8

WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG: FEBRUARY 2022



Migration Yorkshire
supporting local migration services

For information: Members are asked to note the report.

Integration and cohesion

Refugee Integration Yorkshire and Humber

1. The Refugee Integration Service (RIS) is now in its 2nd and final year of our current AMIF-funded programme. The service is now fully operational, although due to COVID-19 restrictions over the past year some services are delivering online-only provision whilst others have now resumed face-to-face provision.
2. Sheffield Council's RIS is now live following successful recruitment meaning all 11 local authority services are now operational. Sheffield are in the process of recruiting additional staff to support the project. Other areas, Leeds and Calderdale have also recently undergone recruitment.
3. Local authority RIS partners have reported low numbers of positive discontinuations from asylum accommodation in recent months suggesting a lower rate of decision-making from the Home Office. Migration Yorkshire is looking into this matter as part of our strategic role as any drop in asylum decision-making may affect the service's ability to meet targets set by funders but also impact other key services in the region supporting this client group.

Connecting Opportunities

4. Due to COVID-19 restrictions easing, up until December 2021, the project has been able to introduce more face-to-face and hybrid support alongside remote delivery across Leeds City Region. For example, some outdoor social activities like wellbeing walking groups and '*Find your way around Bradford*' challenge to help reduce isolation.
5. Alongside continuing to deliver Key working, Employment, English Language, Wellbeing Support and Befriending activities the projects recent Employer Engagement activities have been particularly successful, partially influenced by changes in the labour market and employers increase in awareness of the plight of refugees due to the Afghan crisis e.g. direct contact and recruitment by GXO Logistics in Bradford. Also, incorporating wellbeing delivery, within face-to-face ESOL classes, has worked well in raising mental health awareness/support.
6. Project partners contributed sessions to Migration Yorkshire's Integration Festival: '*The Wellbeing Wheel*,' '*Connecting Opportunities for Women*' and '*Connecting through Befriending*'. These sessions worked well in sharing good practice on CO work and supporting others e.g. LASSN was contacted after the festival by an organisation, who hope to set up a similar Befriending scheme in Bradford.

7. Examples of some recent challenges include: Keyworker recruitment and shortage of staff in some areas, while recruitment has been ongoing; still a reluctance amongst some participants to engage in face-to-face activities, due to COVID anxiety; a high labour demand but low hourly wages being offered and an increase in need for CAB type support due to digital exclusion barriers and many statutory organisations continuing to work remotely and online e.g. online housing, benefits and school applications.
8. Some geographical areas were on temporary hold to new referrals, due to staff shortages, but from January 2022 all geographical areas are now open. Up to the end of December 2021, the project had supported 1474 participants and of these 62% are woman migrants, with the majority joining families in the UK. This rate of female participants has continued to remain steady at this level.
9. In terms of participants by regions this has remained fairly constant, 39% live in Leeds, 22% Bradford, 15% Kirklees, 10% Calderdale, 13% Wakefield and 1% North Yorkshire areas. The top nationality for refugees continues to be Sudanese (21%) and then Iranian (19%) whilst Pakistani (23%) and then Polish (6%) is the most common nationality among other migrants.
10. Despite the pandemic and the many challenges, participants have still continued to exit into employment (24%); 72% have participated in English Language Learning of which 60% have progressed to higher levels and 56% of women feel more integrated, with their local community and British Society.
11. Due to current funding for the delivery of CO project ending 31st March 2023 due to ESF funding no longer being available beyond 2023, sourcing funding for beyond this date will be a priority for 2022.

Additions beyond the Policy update paper

12. These items are intended to update and complement the information in the Policy Update paper (dated November 2021) attached for information as Agenda item (11).
13. [A research report on how coronavirus has impacted on social cohesion and integration](#) identified Bradford, Hull, Scarborough and Selby within a group of [52 council areas where one consequence of the pandemic could be far right extremism](#) as they have a combination of high covid impact, low economic resilience and less liberal attitudes to migration and multiculturalism. (Sources: Hope not Hate, the Observer)
14. [Bradford and Calderdale are two areas studied in detail in a large study on the impact of the pandemic on social cohesion](#), selected as examples of places with greater social connection and social action. The report observes local solidarity and trust in local government despite growing national division and division between particular groups (for example in terms of wealth, referendum vote, and different nations of the UK) and finds that places have been more resilient where councils had invested in social infrastructure and cohesion. It recommends investment in local initiatives as well as leadership to use language that emphasises commonality and interdependence. (Source: Belong – Cohesion and Integration Network)

15. Researchers at Newcastle University evidenced that [lockdown led to greater isolation for refugees and asylum seekers](#) (Source: Newcastle University)
16. [Government needs to 'jump-start' efforts to promote integration](#) according to a think tank, through investment in communities through social infrastructure, reform in the immigration system, and adopting the principles of sanctuary and co-production and ensuring they run through integration strategies. (Source: IPPR)
17. A National Audit Office report on private-renting notes that migrants are three times more likely to live in private-rented accommodation and that private-rented homes are more likely to be unsafe or lower in standard than privately-owned homes or social housing. Disparities are most pronounced in Yorkshire and Humber compared to the rest of England. Alarming, it also found that [a quarter of landlords are unwilling to rent homes to non-UK passport holders](#). The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is developing potential reforms and is planning a white paper. (Source: NAO)
18. [An article 'How racism impacts homeless people'](#) reveals how structural racism impacts access to homelessness services for people identifying as Black or belonging to minority ethnic groups. 'Black households' are more than three times more likely to experience homelessness than all other ethnicities. Partially this is the result of disparities driven by labour market inequalities, immigration policy and the design of the social security system. (Source: Inside Housing – subscription only)
19. [Azeem Rafiq gave evidence to the parliamentary inquiry on racism in cricket](#), including his experiences at Yorkshire County Cricket Club. Some suggest his testimony is not a surprise; what seems different this time - according to some - is that [Azeem Rafiq is being listened to](#). This led to more [stories from Yorkshire's individuals who identify as part of the 'British Asian community'](#) about how racism plays a big part in their day-to-day life. (Sources: BBC, the Guardian)
20. [Broadcasters have agreed to stop using the term BAME](#) where possible, following a BBC-commissioned [report by Birmingham City University](#) that recommends the acronym stops being used as it groups people from very diverse backgrounds, different practices, traditions and values under one umbrella, and may hide discrimination. Instead, more specific terms should be used to describe ethnicity. (Sources: BBC, Birmingham City University)
21. This article explores the use of the term 'racism', which is being adopted globally by various minority groups, with [a move towards recognising 'multiracism'](#) – for example, as experienced by Yazidis in Syria, Uyghurs in China and Papuans in Indonesia, and away from thinking about it as only Western or white. (Source: The Conversation)
22. It's not surprising to hear that the power of images on our perceptions and practices is strong. New research suggests that [people are more willing to help if an image of suffering exposes an identifiable individual](#) rather than a group of anonymous, 'faceless masses'. They found that viewers dehumanised people fleeing persecution if the images of them were in big rather than small groups. Furthermore, dehumanisation seems to increase in cases when images show faceless individuals in the sea (as opposed to the

land). The researchers suggest it is very easy to depict people instead of being *in crisis* as *being a crisis*. (Source: The Conversation)

23. British Future reflect on [10 things we learned about public attitudes in 2021](#) which include issues relating to migration. Most people (70%) agree government is handling migration badly, even if for different reasons. 'Taking the knee' has become the focal point of talk about race and racism, and now six out of 10 football fans back players when taking the knee. Many still do not know much about terminologies around 'Culture Wars', with the exception of the term 'white privilege'. (Source: British Future)

24. Local stories about migrants in Yorkshire and Humber include:

- [Hungry in Huddersfield? There's a new place to get Middle Eastern food](#) - at the family-run Mood Café on Westgate. (Source: Yorkshire Examiner)
- Here's a local [feature about Afghan families resettled in Bradford](#). (Source: Telegraph and Argus)
- Local media highlighted Welcome House, a project managing to deliver [a face to face multi-agency service for people seeking asylum in Hull](#). (Source: Hull Daily Mail)
- [A North Yorkshire veteran created the 'Buddy Box' to support Afghan children](#) learning English in school – it's already been used in places like Selby. (Source: BBC)
- Through virtual reality the [BReaTHE project enables displaced people to visit digitally recreated historical sites](#). (Source: Bradford University)
- Here's a reminder of the [visit by the Duke of Cambridge to a hotel housing Afghan families](#) in Leeds. (Source: Yorkshire Post)
- [ESOL students from Bradford](#) college were invited to the Royal Shakespeare Company Showcase and a VIP trip to Downing Street. (Source: Bradford College on twitter)
- ['More than a migrant' features three people from different walks of life who have made Kirklees their home](#). Kirklees Council put together this two minute video for International Migrants Day. (Source: Kirklees Together)
- A young woman from Leeds has been named [inspirational young person of the year](#) for raising awareness and getting people to talk about their Caribbean heritage. (Source: LeedsLive)
- The [Yorkshire Cricket Foundation is offering coaching sessions to Afghan refugees in Scarborough](#). (Source: Scarborough News)

Stefan Robert
Vanessa Lendzionowski
Pip Tyler
January 2022

AGENDA ITEM: 9

WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG: FEBRUARY 2022



For information: Members are asked to note the report.

Hong Kong British National (Overseas)

Background

1. From 31 January 2021, Hong Kong citizens with British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) status, and their family members, have been applying for a Hong Kong BN(O) visa enabling them to live, work and study in the UK.
2. In April, the government announced a new UK-wide welcome programme to support integration of the new arrivals from Hong Kong, which includes regional 'Welcome Hubs', funding to local authorities to provide ESOL and destitution support, and national and local VCSE grant schemes to support employment, education and community cohesion.
3. Details of the successful VCSE projects will be publicly announced at the end of January.

Developments

4. The most recent [government statistics](#) show that 88,800 applications for the BN(O) visa were made, with 24,000 applications submitted in Q3 2021. New data for the last quarter of 2021 is due at the end of February. (Source: Home Office)
5. Migration Observatory published key findings from a survey focusing on the [migration intentions of BNO status holders](#). The survey shows that 6% of eligible population were planning to come to the UK, with further 32% considering the move. Those planning to move are younger and more educated, and London is seen as the most popular destination. (Source: Migration Observatory)
6. The [BN\(O\) visa factsheet](#) is one of many published by the government on different elements of the Nationality and Borders Bill, with the route mentioned as [one of 'safe and legal routes'](#) among available refugee resettlement schemes. More details about future [settlement applications for Hong Kong nationals arriving via the BNO route](#) have also been published. (Source: Home Office)
7. Media are reporting that with [Hongkongers being the fastest growing community in the UK](#) there are worries about pace of change and potential local tensions, and describe [mixed experiences of new arrivals](#), with many being underemployed and finding it difficult to adjust to British social norms. (Sources: Sky News, Ejinight)
8. A [short survey on medical professions](#) amongst new Hong Kong arrivals and those planning to come to the UK found that nurses are the most prominent occupation. (Source: Hongkongers in Britain)

9. In December, due to elections in Hong Kong, [rally protests for Hong Kong press freedoms have taken place across the UK](#), including in Leeds. (Source: Hong Kong Free Press)

Regional work

10. Work on the regional coordination of the welcome programme is ongoing:
- A regional BN(O) network involving mainly local authority representatives is continuing, with regular meetings and updates.
 - A [Hong Kong Hub](#) is being updated regularly and over 70 individuals have signed up to a monthly newsletter. We are working on Cantonese translation of information on the Hub.
 - Virtual [welcome events](#) are continuing with fortnightly drop-in sessions covering topics suggested by individuals, such school places, private housing, employment and volunteering. Seven sessions, taken place since mid-October, were attended by over 200 individuals.
 - In January, [a new survey for new arrivals from Hong Kong](#) have been launched with over 200 responses from across 11 local authorities received so far.
 - Migration Yorkshire continues to gather information on settling patterns and experiences of migrants who arrive via this route and share them with relevant local authorities. So far, the largest communities have been reported in Leeds, Sheffield, York and Wakefield.
11. To raise awareness of this new group, another [info session for frontline staff](#) from voluntary and statutory sector organisations on the Hong Kong Welcome Programme and the rights of BN(O) visa holders is taking place on 25 January.
12. Migration Yorkshire, with partnership with other SMPs, have commissioned the IOM to deliver session on Hong Kong, similar to those they did on Syria and other nationalities. The sessions are taking place in January and February.

Ewa Jamróz
Migration Yorkshire
20 January 2022

AGENDA ITEM: 10

WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG: FEBRUARY 2022



For information: Members are asked to note the report.

EEA Nationals and EUSS

EU Nationals

1. According to estimates of the EU and non-EU population (year ending June 2021), [Poland is still the top non-British nationality](#). (Source: ONS)
2. [A new briefing on migrants in the UK labour market](#) suggests workers born in EU14 countries are more likely to be in high skilled occupations than the UK born, while those from new EU member states (EU8 and EU2) dominate occupations classified as low-skilled. In 2020, around half of highly educated workers born in EU8 and EU2 states were in low and medium-low skilled jobs. (Source: Migration Observatory)
3. It has been reported that [EU nationals are three times most likely to experience homelessness than the general population](#), with job loss being the main reasons behind it. (Source: Guardian)
4. Back in December, [Bradford launched their Roma strategy](#), while a new report from Roma Support Group covers lessons learned from [supporting the Roma community during the pandemic](#). (Sources: Roma Support Group and Twitter)

EU Settlement Scheme

5. Latest EUSS statistics show:
 - Over 6.39 million applications have been made to the scheme by the end of [December 2021](#). [Romania has now overtaken Poland as the top nationality of EUSS applicants](#) overall. (Source: Home Office)
 - Over 300,000 applicants are still waiting for a decision, including [more than 25,000 claims who has been paused due to pending prosecution](#), some of which are caused by the out of date Police National Computer (PNC) records. (Source: Independent)
 - Since the application deadline, there have been nearly 90,000 late applications, and close to 36,000 were from joining family members. Other applications include those moving from pre-settled to settled status.
 - The latest statistics at local authority level (up to the [end of September 2021](#)) show close to 340,000 applications to the scheme in Yorkshire and the Humber. (Source: Home Office)
 - [Nationality](#) – top five nationalities of applicants in our region remain broadly the same – Poland (27%), Romania (20%), Slovakia (9%), Italy (6%) and Lithuania (5%), with non-EU applicants accounting now for 5% of applications.
 - [Age](#) – rate of applications from children in the region continue to be higher than nationally, with under 18s accounting for 21% of applications, compared

to 17% nationally, while older applicants (over 65) account for 2% of applications in Y&H, slightly lower than 3% nationally.

- Outcomes – 53% have been granted settled status and 40% pre-settled, while other outcomes accounts for 7%, compared to 53%, 42% and 6% nationally.

Recent changes and developments

6. Updated [data on applications under the EUSS from looked after children](#) has been published indicating 95 per cent of eligible children have applied to the scheme. In Yorkshire and Humber, 534 children were identified as potentially eligible to apply for the EUSS, with 503 making applications (94% of eligible children). The highest number of eligible children were from Bradford (147), Rotherham (118) and Leeds (86), with none in East Riding and York. (Source: Home Office)
7. The long awaiting judgement on [access to benefits for EU nationals with pre-settled status](#) overturns the last year's ruling confirming that pre-settled status is not sufficient to meet the right to reside test for the purpose of claiming benefits. The [implications of the judgement](#) are discussed in the recent Housing Rights newsletter. (Sources: Free Movement, Chartered Institute of Housing)
8. More from the courts, [EU nationals, who are appealing deportation orders, have their rights protected](#) by the Withdrawal Agreement, while [non-married EU partners lose their residence rights, even in cases of domestic violence](#). (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)
9. The [guidance for border staff on treatment of EU nationals post grace period](#) has been updated clarifying those waiting for status are allowed entry to the UK. Meanwhile, landlord's [right to rent guidance now includes information on late EU settlement scheme \(EUSS\) applicants](#), while a memo from the Department for Work and Pensions ([DWP](#)) [clarifies rights to benefits for applicants who are still waiting for a decision](#) on their status. (Sources: gov.uk, Home Office, DWP)
10. The [NRPF Network's guidance for local authorities on supporting EU nationals](#) has also been updated. (Source: NRPF Network)
11. In the [response to the House of Lords European Affairs Select Committee report on citizens' rights](#), the Home Office confirmed that they will be reminding holders of pre-settled status holders to upgrade their status before it expires. Meanwhile, the Independent Monitoring Authority (IMA) [issued judicial review proceedings](#) against the Home Office in relation to conversion of pre-settled status to settled status. (Sources: Parliament, IMA)
12. The Home Office accepted most of the recommendations from the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration ([ICIBI](#))'s [report inspecting the EUSS](#) between July 2020 and March 2021 (to which Migration Yorkshire contributed), except for the collection of data on vulnerability and protected characteristics. (Source: ICIBI)

ASYLUM OPERATIONS BRIEFING – Strategic Migration Partnership (SMPs)

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

Intake

- There were 37,562 asylum applications in the year ending September 2021 (relating to 44,190 people), in the UK in the year ending September 2021. This is 18% more than the previous year and higher than at the peak of the European Migration crisis in year ending June 2016 (36,546).
- Iran was the top nationality claiming asylum in the UK in the year ending September 2021 (6,002 applications), as it has been in every year since 2016.
- *The number of applications* increased for eight of the top 10 nationalities applying for asylum in the UK – Iranian (up 39%), Eritrean (up 97%), Albanian (up 39%), Iraqi (up 16%), Syrian (up 74%), Sudanese (up 4%), Afghan (up 39%), and Vietnamese (up 44%). Of the top 10 nationalities, two experienced a decrease – Pakistani (down 24%), and Bangladeshi (down 11%).

Initial Decisions and grant rates (Output)

- In the year ending September 2021, there were **14,758** initial decisions made on asylum applications, **6%** fewer than the previous year (15,684).
- Almost two thirds (64%) of the initial decisions in the year ending September 2021 were grants of asylum, humanitarian protection or alternative forms of leave. The proportion of grants is higher than the previous year (49%), and higher than levels prior to 2019, when around a third of initial decisions were grants.
- At the end of September 2021, **67,547** cases awaiting an initial decision (41% higher than the previous year).

Breakdown of initial decisions for September 2020 and September 2021.
Includes main applicant only.

<i>Year Ending</i>		<i>Change (latest year)</i>	
<i>September 2020</i>	<i>September 2021</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
<hr/>			

Total grants	7,649	9,516	+1,867	+24%
<i>Asylum</i>	6,676	8,744	+2,068	+31%
<i>Humanitarian Protection</i>	575	558	-17	-3%
<i>Discretionary Leave</i>	36	30	-6	z
<i>UASC Leave</i>	89	32	-57	-64%
<i>Other Grants</i>	273	152	-121	-44%
Total refusals	8,035	5,242	-2,793	-35%
<i>Grant rate</i>	49%	64%	z	z
<i>Total initial decisions</i>	15,684	14,758	-926	-6%

Nationalities

- There was significant increase in applicants from Eritrea, Iran and Albania applications in the past year.

Largest changes in number of asylum applications by nationality in the year ending September 2021. Changes are relevant to Main Applicants only

Asylum applications, year ending September 2021				
	Increasing	Change	% Change	Total applications
↑	Eritrea	2,170	97%	4,412
	Iran	1,680	39%	6,002
	Albania	1,124	39%	4,010
	Syria	983	74%	2,303
	Vietnam	561	44%	1,826
↓	Decreasing			
	China	-435	-46%	515
	India	-362	-34%	713
	Pakistan	-322	-24%	1,034
	Stateless	-246	-31%	545
	Yemen	-191	-36%	340

Top 10 nationalities claiming asylum in the UK, year ending September 2021. Includes main applicants only. Changes are relative to the year ending September 2020.

Ranking in year ending September 2021	Country of nationality	YE Sept 2020	YE Sept 2021	Change	Grant Rate (at initial decision)
(YE Sept 2020)					
1 (1)	Iran	4,322	6,002	1,680	80%
2 (4)	Eritrea	2,242	4,412	2,170	93%
3 (2)	Albania	2,886	4,010	1,124	45%
4 (3)	Iraq	2,616	3,042	426	39%
5 (8)	Syria	1,320	2,303	983	97%
6 (5)	Sudan	1,970	2,048	78	78%
7 (6)	Afghanistan	1,417	1,974	557	56%
8 (9)	Vietnam	1,265	1,826	561	70%
9 (7)	Pakistan	1,356	1,034	-322	47%
10 (12)	Bangladesh	860	766	-94	27%

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASCs)

In the year ending September 2021:

- There were **3,103** asylum applications from UASC, a **3% decrease** compared to the previous year (**3,202**). This represented 8% of all asylum applications, compared to 10% in the previous year.

- There were **2,082** initial decisions relating to UASC, **23%** higher than the previous year (**1,687**). Of these initial decisions **88%** of these were grants of asylum or humanitarian protection, and 1% were grants of temporary leave (such as UASC and discretionary leave).

Number of people claiming asylum in the UK by age:

	Year Ending		Number	%
	September 2020	September 2021		
<i>Total applicants</i>	39,688	44,190	+4,502	+11%
<i>Under 14</i>	5,164	4,171	-993	-19%
<i>14 - 15</i>	1,059	1,020	-39	-4%
<i>16 - 17</i>	2,859	2,731	-128	-4%
<i>18+</i>	30,605	36,266	+5,661	+18%

Initial decisions on asylum applications from UASC:

Date of initial decision	Year ending Sept 2020	Year ending Sept 2021	Change in the latest year	% change in the latest year
Total UASC grants	1,321	1,860	+539	+41%
Asylum	1,163	1,754	+591	+51%
Humanitarian Protection	71	71	0	0 %
Discretionary Leave	1	3	+2	z
UASC Leave	83	28	-55	-66%
Other Grants	3	4	+1	z
Total UASC refusals	366	222	-144	-39%
Grant rate	78%	89%	z	z
Total initial decisions	1,687	2,082	+395	+23%

Asylum Claims and Decisions by Quarter

The lower numbers of people given protection in the latest year is mainly due to fewer initial decisions being made on asylum applications (**14,758** decisions in the year ending September 2021 compared with **15,684** in the year ending September 2020).

Asylum Claims*			
	2018	2019	2020
			2021

Q1	6,758	8,962	8,481	5,902
Q2	6,608	7,657	4,889	8,768
Q3	7,479	9,179	8,657	15,104
Q4	8,659	9,939	7,788	-

Asylum Decisions*				
	2018	2019	2020	2021
Q1	6,791	6,118	6,236	4,573
Q2	6,018	5,695	3,042	4,398
Q3	5,865	5,996	3,144	4,076
Q4	5,498	6,070	4,451	-

*For Main applicants only

Numbers awaiting a decision

- At the end of September 2021, **70,808** applications for asylum from main applicants were pending a decision (initial decision or further review).

Number of main applicants awaiting decisions for September 2020 and September 2021:

	Year ending		
	September 2020	September 2021	%
Total awaiting decision	50,179	70,808	z
Awaiting initial decision (subset)	48,054	67,547	95%

**of total awaiting
a decision)**

<i>6 months or less</i>	11,961	23,529	33%
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- **All figures relate to main claimants** only and have been taken from Immigration statistics data tables, found at the following link:

[List of tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

AGENDA ITEM: 11B

WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG:
FEBRUARY 2022

19th January 2022

AASC Report

West Yorkshire Sub Regional Meeting

Contingency / Hotel Exit Strategy

Whilst the number of Service Users housed in contingency accommodation continues to rise (in common with the trend across the UK), a sustainable exit strategy remains our key business priority. We continue to procure both family and single (HMO type) dispersal accommodation) as a means to deliver this priority. We will continue to liaise with UKVI, Migration Yorkshire and the relevant local authorities in procuring and standing up such accommodation.

More contingency IA sites are being stood up across the country in response to increased pressure arising from consistent high intake, some IA sites closing to return to BAU, and issues with DA procurement.

Initial Accommodation – Urban House

We continue operating Urban House in line with arrangements and guidance from Public Health Leads. This continues to work well and provide a COVID secure environment for colleagues and Service Users. Maximum capacity at Urban House is currently 254. This continues to be reviewed regularly with health protection leads and health professionals.

Urban House Working Group

A Working Group was set up early 2020 with the main focus around:

- Service User experience – focus groups, complaints, and satisfaction surveys
- Activities planner – VCS in reach and activities available externally
- Social Value, projects, and initiatives – Easter, Ramadan, Eid, Refugee Week etc
- Good news stories and partnership pieces
- Health and wellbeing projects

This UH Working Group was set to meet monthly. However, given the rise in COVID related challenges we have not met for some time. We aim to review this and reschedule meetings for 2022.

The number of IA contingency sites has increased significantly as routing has been consistently high for several months. We continue to work collaboratively both with the Home Office, local authorities and partners to ensure healthcare, support services and activities are accessible to our Service Users.

Health in IA and IA contingency:

We continue to collaborate with Public Health England Lead (Cathie Railton) and the Home Office to develop a consistent healthcare offer which is to be established across all our IA contingency sites. This regional approach meets both the needs of our service users and contractual requirements. In addition, this will assist in managing increasing pressure on our local healthcare partners which has been significant. Data sharing has been the main challenge to date.

Covid-19 safety and control measures:

Mears continue to review operating procedures across the AASC contract to ensure that we are compliant with current government and local authority guidance. Mears are only able to advise and guide service users regarding Covid measures, including mask wearing and social distancing.

Within IA and IA contingency there is a Covid risk assessment in place. This assessment is regularly updated in line with NHS updates, to consider the risks associated with COVID -19 within the hotel, and to set out the mandatory control measures required to reduce the risk to as low as is reasonably practicable for SU's, staff and visitors.

For each hotel, the following control measures are in place as a minimum:

- All frontline operational staff must complete 2x LFT's per week and present a negative result.
- A 24-hour security team is present at each hotel.
- Each hotel site has a Mears named contact who attends the site regularly to monitor and support.
- All service users receive a full induction at the time of arrival, delivered in appropriate languages.



- All service users are issued with up-to-date guidance regarding Covid 19.
- Key control guidance such as social distancing and mask wearing, has been put up around the hotel in poster form.
- Hand sanitising stations have been made available in communal areas within the hotels.
- Security patrol the communal areas to ensure that social distancing guidelines and other controls are being adhered to.
- A daily register of service users in attendance at the hotel is taken. During this process, service users are spoken to, to ensure that they are well and safe, and any issues they may have are communicated and actioned by Mears.
- A meaningful conversations log is produced on a weekly basis, to ensure that any ongoing issues service users raise are collected, and any actions needed are monitored.
- Face coverings have been issued to all service users and they are advised to wear them in all communal areas.
- A designated smoking area has been implemented at each of the hotels and use of the area is controlled and monitored by security staff.
- Perspex Screens are in place on Resident Welfare Manager desks to support the safety of service users and staff.

Covid measures - VCS/Visitors to site and on site in reach:

Under government guidance, we have worked and liaised with VCS partners to facilitate face-to-face VCS support at IA and IA contingency accommodation sites. The following ask remains in place to ensure the safety of all internal and external staff and service users:

- As a precaution, any activities are coordinated in reduced groups of service users where possible, a decision regarding capacity of SU's attending on-site activities is made based on take-up amongst residents and available space to be utilised. With space to support multiple socially distanced groups, capacity of numbers engaging can be increased. This will continue to be monitored.
- An appointment system is coordinated between the VCS and Resident Welfare Managers supporting IA sites when arranging on site activities. On-site engagement must be arranged in advance with Mears Partnership Manager and Resident Welfare Manager.
- All VCS attending hotel sites must also have their own Covid risk assessment, approved by Mears Health and Safety to be authorised on site.
- If entering a hotel site, all visitors must present evidence of a negative Lateral Flow result to be authorised entry to site.
- Should any VCS or other external visitors develop Covid-19 symptoms after visiting a hotel, they must inform Mears immediately and a register of all service users attending any VCS class/workshops should be passed onto the resident welfare manager for our records.

Covid-19 vaccination roll out – IA and IA Contingency.

Across West Yorkshire IA and IA contingency sites, service users accommodated in these settings have been provided the opportunity to engage in vaccination clinics and workshops. Mears Partnership Managers, RWMS and operational colleagues worked alongside health partners, CCG's, VCS, and local authorities to facilitate the delivery of Covid-19 hesitancy workshops. Following the engagement sessions, service users were able to make an informed choice regarding their vaccination take up. This roll out has been a great success, with a good ratio of service users participating across all sites. Further clinics are planned to support 'mop up' first dose clinic and continue roll out of second doses. Mears have:

- Facilitating any offer of vaccinations from local healthcare providers at all IA contingency sites across NEYH.
- Provided translated documentation regarding coronavirus and vaccinations to all service users.

IA Contingency – hotels



Mears Housing Management Limited is part of the Mears Group and provides services on behalf of Plexus UK (First Project) Limited, Omega Housing Limited and Tando Property Services Limited.

As of 18th January 2022, **2659 Service Users** were accommodated in the hotel IA estate across NEYH.

IA Contingency – West Yorkshire Sub-Region Contingency / Hotel Update as of 18th January 2022

Hotel	<u>Number of Children</u>	<u>Number of families</u>	<u>Number of family SUs</u>	<u>Number of Single people</u>	<u>Total</u>
Cedar Court Hotel Wakefield	0	0	0	150	150
The Bradford Hotel	0	0	0	120	120
Metro Inn Huddersfield	0	0	0	29	29
The Rock Halifax	0	0	0	25	25
Mercure Leeds City Centre	0	0	0	59	59
Holiday Inn Express, Leeds	0	0	0	74	74
Britannia Hotel Mill Green View, Leeds	0	0	0	164	164
The Huddersfield Hotel	0	0	0	41	41
Dubrovnik Hotel Bradford	40	31	97	0	97
Merchants House Bradford	0	0	0	66	66
Kirkgate, Huddersfield Hotel Apartments	0	0	0	12	12
Britannia Buildings, Huddersfield	0	0	0	16	16
IBIS Hotel, 23 Marlborough Street, Leeds	0	0	0	150	150
Alexandra Apartments 39-41 Bolton Road, BD1 4DR	0	0	0	89	89
Wool Merchant Hotel Halifax	3	33	100	8	108
Mercure Parkway Leeds – not online until Friday 21st Jan	0	0	0	106	106
Ibis budget Bradford	0	0	0	86	86
Total	43	64	197	1195	1392

VCS and visitor attendance to IA and IA contingency sites:

As a business we recognise the importance of the provision and support to our service users provided by VCS and many other supporting agencies. We continue to offer thanks to each VCS and support organisation particularly during the pandemic.

Best practice pieces continue to develop within West Yorkshire with VCS and Mears working well together to collaborate and develop new ways of working and new responses with service user needs in mind. Particular note made to the success of recent Bradford Networking Events, hosted face to face in the City by VCS Rep Rachel Goodall and Mears Partnership Manager Nicki Batley. Over 150 service users access the sessions, with around 30 support organisations attending. Networking events offered well-managed, safe, informative support sessions to those accommodated in the hotels within the Bradford District. Based on the success of these, we are looking to replicate this offer in other LA areas across the region.

At all our IA sites we have activity planners in place and focus groups scheduled throughout the next quarter. Mears welcome our partners from VCS and local authorities to join these. Mears colleagues offer signposting opportunities to all service users to assist local connections.

Dispersed Accommodation



Project Oak (now termed the Hotel Exit Strategy) was initiated late 2020 and has been a focal point of our dispersed accommodation estate. The main objective is to decant from IA contingency sites. IA contingency sites do provide a safe and secure environment for service users. However, we empathise with our service users that these environments cannot always be called 'home'. We welcome a collaborative approach with all local authorities to support the objectives of the Hotel Exit Strategy. We will continue to work with all local authorities to overcome barriers to procurement.

There are regular conversations regarding the procurement of dispersed accommodation. Given the different cohorts accommodated within our IA / Contingency estate, there is an ongoing need for both family and single (HMO) type accommodation.

Dispersed Accommodation Covid-19 response – we continue to signpost service users accommodated in DA to local Covid-19 vaccination clinics held within the West Yorkshire areas.

Discontinuations

In line with the Hotel Exit strategy, there is a focus on the effective utilisation of our dispersed accommodation estate to ensure new arrivals have access to accommodation. At present we have the below positive cessations applicable to the West Yorkshire region. Mears and our service users continue to be effectively supported by local authorities in securing move on accommodation. We are assured local authorities will maintain this approach and encourage the development of working relationships between yourselves and your local Mears Partnership Manager and DA Operations Manager.

The table below shows the discontinuation figures for service users with a planned departure date on or before the **4th February 2022 from 1st January 2022.**

LA	Home Office Decision	
Bradford	Successful	10
Leeds	Successful	8
Calderdale	Successful	4
Wakefield	Successful	0
Kirklees	Successful	5
Grand Total	Successful	27

Positive Engagement, Social Inclusion and Social Value – West Yorkshire

Mears continues to engage with local authorities and key representatives from the voluntary and community sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below is a summary of some of the VCS and service user engagement within West Yorkshire over the last month or so:

Wakefield -

- Mental Health awareness sessions in development stages with Health Lead for Inequalities Kerry Murphy. These are in collaboration with HARP and Solace for those in IA and IA contingency. Staff also have the opportunity to access this offer.
- City of Sanctuary – digital inclusion for UH and IA contingency. Over 60 tablets on loan to service users across the IA estate.
- We are Wakefield – continued Art House Projects.
- UH focus groups continue.
- West Yorkshire Student Police Officer project continues – we now have several service users who help co-host this with Partnership Manager Nicki Batley.



- MESMAC continue in reach at Urban House and Cedar Court Wakefield

Bradford –

- PREVENT team from West Yorkshire Police continue to deliver weekly ‘get to know us’ session in IA contingency.
- Bevan Health and Wellbeing deliver activity sessions focussed on ‘healthy minds.
- Bevan Wellbeing activity sessions back in place.

Leeds –

- Befriending and orientation of Leeds City – Refugee Council remains a great intervention for service users to access the City.

Calderdale –

- ST Augustine’s supported by Mears Partnership Manager to access Mears Foundation grant.
- St Augustine’s continue to deliver in reach support sessions to service users.

Kirklees –

- DASH in reach support to IA contingency continues.
- TSL – this way for English sessions continues.

Each year, Mears commit to planning and delivering social value initiative which positively impact the lives of service users and the communities in which we serve. Across 2022, we plan to deliver a minimum of 12 targeted social value initiatives across IA and DA. Partnership Managers will work in collaboration with VCS representatives, LA, and partners to develop and deliver these initiatives across the region.

The below are a few of the local social value initiatives you can expect to see from Mears in the next three months:

- Modern Slavery and Human Slavery awareness sessions – for service users and colleagues
- Refugee Week – June
- The Art and About project – Wakefield Art House
- West Yorkshire Police Student Officer engagement session continues
- Men’s Health Awareness Week
- Recycle Project – Continues to support Wakefield DA
- Breast of Friends – female bra fitting service in Calderdale





MIGRANT HELP

MONTHLY UPDATE – DECEMBER 2021

FRC UPDATE

- The team have continued to see progress, increasing the number of calls answered each day and reducing the average wait time to get through to our services despite further increases to the volume of calls coming through.
- New staff are joining the team each week and are currently undergoing training.
- We processed the highest number of A&G and Issue Reporting queries this year during November and indications are that this trend will continue through December.

Trends:

- Trends remain consistent with previous months and we are highlighting these to the Home Office, Asylum Support and the Accommodation Providers.
- Requests for legal advice have increased over the last month. We continue to signpost clients and provide them with information on how to access support and information during all interactions.

EAGL UPDATE

- We remain committed to improving our performance and the last month has seen weekly improvements with our average wait time reducing significantly across the month.
- The team have filled all vacancies, we have eight advisers yet to start with our next training group set to start on the 4th January. We are confident that all new advisers will have joined the team by the end of January.
- Our training lead has been working with our managers to identify any needs and supporting with call handling training for the team to ensure calls are handled appropriately and the highest level of service provided.

Trends:

- As expected, we submitted the highest number of S98 referrals in November. During December exceptionally high numbers of requests have been made each day.

OUTREACH UPDATE

- The number of service users assisted by Outreach continue to increase, we assisted on average 125 service users each week last month. We continue to see an increasing number of service users face to face following the latest government advice.
- Here is an example of how our Outreach team can support you and the service users you assist;

Outreach received a referral for a family struggling to support their 8-year-old son who had been diagnosed with depression. The child has physical disabilities and was experiencing bullying. A safeguarding hub referral was completed to notify the AASC provider and the Home Office. Outreach liaised with the family and a social services referral was completed so the local authority could complete an assessment to see how they could support the family. Outreach ensured the family had spoken to the local GP and helped the family to confirm the requirements of the property for their needs and requested dispersal was expedited.



- Here is some of the feedback our Outreach inbox received over the last month.
'Brilliant, thank you for clarifying'
'Thank you. You have been supportive, and we know there are limits of your great work.'
'This is great news, thank you!'
'That's just what we needed to hear! I am over the moon.'
'Amazing, thank you'
'Wonderful, that's great news!'
'That's brilliant'

Trends:

- The team assisted with several S98 IA referrals, S95 applications, S4 applications, COC requests to move. Our team also assisted in signposting to specialised organisations who could provide further targeted support after our team have assisted with Asylum Support related matters.

MOVE ON NATIONAL UPDATE

- Our Move On team have been able to make successful contact in the majority of cases during November with many service users accepting our offer of support. Referrals were sent through to our providers, Reed in Partnership for England / Scotland, Welsh Refugee Council for Wales and Bryson for Northern Ireland.
- Work continues on keeping referral pathways up to date with local authorities. Our providers are in contact with many areas and working referral routes through in others. If you would like to speak to us about this please contact Nicola.Davies@migranthehelpuk.org who can arrange a meeting.
- We also have our positivemoveon@migranthehelpuk.org inbox monitored by our Outreach and Move On Manager or her deputy. This is our escalation route and we can help answer any concerns or queries you have relating our Move On service if you contact us through this channel.
- We can also request reinstatement from the Home Office if you email the above inbox if:-
 - * Discontinuation letters have not been received
 - * BRP has not been received
 - * Errors on the BRP

SERVICE COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK UPDATE

- We held our Commissioning Framework Overview / Q&A session on the 25th of November.
- The session had organisations from many geographical areas attend who wanted to learn more about our commissioning framework. We provided a presentation and some examples of how it works.
- We created a guide for partners which we have included with this update as well as a link to the electronic version on "Issuu".
https://issuu.com/commsteam-migranthehelpuk/docs/migrant_help_commissioning_framework_leaflet_issuu
- Our Portal is now open for applications until the 31st December 2021, the link to our portal is below.

For more information about this opportunity, please visit the Delta portal at:

https://www.delta-esourcing.com/tenders/GB-UK:-Migrant-Help-Commissioning-Framework-for-AIRE-contract-*Duplicated*/ME37U423QU



To respond to this opportunity, please click here:
<https://www.delta-esourcing.com/respond/ME37U423QU>

If you are interested but would like to know more or have any questions please contact
Nicola.Davies@migranthehelpuk.org copying in partnerships@migranthehelpuk.org

Trends:

- S95 ASF1 are the highest volume of work sent via our commissioned framework over the last month.

SU EXPERIENCE FEEDBACK AND UPDATE

- November saw the number of responses to our survey increase.
- Our SU Experience Lead has been reviewing these responses, identifying trends and feeding into Leads across AIRE to support continuous improvement.
- We continue to receive responses relating to concerns outside of Migrant Helps control and provide regular updates to the Home Office on this.
- 72.8% of clients responding to the survey in November were satisfied with the service provided by Migrant Help services.

Good listening and very helpful

I am happy and satisfied with the Migrant Help service

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Thanks for the helpful great service

Good service attitude, very satisfied

They have all been very friendly and they have a lot of patience when giving us information given the language barrier, my family and I are very grateful

- Some service users raised concerns about the length of time taking to get through to the FRC. The teams are working to address this and also to promote our alternative contact channels to support this further. We are able to see that the use of these channels has increased, and we have been provided with feedback on peoples experience of using them. Our SU Experience lead is holding workshops and attending external meetings to provide training and obtain more feedback which will then be used to make further improvements.

[Webchat](#)

[Raise an Issue](#)

[Self Serve Portal](#)

- If you would like us to join any meetings to support with information around our alternative methods of contact, please let us know, we would be happy to support this.



ANY OTHER UPDATES

UPDATE FROM NAPIER

- We have welcomed our new Client Adviser at the Migrant Help Napier office.
- At the site we have been preparing for Christmas festivities. With the help of Napier residents as well as our NGO partners and their wonderful team of volunteers (thank you Samphire and Napier Friends to name only two), we have put up various Christmas trees and decorations around the site. It was heart-warming to see so many of our service users getting involved and offering their help which made it a collective effort and a sense of community for Napier.
- Winter clothing packs are being prepared and a distribution on site will follow which will include brand new jackets, hats, scarves and gloves.
- Music workshops will be trialled on site as of next week in order to increase indoor activities.
- We have had a steadily high footfall in the office due to increased number of service users being transferred to and out of the site. Most of new residents have visited the office and some of the common queries are regarding their ARCs, ASPENs, S95 grant letters as well as for general advice & guidance.

REGIONAL UPDATE

- The focus remains on supporting new arrivals into the Asylum system by completing an initial induction, verbally or in writing via the new Induction leaflet issued by the AASC at point of arrival, and the Asylum Support Form (ASF). As the majority of Service Users are housed in contingency accommodation locations, our communication has largely been via the telephone. Our London team continue to visit a number of sites, in and around the core IAs in London to deliver face to face services.
- In November we completed in excess of 3,100 ASFs and Induction briefings, however, due to the large intake we are seeing at present, we continue to see a backlog and some cases are taking longer than expected 1 day (Induction) and 5 days (ASF) to complete.
- The other main priority remains issuing ASPEN cards, most of which are for SUs in contingency accommodation providing them with the £8 weekly payment. This month we issued just over 2,500 ASPEN cards, another month on month increase of around 25%.
- We continue to work closely with the AASC providers who are arranging and facilitating communication channels with the Service Users in the contingency sites.

GLOSSARY

- AASC** Accommodation Provider
ARC Application Registration Card
ASF1 Asylum Support Application Form
COC Change of Circumstances
EAGL Eligibility, Advice and Guidance Line
ECP Emergency Cash Payment
FRC First Response Centre



CONTACTS

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Discontinuation letter queries	positivemoveon@migranthehelpuk.org
EAGL/FRC/SU Experience	Daisy.noble@migranthehelpuk.org
Move On Services	Nicola.Davies@migranthehelpuk.org



For information: Members are asked to note the report.

Asylum

Asylum statistics

1. The latest Home Office statistics for asylum and resettlement were published on 25 November 2021, showing data up to the end September 2021. The full datasets are publicly available and can be viewed [here](#).
2. There were 37,562 asylum applications (main applicants only) in the UK in the year ending September 2021, higher than the previous peak in year ending June 2016 (36,546).
 - The top 5 countries of origin were Iran, Eritrea, Albania, Iraq and Syria.
 - In the year ending September 2021, there were 14,758 initial decisions made on asylum applications, and over half (64%) of these were grants of asylum, humanitarian protection or alternative forms of leave (such as discretionary leave or UASC leave), up from the previous year (55%).
 - The UK offered protection, in the form of asylum, humanitarian protection, alternative forms of leave and resettlement to 13,210 people (including dependants) in the year ending September 2021, 23% higher than the previous year (to June 2021), The rise in people granted in the latest year is due the resumption to resettlement activity which was paused in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of grants of protection and alternative forms of leave in the year ending September 2021 included:

- 10,725 grants of asylum, up 22% compared with the previous year (to June 2021), with the top nationalities that received grants to September 2021 being Iranian (2,242), Eritrean (1,419), Syrian (1,026), Sudanese (942) and Vietnamese (537) nationals; all these nationalities saw increases in grants in the latest year.
- 964 grants of humanitarian protection, up 8% compared with the previous year (to June 2021) – almost half of these (41%) were granted to Libyan nationals, also a notable increase in grants awarded to El Salvadorian nationals (152 up from 40 in 2019), following an increase in applications since year ending December 2018.
- 350 grants of alternative forms of leave following an application for asylum, down 15% since the previous year (to June 2021).
- 1,171 grants of protection through resettlement schemes, 77% more than in the previous year, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic preventing resettlement activity since March 2020 onwards and the commencement of the new UK Resettlement scheme in February 2021; almost four-fifths (77%) of resettlement cases over the past year were Syrian nationals.

3. Key points from this asylum accommodation data for the last 12 months are:
 - At the end of September 2021, 45,857 asylum seekers in the UK were in receipt of support under Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, a 1% decrease on the previous year (to June 2021 – 46,254).
 - Of these, 40,940 (89%) were in receipt of both accommodation and subsistence, and 4,917 (11%) in receipt of subsistence only. More than four fifths (85%) were located in England, with smaller supported populations in Scotland (8%), Wales (5%) and Northern Ireland (2%).
4. The number of S95 dispersed clients in it Y&H sub regions as at September 2021 was:
 - South Yorkshire 1,785
 - West Yorkshire 3,156
 - Humber 541
5. Please note, this data only includes those on Section 95, so therefore won't include the majority of those in temporary or alternative initial accommodation.

Asylum Policy

6. The [Nationality and Borders Bill](#) is currently making its way through the parliamentary process. The Bill seeks to make considerable changes to the UK asylum system and to the provision of asylum accommodation. Its currently in the committee stage after passing its 2nd reading in the House of Lords. The Bill has evolved since its initial publication. A number of amendments were tabled by the government and House of Lords. The [government has published a number of factsheets relating to the Bill](#), on topics such as safe and legal routes, modern slavery, and powers to stop small boats. [UK Parliament, Gov.uk]
7. In November the government published an [overview](#) of its action to prevent Channel crossings by small boats following reports of increasing arrivals. Measures include working closer with French authorities and implementing proposals outlined in the Nationality and Borders Bill to reform the asylum system. [Source: Gov.uk]
8. There will also be an [official inspection](#) from the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration of the way in which people are processed at Tug Haven in Kent after arriving on small boats. [Source: Gov.uk]
9. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons published a [report](#) criticising conditions in holding facilities like Tug Haven for those arriving on small boats, Notably, it found that some vulnerable women who had disclosed experiences of exploitation and sexual violence were offered no support. [Sources: HM Inspectorate of Prisons]

Asylum Support

10. Migration Yorkshire continues to work in partnership with the Home Office, contracted providers (Mears and Migrant Help) and local authorities, supporting local authority engagement regarding the asylum support contracts. Current issues remain focused around the use of hotels as asylum contingency accommodation. Migration Yorkshire is also working with the Home Office on some new pilots to improve information sharing, risk

management and the use of the complaints process for the AIRE and AASC contracts.

11. In November 2021 Migration Yorkshire published a [briefing paper](#) on asylum trends. We looked at Home Office data up to Quarter 2 in 2021, analysing how current issues like small boats arrivals or the use of hotels and contingency accommodation are reflected in the datasets and how these might impact the picture we see at a local level. [Source: Migration Yorkshire]
12. The Home Office published its [report](#) on last year's review asylum rates. It provides a breakdown of how support rates have been calculated including the amount allocated for different needs. [Sources: Gov.uk]
13. The High Court ruled that [Home Office support provided to asylum seekers accommodated in hotels is inadequate](#). Despite a previous ruling resulting in the Home Office paying hotel residents an additional £8 a week, the court found this was still below the advised £12 per week and failed to include money for phone calls. The Home Office may have to provide backdated support payments to up to 10,000 asylum seekers housed in hotels. [Source: Guardian]
14. The All-Party Parliamentary Group [\[APPG\] on Immigration Detention published a report on 'quasi-detention'](#) recommending closure of army barracks and immigration detention contingency sites accommodating asylum seekers. It also makes clear the group opposes plans for reception centres. [Source: APPG on Immigration Detention]

Asylum Operations

15. A new inspection [report](#) from the Independent Chief Inspector on Borders and Immigration on the initial stages of asylum casework reveals new findings about the efficiency and quality of the asylum system. Notable findings include that the length of time to provide decisions was on average 449 days for adults 550 days for unaccompanied children in 2020, and that the number of asylum claims recorded as 'inadmissible' was over 3,000 in 2021 but that at the time of the report none of these claimants has been returned. The Home Office accepted 8 of 9 of the Inspectors recommendations such as reintroducing a service standard and prioritising claims from unaccompanied children. [Source: ICIBI]
16. The Home Office published new [country guidance policy](#) on Afghanistan after recently removing their previous guidance and placing decision-making on hold for Afghan asylum claims. [Sources: Gov.uk]
17. A Home Office stakeholder communication has announced key changes and news affecting Asylum Operations. This includes the move of refugee family reunion cases from Asylum to Resettlement, Asylum Support and Integration (RASI), a new digital system to be rolled out for Settlement applications for those with refugee leave and a new pilot project looking at screening, interviews and decision-making in the asylum system. [Source: Home Office]

Stefan Robert
Migration Yorkshire
January 2022

AGENDA ITEM: 11E

**WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG:
FEBRUARY 2022**



Migration Yorkshire
supporting local migration services

Asylum Cluster Table for Yorkshire and Humber dispersal areas using latest available data (dispersal data and IA data for 7 January 2022)

This update contains confidential information.

Please refer to additional update.

AGENDA ITEM: 12

WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG: FEBRUARY 2022



Migration Yorkshire
supporting local migration services

For information: Members are asked to note the report.

Policy update November 2021

An overview of the latest statistics, policy and research on migration issues affecting partner organisations in Yorkshire and Humber.

Summary

- Immigration statistics to mid-2021 show rises in work and family visas but falls in asylum claims. (para. 1)
- The number of people crossing the Channel rose to new levels during 2021, with the Home Office exploring ways to reduce crossings. (paras. 4, 7)
- The Nationality and Borders Bill is at Committee stage. The Committee includes four Yorkshire and Humber MPs. Proposed amendments to the Bill include using x-rays or DNA tests in the age assessment process for young people. (paras. 9, 58)
- Labour shortages in a growing number of sectors led to a series of short-term visas being issued, although government wants a higher skilled UK workforce. (paras. 12-13)
- Most attention on asylum has focused on housing: standards in temporary accommodation, finding placements for young refugees and housing availability for Afghans. 'Operation Warm Welcome' was launched and an Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme will resettle 20,000 people. (paras. 27-31, 40-41, 60-61)
- Thousands of modern slavery victims could be granted leave to remain in the UK following a high court ruling. (para. 66)
- Sheffield Central tops all UK constituencies in terms of net impact of international students on the UK economy. However, there have been falls in international student applications to UK universities. (para. 80)
- A range of reports have considered social and economic impacts of and responses to the pandemic, and some positive polling on migration issues. (para. 85,91)
- An increasingly tense situation has developed between Belarus and its neighbours as it has been encouraging migrants to cross into Europe through its territory. (para. 94)
- The number of people trying to reach Europe by sea rose in the first half of 2021 compared to 2020, as did the number of people who died in their attempt. Far fewer migrants now live on Greek island camps. (paras. 95-96)
- It was the 70th anniversary of the Refugee Convention and the first Olympics with a Refugee Paralympic Team. (paras. 98, 101)
- Despite resettlement places for Afghan evacuees, it's increasingly difficult for people to leave Afghanistan and enter neighbouring countries or Europe. (para. 105)
- Local stories identify new places of sanctuary, including a CCG and a cinema. (para.109)

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UK migration trends

1. The [Home Office immigration statistics provide data up to the end of June 2021](#). Key information includes:
 - There has been a sharp rise in skilled work visas almost to pre-pandemic levels, but also growth in seasonal worker visas, family visas and family permits (an impact of the EUSS deadline)
 - There has been a total of 64,900 applications overall under the BNO route since it opened in January, over 47,000 grants and a 99% grant rate
 - 82% of grants of protection in the last year were grants of 'refugee status' to people who have come through the asylum route
 - Asylum applications fell by 4% compared to the previous year. Top countries of origin are Iran, Albania, Eritrea, Sudan and Iraq (Afghanistan is 8th) – but the greatest changes are increases from Sudan and Ethiopia then Eritrea and Syria, the greatest falls were from China and India.
 - In comparison to EU countries, the UK would come 4th in the total number of asylum applicants (after Germany, France and Spain) but 17th per head of the population.
 - Initial decisions on asylum applications are much lower than applications (almost 14,000 decisions, but there were 31,000 applications)
 - The initial grant rate is 55% (and for unaccompanied children it is 85%), the appeal success rate is 48% (both are up by a couple of percent). Once you take appeals into account, the 'final' grant rate is 59%.
 - Asylum support applications are down by a third, but the number of people on support is up by 11%.
 - There have been 310 refugees resettled under the new UKRS scheme since it began in March
 - In 2020 almost 3,200 [citizenship ceremonies](#) were attended in Yorkshire and Humber, taking place in every council area (from 873 in Leeds to 24 in NE Lincolnshire).
2. Other data includes '[Migration Transparency Data](#)' that shows National Transfer Scheme cases, ASPEN cards and support enquiries, the number of online views of EUSS status, right to work/rent checks by employers and landlords and applicants and [Windrush task force](#), grants of status. (Source: Home Office)
3. It has been calculated that over the past seven years [Yorkshire and Humber has welcomed the most refugees in England](#) under resettlement programmes. (Source: Yorkshire Post)

UK borders and migration policy

Sea crossings

4. The number of people crossing the Channel in small boats rose to new levels during 2021, with a [doubling in the number of people crossing the Channel](#) by September compared with 2020. Many media outlets published [stories of record numbers of people arriving on individual days](#) of the year. An indication of increasing risk of travelling this way is the [average number of passengers in each boat](#) was 16.7 last year, compared with 7.3 in 2018. (Sources: the Guardian, Kent Online, inews)
5. The risks of prosecution have shifted. New [guidance on smuggling charges](#) confirms that [migrants steering dinghies will no longer face prosecution](#) if claiming asylum.⁴⁶

However, people helping those in precarious boats face new risks themselves. The Royal National Lifeboat Institution ([RNLI](#)) [crews have faced abuse](#) for rescuing migrants at sea, and [RNLI faces the prospect of criminalisation for sea rescues](#) under the [Nationality and Borders Bill](#) - yet it had a 3,000% [increase in donations](#). (Sources: Metro, CPS, BBC, Marine Industry News, Independent, the Guardian)

6. In the summer, the UK and France agreed to double the number of [French police patrolling beaches](#) (at a [cost to the UK of £54 million](#)), but subsequently traded criticism for the lack of progress in deterring crossings. Eventually, the [government has said it will start paying the £54 million](#) promised in return for extra security. A further possibility is [UK-funded asylum reception centres in France](#). (Sources: Home Office, BBC, Latest Page News, Daily Mail)
7. The Home Office has been considering other ways of responding to people crossing the sea, with [plans to turn boats back on reaching UK waters](#) and [Border Force using jet skis](#) to turn back dinghies. Union representatives for Border Force staff say [it's unlikely the strategy will be used](#) because of the criteria involved such as ensuring there's no chance of loss of life. In her party conference speech [the Home Secretary referred to 'new sea tactics' in the Channel](#) and she is [seeking legal protection for Border Force officials](#) in the event of migrant deaths at sea. [Patel has been criticised for her comments](#) to a parliamentary committee where she asserted that most people arriving on boats are 'economic migrants' wanting to stay in hotels, rather than genuinely seeking safety. This parliamentary overview of [international law in relation to turning back migrants at sea](#) is worth a read. (Sources: BBC, Independent, the Guardian, Free Movement, House of Commons Library)
8. Other stories report [it costs £500K a year to store the boats](#), and many [migrants arriving on boats abscond from their quarantine hotels](#). [A government website to deter migrants from travelling](#) was criticised as unethical by Chartered Institute of Public Relations as it's not explicit that [On The Move](#) is a Home Office site. The 'Common Sense Group' of [Conservative MPs called for the Human Rights Act to be replaced](#) to help tackle irregular entry to the UK. (Sources: Daily Mail, the Guardian, Migrants on the Move, the Express)

Nationality and Borders Bill

9. The [Nationality and Borders Bill](#) was published, had its first two readings and is now at Committee stage. [The Commons Committee includes four Yorkshire and Humber MPs](#): Paul Blomfield (Sheffield Central), Robert Goodwill (Scarborough and Whitby), Holly Lynch (Halifax), and Craig Whittaker (Calder Valley) who have begun scrutinising the Bill. [A Migration Yorkshire briefing on the Bill is available](#). (Sources: UK Parliament, Migration Yorkshire)
10. When passed, the Bill will bring into force some of the proposals in the New Plan for Immigration, on which the [government has now published the outcome of its consultation](#). It also published [the equality impact assessment](#) for the Bill which acknowledges there is [limited evidence of the effectiveness of the proposed approach](#), but states these risks are justified as supporting the overall objective of decreasing illegal migration. (Sources: Home Office, the Independent)
11. Commentary and criticism of the Bill include that it is '[anti-refugee](#)', should have been [informed by the consultation](#), raise [doubt about how new or effective the measures might be](#) to stop Channel crossings, could [make it harder to identify modern slavery victims](#), will [breach the UN refugee convention and the European convention on human rights](#) and [will create a two-tier asylum system and hinder integration](#). A

national 'week of action' protesting against the Bill - including [Bradford](#) and [Halifax](#) - culminated in a demonstration outside Parliament. (Sources: Refugee Council, Free Movement, Migration Watch, the Independent, Metro, LSE, Twitter)

Post-Brexit immigration

12. Labour shortages in a growing number of sectors pressured the government into announcing a series of short-term visas, including [HGV drivers](#), [poultry workers](#) and [pork butchers](#), with some [later extensions](#) to ensure food supply in the run up to Christmas despite warnings that [a three month visa has limited appeal](#). The short term [visa scheme to attract 5,000 HGV drivers received 300 applications](#) by mid-October, so [government was expected to relax the rules on deliveries](#) that overseas lorry drivers can make in the UK. (Sources: Department for Transport, Free Movement, BBC, the Independent, the Guardian)
13. However, at the Conservative party conference the Prime Minister reiterated that [government aspires to having a higher skilled UK workforce](#) rather than reliance on overseas labour, backed up by the Business Secretary who spoke of [transition from a 'low-wage, high-immigration' model](#). (Sources: the Guardian, the Evening Standard)
14. The short term visas did not impact the problem of fuel shortages, since by being introduced under the agricultural seasonal worker scheme, [the haulier visa didn't include those delivering to petrol stations](#). [Visa overstayers with HGV licenses received letters](#) asking them to step in to help, despite having no right to work. Rather, [the military began delivering fuel](#) and [government announced 300 temporary visas for overseas fuel drivers](#) to last to the end of March. There are [calls for a similar scheme for care workers](#), and [suggestions for changes to improve the system](#) and help address the current shortages. (Sources: Free Movement, BBC, the Independent, Cabinet Office, the Guardian)
15. Greatest labour shortages include HGV drivers, nurses, IT professionals, care workers, teachers, and chefs, and there are [growing calls for the Shortage Occupation List to be extended](#). The City of London Lord Mayor raised [concerns about the financial sector](#). Government shared an [independent review of immigration routes for adult social care workers](#) in different countries, finding, for example, only a few OECD countries have a specific migration scheme for this sector - under the UK's points-based system only senior care workers meet the criteria. (Sources: Sky, City A.M., Home Office)
16. Other stories relating to post-Brexit immigration include:
 - [What are the costs of sponsoring someone on a work visa](#) to come to the UK? This article estimates costs of just under £7,000. (Source: Free Movement)
 - [Barnsley football team is frustrated at visa delays](#) impeding their new signings from joining the club. (Source: Yorkshire Post)
 - A new [guide for seasonal agriculture workers](#) (holding seasonal worker visas or pre-settled status) explaining their rights, was co-produced by New Europeans and University of Leeds. (Source: New Europeans)
 - Some NHS staff are leaving the UK to care for elderly relatives, due to changes made to the immigration rules that make it harder to get [adult dependent visas](#). (Source: Independent)
 - A briefing from the Migration Observatory focuses on [migrants with longer routes to settlement](#) and challenges they face. (Source: Migration Observatory)

The hostile environment

17. [Data about destitute households supported by councils during 2020/21 has been released](#), including some from Yorkshire and Humber, building on an earlier report showing a [30% rise in households with no recourse to public funds \(NRPF\) accommodated by social services](#). (Source: NRPF Network)
18. An estimated 1.3 million migrants have NRPF visa conditions, and [the number of people at risk of destitution could increase in light of the EU settlement scheme closing and the Nationality and Borders Bill](#). Report authors conclude that the policy undermines integration; they recommend suspension of NRPF conditions during the pandemic, and more funding and decision-making roles for councils. (Source: IPPR)
19. [Councils accommodating destitute people during the pandemic began to diverge in their practice](#) in relation to those with no recourse to public funds following ambiguous government messaging and were told earlier this year to stop using hotels or risk losing Rough Sleeper Initiative funding. (Source: House of Commons Library, Inside Housing)
20. Ten English councils reportedly signed up to the Home Office's [Rough Sleepers Support Service](#). There are concerns that in some cases, [data shared by councils could result in migrants being deported](#), given the recent guidance that states rough sleepers can be removed if they have refused offers of support and engaged in anti-social behaviour. However, more than 100 charities and 9 councils in London and Bristol have said they won't play a role in [the policy to deport migrant rough sleepers](#). (Sources: Gov.UK, the Guardian, Inside Housing)
21. In the '[Safety before Status](#)' report, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner calls for [funding to support people with NRPF escaping 'immigration abuse'](#) whereby a person cannot escape an abusive situation because of their immigration status. (Sources: Domestic Abuse Commissioner, ITV)
22. Two new parliamentary briefings provide up-to-date information on: [Eligibility for benefits for people born abroad](#), including EU nationals, non-EEA nationals, asylum seekers and refugees. (Sources: House of Commons Library)
23. An investigation suggested nearly [two-thirds of GP surgeries would not register an undocumented migrant](#) as a patient. Even when refusing to register undocumented migrants, [GP surgeries are often assessed as good](#) by the Care Quality Commission. A parliamentary [debate on issues for undocumented migrants](#) touched on health issues. (Sources: Bureau of Investigative Journalism, the Independent, JCWI)
24. The [Judicial Review and Courts Bill](#) 2021 will [reduce migrants' appeal options](#). (Sources: Gov.uk, Free Movement)
25. In contrast to [the research findings of a detention support organisation](#), the [prisons inspectorate](#) was broadly positive about [immigration removal centres](#) in its annual report, while expressing concerns about short-term holding facilities, and the conditions in mainstream prisons, where some immigration detainees are held. (Sources: BID, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, Free Movement)
26. Over [1,000 people have been removed from the UK](#) on charter flights since the start of the pandemic, the majority to Romania and Albania. The UK signed a [removals agreement with Albania](#), enabling the quicker deportation of refused asylum seekers, those in prison and visa overstayers. A [controversial deportation charter flight left for Jamaica](#) carrying seven people on board, that had been planned to remove 90

people. Under [new powers announced by the government](#) there will be [visa penalties for countries not cooperating with removals](#) from the UK. The Home Office published a [deportation factsheet](#). (Sources: inews, Home Office, the Guardian, the Independent)

Specific migrant groups

Asylum seekers and refugees

27. Most attention in the news has been around accommodation issues.
28. Plans are proceeding for accommodation reception centres to house asylum seekers. The [Home Office posted initial information about the contract for accommodation reception centres](#) for interested parties to deliver in England and run for up to 8,000 service users, including wraparound services. [Commentators have raised questions around the feasibility](#) and [desirability of such a project](#). (Sources: Gov.uk, Danny Shaw, PoliticsHome)
29. A Freedom of Information request revealed [95 people have died in asylum accommodation since 2016](#). Scottish Refugee Council is calling for an inquiry into the discrepancy between figures that the Home Office provided to different organisations on this matter. (Source: the Guardian)
30. In August there was another [COVID outbreak at Napier barracks](#). The full [inspection report on former military barracks sites as asylum accommodation](#) revealed some staff working for Home Office contractors were living on-site in sub-standard conditions and appear to have been breaching their own visa conditions. Some [charities say the Napier site must close](#) due to its unsuitability. (Sources: the Independent, ICIBI, the [Daily Mail](#), BBC)
31. A report by Edinburgh Napier University is critical of the conditions in [hotels where asylum seekers were housed during the pandemic](#). The High Court later ruled that [Home Office support provided to asylum seekers accommodated in hotels is inadequate](#). Despite a previous ruling resulting in an additional £8 a week for residents, the court found this was below the advised £12 per week and failed to cover phone calls. The Home Office may have to provide backdated support payments. Some new [potential hotel sites include a hotel in Leicester](#) but not in Blackpool, after outcry from local elected members meant a [proposed hotel site for asylum seekers on Blackpool promenade has been paused](#). The local council raised concerns about the appropriateness of the site and informed the hotel they'd need planning permission. (Sources: the Guardian, Leicester Mercury, BBC)
32. Other developments within the asylum system include:
 - Ghana and Albania have been rumoured as potential offshore locations for processing asylum claims, further elements of the New Plan for Immigration. [The rumours were dismissed by the Albanian government](#) but [the Ghanaian Foreign Ministry deleted tweets on the matter](#). (Sources: inews, Sky News)
 - The Home Office published [new policy on medical evidence in asylum claims](#) which means they'll [consider medical evidence](#) regardless of the type of clinician it came from, but there are tighter requirements for those wishing to delay for pending medical evidence. (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)
 - The reported [causes of delays in asylum decision making include checks on 'admissibility'](#) if individuals passed through a third country [and the pandemic](#)

(highlighted by Immigration minister Chris Philp in a parliamentary debate).
(Sources: The Ferret, TheyWorkForYou)

- [There was renewed debate about the right to work](#) after Justice Secretary [Dominic Raab said he'd be open to allowing asylum seekers to work](#) in response to the UK's labour shortages. (Source: the Guardian)

Afghanistan

33. Following Operation Pitting to evacuate people from Afghanistan in late August, '[Operation Warm Welcome](#)' was launched as the cross-government initiative to support Afghans in the UK. Further, under a new [Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme](#) (ACRS) the government pledged to resettle 20,000 people in total and 5,000 in the first year, with priority given to women, girls and religious minorities. (Source: Home Office)
34. It is not clear how many evacuated Afghans fall into which resettlement initiatives, but there have been subsequent [evacuations of other small groups include the Afghan women's football development team](#) and [a group of LGBTQ+ Afghans](#). Media coverage has also included [Chevening scholars in the UK](#) anxious about family members still in Afghanistan, and the fears of [prospective](#) and [former scholars still in Kabul](#). (Sources: BBC, FCDO, the Guardian)
35. Over time, government has released various policy statements to explain their approach to supporting Afghan nationals now in the UK, the most detailed of which was the [Afghan resettlement immigration policy statement](#) of 13 September. (Source: UKVI) Other information published in this period includes:
 - (In early August) [guidance on support for British and non-British nationals in Afghanistan](#) and a [letter by the Home Secretary and Defence Secretary regarding ARAP](#) (the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy), allowing those who had already left Afghanistan to apply. (Source: Home Office)
 - An [Afghan resettlement factsheet](#)
 - Confirmation of [extra support around housing and healthcare](#) to arrivals on the two Afghan schemes
 - A [new country guidance policy on Afghanistan](#) after placing decision-making on hold for Afghan asylum claims. The previous policy relied on the safety of Kabul, arguing many claimants could relocate to the capital.
 - A [guidance page for Afghan evacuees](#) in the UK with information on the different resettlement and immigration routes open to them.(Sources: Home Office, Ministry of Defence, UKVI, DHSC)
36. Useful parliamentary briefings on this matter include:
 - [UK immigration routes for Afghan nationals](#) (published October)
 - '[Afghanistan 2021](#)' (published September) on schemes assisting British nationals and others remaining in Afghanistan, key resources and helplines.
 - [Resettlement scheme for locally employed civilians in Afghanistan](#) on the ARAP scheme (published September).(Sources: House of Commons Library)
37. Critical commentary has included [whether allocated funding can meet the support needs of Afghans](#), UNHCR questioning [how measures in the Nationality and Borders Bill will affect Afghans seeking asylum](#) in the UK and articles looking at how Afghans fare in the UK asylum system, such as [the UK's record of granting refuge to Afghan refugees](#) and the [prospects for Afghans in the UK asylum system](#). (Sources: BBC, the Guardian, inews)

38. There was much coverage of [Afghans who have already arrived in our region](#), as well as statements of support by local authorities including [Calderdale, Bradford and Leeds councils](#), and [Harrogate offering to take more than their quota](#). Others pledging to help included [hotel owners in Huddersfield](#). Political leaders in North England said they would welcome arrivals but want [fairer distribution across the country](#). [A Home Office Director issued a response to the tragic incident in Sheffield](#) where a young Afghan refugee died in the summer. (Sources: Yorkshire Post, the Telegraph and Argus, the Halifax Courier, Yorkshire Live, BBC, Examiner, the Guardian, the Telegraph)
39. The public response included [Brits offering spare rooms to Afghans](#) and [a Scarborough charity described the local response as 'amazing'](#). In contrast, [far right groups have targeted hotels](#) hosting Afghans, protesting, making videos and encouraging negative Tripadvisor reviews. (Sources: the Telegraph, BBC, the Guardian)
40. It's been reported that [there could be difficulty finding housing for Afghan refugees](#) due to the uneven concentration of asylum accommodation and government's decision not to disperse to new areas. Local press confirmed [hotels in Leeds and Scarborough being used to temporarily accommodate Afghans](#). [The military was called on to collect information about Afghans](#) in hotels to provide the Home Office with information needed to identify suitable accommodation, such as English language skills and local connections people already have in the UK. (Sources: the Guardian, Leedslive, The Scarborough News, The Times)
41. There have been many calls for detail about how and when the ACRS will function. [The Home Office has yet to reveal details](#) of how many Afghan citizens were relocated, how many have moved into longer-term housing, nor the system to place people around the UK (this story mentions Yorkshire and Humber councils). Most recently, over 200 [families from Afghanistan have registered as homeless](#) in London in an attempt to leave hotels and find new homes rather than wait any longer for the Afghan resettlement scheme to be implemented. (Sources: the Guardian, BBC)

EU nationals

42. From 1 October 2021 [EU nationals cannot use their ID cards when travelling to the UK](#) unless they have EUSS status (or have applied for it). (Source: Home Office)
43. The Office for National Statistics ([ONS](#)) [kept its estimate of the UK's EU population at 3.5 million](#), cautioning that EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) applications are not the best measure of the size of this group. (Source: ONS)
44. [Applications for British citizenship by EU nationals rose by over 80%](#) compared to the previous year and now account for more than a third of all naturalisation applications. Italian nationals were the top EU nationality granted citizenship in the latest year, followed by Romanian and Polish nationals. [Children born after 1 July may become British automatically](#) if their EU parents are facing delays in receiving settled status. (Sources: Home Office, gov.uk)
45. [Latest EUSS statistics show over 6.22 million applications](#) by the end of September 2021 from an estimated 5.5 million applicants (8% were from repeat applicants). Close to 400,000 applications are awaiting a decision. Applications received since 30 June 2021 include late applicants, joining family members and those moving from pre-settled to settled status. An ['unprecedented' level of applications for an](#)

[administrative review](#), a process which challenges a refusal or incorrect grant of status, are causing delays in decisions. (Source: Home Office)

46. The [latest local authority statistics](#) (to the end of June 2021) show over 327,000 applications to the scheme in Yorkshire and the Humber.
- The top nationalities of applicants in our region remain mainly the same: Poland (27%), Romania (19%), Slovakia (8%), Italy (6%) and Lithuania (5%).
 - Polish remains the top nationality in most of our local authorities, except Romanian is top in Barnsley, Doncaster, Leeds, NE Lincolnshire, Ryedale and Scarborough while Slovak continues to be top in Bradford, Sheffield and Rotherham.
 - The rate of applications from children in the region continues to be higher than nationally, with under 18s accounting for 21% of applications (compared to 17% nationally). In local authorities such as Bradford, Rotherham and Kirklees, this rate is much higher; between 24 and 27%.
 - Older applicants (over 65) account for 2% of applications in Yorkshire and Humber (slightly lower than 3% nationally) though some North Yorkshire districts such as Richmondshire and Craven have much higher take up from this group at 6%, while Barnsley, Doncaster and Hull are lower at 1%.
 - There are close to 38,000 outstanding applications in the region, which account for 12% of all applications, an increase from 7% last quarter.
 - 53% have been granted settled status and 41% pre-settled, while other outcomes accounts for 6% (compared to 52%, 43% and 5% nationally).
47. [Temporary protection was announced for EU nationals making late applications](#) to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), that they can take up [new employment](#) while waiting for an outcome and [late applicants can now access benefits and services](#) once their application is validated and identity verified. The Home Office extended [funding for voluntary organisations offering support with applications under the EUSS](#) to at least end of March 2022. Updated guidance documents for [employers](#) and [landlords](#) confirm that no retrospective checks are required in respect of those employed or having tenancies signed before the EUSS deadline. [EU nationals who did not apply before the deadline have 28 days to apply](#) before immigration enforcement action is taken, yet there have been reports of [homeless EU nationals with pre-settled status being offered 'voluntary reconnection'](#) to their countries of origin despite being legally entitled to stay in the UK. From 6 October, [joining family members who arrived in the UK as visitors can apply from within the UK](#). (Sources: Home Office, Justice Gap. Free Movement)
48. As many EU migrants worked in hospitality and retail sectors, an [increase in EU nationals claiming benefits](#) has been reported quoting [DWP statistics](#) for 2020 that reflect the impact of the pandemic. The EU Court of Justice determined [it is justified to refuse Universal Credit to EU citizens with pre-settled status](#), but the UK's Supreme Court hearing on the same issue remains adjourned. The [latest position on housing and benefits for different groups on EU nationals](#), including late applicants to the EUSS, is in the October edition of the Housing Rights newsletter. (Sources: Express, DWP, Free Movement, Chartered Institute of Housing)
49. From 1 August [family members of EU nationals are not eligible to access courses](#) funded through the Adult Education Budget until they have met three years UK/EEA residency requirements. [Updated guidance on access to student finance for late EUSS applicants](#) and joining family members clarifies that unlawful residence from 1 July to the date of the late application is to be treated as lawful when considering the three year residence requirement for student loans. (Sources: Education and Skills Funding Agency, Department of Education)

50. There's new [legal action against the Home Office regarding pre-settled status](#) as people could lose their residency rights without settled status. (Source: IMA)
51. The lack of physical documentation and difficulties with accessing digital status have been the most prevalent problems since the EUSS deadline, as flagged by the [European Affairs Committee](#) and [the3million](#). There are press stories of [EU nationals with valid status receiving letters from HMRC or DWP asking them to apply](#) to the scheme due to no record of their leave or submitted applications, and an [online glitch for people applying to upgrade from pre-settled to settled status](#) means they can't evidence their rights to access services despite having status. [The Home Office's Employer Checking Service needs improving](#) according to a charity briefing. The checking service is used by employers to confirm a migrant's right to work. (Sources: Parliament, 3million, Public Technology, the Guardian, Work Rights Centre)
52. Other reports on the experiences, delivery and the impact of the EU Settlement Scheme cover [complex cases](#), [Roma communities](#) and [role of local authorities](#). (Source: Law Centre Network, University of Leeds, EU Rights Hub)

Hong Kong

53. In addition to the latest statistics in para.1 on applications for the BN(O) visa route, nearly [500,000 applications for BNO passports](#) were received by the UK government between 2019 and 2020.
54. There are growing [calls for the BN\(O\) visa to be extended to younger people](#) (born after the handover in 1997) from a parliamentary committee and [Hong Kong Watch](#); indeed some [young people are claiming asylum](#) in the UK. (Sources: Home Affairs Committee, Hong Kong Watch, the Independent)
55. [People on a BN\(O\) visa are more likely to rent](#), than buy a property, taking time to find the right place to settle permanently, although many face [difficulties when looking for a place to rent](#). A survey of newly arrived Hongkongers revealed [jobseekers from Hong Kong identify the top obstacles in finding work](#) as language barriers, lack of relevant qualifications and proving the right to work. (Sources: South China Monitoring Post, the Guardian, Hongkongers in Britain)
56. Rotherham MP and vice-chair of the all-party parliamentary group (APPG) on Hong Kong [Sarah Champion called for government to 'come up with practical measures'](#) to enable Hongkongers to have fair access to accommodation and employment in the UK. (Source: the Guardian)
57. Since October, [a main applicant can move to the UK to sort out living arrangements before dependent partners and children](#) join them. (Source: Immigration Barrister)

Children and young people

58. Proposed [amendments to the Nationality and Borders Bill](#) include [using x-rays or DNA tests in the age assessment process](#) for young people whose age is disputed by the Home Office; these measures were previously ruled out as unethical. [Plans to use dental x-rays have been withdrawn](#) after objections by the British Dental Association. Earlier [Welsh Government guidance for social workers](#) carrying out age assessments of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children makes it clear that [medical methods should not be used due to results being inconclusive](#). (Sources: the Telegraph, the Guardian, Inews, Welsh Government, Free Movement)

59. Government announced recovery fund for children's social care; within this, each region will be allocated [£50,000 to help in accommodating unaccompanied asylum-seeking children](#). (Source: Wired.gov)
60. There has been much [coverage of temporary housing conditions where newly-arrived unaccompanied asylum seeking children have been placed](#) in the south of England - that has included office floors and camp beds in the Kent Intake Unit, a facility called the Atrium and a hotel in Brighton – drawing criticism from [council leaders](#), the Home Affairs Committee, the [Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium](#) and [Ofsted](#). There have also been [concerns raised about the ability of professionals to work with these young people](#), including council officers and lawyers. (Sources: the Guardian, Brighton and Hove City Council, Coram Children's Legal Centre, BBC)
61. The response of local authorities to take some of these young people into their care has been mixed, with some like [Croydon](#) and [Kent struggling to take young people](#) because they had reached capacity, [and others offering new placements such as Norfolk County Council](#) and [Southend Council](#). [The Green Party wrote to all councils in England](#) asking them to take their 'fair share' of children, as well as urging the government to increase the funding to councils. (Sources: Inside Croydon, LGC online, Eastern Daily Press, Echo news, the Green Party)
62. Local authority estimates suggest that [hundreds of child refugees are going missing from care](#) after they arrive in the UK, including a 15 year old boy who disappeared from hotel accommodation, many of whom have been subjected to modern slavery. (Source: the Times)
63. Charities wrote to the health minister Nadine Dorries about high rates of [suicide amongst young asylum seekers](#) in the UK, an issue also picked up by the BBC asking if [there is a national crisis given there is a recurrence of suicides amongst young asylum seekers](#). (Sources: the Guardian, BBC)
64. A number of legal developments relating to children include:
- [Children denied family reunion in the UK may now be able to challenge decisions](#) on their case. A judicial review found a change in April 2020 to Home Office policy on family reunion was unlawful. The change meant if caseworkers couldn't work out within two months whether a child qualified for a transfer to the UK from Europe, they refused the request. (Source: Free Movement)
 - [A change to Home Office policy](#) means many 18-25 year old [young people born or raised in the UK will be able to apply for settlement after 5 years](#) after the Home Office conceded the 10 year route to settlement was not appropriate for many children. (Sources: Home Office, Free Movement)
 - A court ruling means in future, [children in families might be considered to have a separate asylum claim to their parents](#), rather than being assessed together. (Source: Freemovement)
 - The [Supreme Court has handed down its judgment](#) that concerns the Home Office's policy in relation to age assessments by immigration officers. The Court confirmed the previous 'significantly over 18' policy was lawful; if on initial assessment a young person is assessed as 'significantly over 18', they can be detained as an adult. Since 2019 this had been set at 'significantly over 25'. (Source: EIN)

65. An informal mentoring programme in this [story of mentor Sohail and mentee Ahmed](#) in Bradford will be rolled out nationally to support young refugees including those from Afghanistan. (Source: the Independent)

Modern slavery

66. [Thousands of modern slavery victims could be granted leave to remain](#) in the UK following a high court ruling. Currently, discretionary leave to remain for trafficking victims is granted in certain limited circumstances, leaving many seeking asylum or humanitarian protection and facing lengthy waits. (Source: the Guardian)
67. [Referrals to the NRM are increasing](#) (National Referral Mechanism, the UK system for identifying and supporting victims) having fallen during the pandemic. 3,140 individuals were referred in quarter 2 this year, up 42% compared to last year. Labour exploitation remains the most common exploitation type for adults and the top nationalities are the UK, Albania and Vietnam. (Source: Home Office)
68. [80% of appeals in trafficking cases were successful](#) last year - these are cases that initially were not recognised as trafficking by the Home Office through the National Referral Mechanism process (255 of 325 decisions); the Home Office countered that these figures were misleading and represent only 2% of decisions. (Source: the Guardian)
69. Contemporary practice in relation to modern slavery is discussed by several experts:
- The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings ([GRETA](#)) [has recommended the UK improve the identification of trafficking victims](#) (Source: Council of Europe)
 - [The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner \(IASC\)'s annual report](#) raises concerns about the impact of Brexit, the New Plan for Immigration, policy on rough sleeping and deportation, as well as the continuing issue of victims not coming forward due to fears of being reported to Immigration Enforcement. (Source: IASC)
 - This short article summarises the [possible impact of the Immigration and Borders Bill](#), while another describes the changes in the [Nationality and Borders Bill](#) (Sources: Politics Home, Free Movement)
 - A report shows [the pandemic could place more people at risk](#) of modern slavery. [Bulgarian and Romanian agricultural workers](#) in the UK have been more vulnerable to exploitation during the pandemic, according to other research. (Sources: Salvation Army, Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre)
 - This report examines [labour abuses in the hospitality sector](#) with participants reporting unpaid work, inability to take time off sick, dangerous work conditions and work-related violence. EEA workers also mentioned insecurity linked to changes to their immigration status. (Source: the Guardian)
 - A new study compares [access to legal aid](#) for victims in six European countries. In England and Wales some good practice was identified, but highlighted issues such as funding structures, fixed fees, and scarcity of legal aid providers outside London. (Source: RENATE)
70. Recent research found [children of modern slavery victims are not getting enough support](#). (Source: Hestia)

71. New [online training](#) on child victims for First Responders and safeguarding partners is available, and e-learning on [slavery in supply chains for public sector commercial staff](#) was developed. (Sources: Focus on Labour Exploitation, Home Office)
72. 80% of UK supply managers surveyed think the law should be strengthened relating to [corporate reporting requirements under the Modern Slavery Act](#). (Source: Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre)
73. There are claims that [thousands of potential trafficking victims have been held in immigration detention](#) over the past five years. There are concerns that [Vietnamese nationals vulnerable to trafficking have been detained](#) under the 'Detention Asylum Casework' system, designed to facilitate the prompt removal of asylum seekers without a valid case. (Source: the Guardian)
74. A short animation tells [the story of a woman who moved to the UK and survived domestic servitude](#). (Source: West Yorkshire Combined Authority)

Windrush

75. In July, [a parliamentary committee asked when those affected by the Windrush scandal would get their redress](#). It found at least 21 people had died since the compensation scheme was announced, and only 412 out of 2,367 who have submitted a claim have received their final payment. By the end of August, [the Home Office reported over £30 million in compensation had been paid](#) across 837 claims. Two claimants launched [legal proceedings against the Home Office over delays in compensation](#) and lack of clarity on how to expediate the claims. The average waiting time to receive compensation is 434 days. (Sources: Public Accounts Committee, Home Office, the Guardian)
76. In response to the Windrush Lessons Learned Review, the [Home Office committed to increasing the number of senior staff that identify as Black, Asian or a minority group](#). (Source: Home Office).
77. A [statue celebrating 40,000 Commonwealth NHS nurses and midwives](#) was unveiled outside a London hospital, and government is considering issuing a [Windrush 50p coin](#) to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Windrush ship's arrival in the UK. (Sources: the Guardian, Inews)
78. [Stories from the Windrush generation include an exhibition 'Chesterfield Black Stories'](#) and [this 4min video about Lutalo Muhammad, a medal winning Olympian](#) whose life has been shaped by the experiences of his grandparents who arrived from Jamaica in the 1960s, and his father. (Sources: Derbyshire Times, BBC)

International students

79. [Higher education is the topic for a forthcoming immigration inspection](#). Professionals and people with personal experience can submit evidence until 15 November. (Source: Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration)
80. Sheffield Central tops all UK constituencies in terms of net impact of international students on the UK economy. The report claims that [every part of the UK is financially better off because of international students, on average by £390 per person a year](#). This comes amidst a [50% drop in EU students applying to study in the UK](#) due to Brexit, and uncertainties around Covid leading to fewer international

students applying to study here. (Sources: Higher Education Policy Institute, the Guardian, the Independent)

81. UK universities have had [record numbers of applications from China](#) and [India](#) which is helping to deal with a reduction in EU students. [Summer language schools](#), which prepare international students for university, are reportedly near to collapse due to the pandemic, which could have a negative impact on applications from international students. A former Olympian athlete and an aspiring nurse describe facing financial, legal and practical [obstacles to attending university due to their immigration status](#). (Sources: Merco Press, Times Higher Education, The Economic Times, Student Action for Refugees)
82. Some [Nigerian students are studying consecutive degrees](#) in Europe in order to find ways to settle permanently, while thousands of [British students are delaying their studies](#) in Europe or changing courses due to difficulties in obtaining the correct visas, particularly for Spain. (Sources: BBC, the Guardian)
83. The BBC reported on the experiences of [international students who had their courses deferred and returned home during government lockdowns](#), only to find their visas expired whilst away or that they face additional costs due to travel restrictions and visa requirements. (Source: BBC)
84. Funding has been announced under [The Turing Scheme](#) which replaced the ERASMUS programme after Brexit, that allows students to take up study, train or work placements overseas. It will enable 40,000 students to benefit. (Source: the Turing Scheme)

Cohesion and integration

85. A range of reports have considered societal impacts of and responses to the pandemic:
 - ['Building stronger communities in post-pandemic Britain'](#) is a cross-party report considering what helps make social connection stronger, such as volunteering, support provided by businesses, English lessons in the workplace, and the development of important locations such as high streets or other shared spaces like libraries. (Source: APPG on Social Integration)
 - A report on the [impact of Covid-19 on migrant workers and the labour market](#) in Europe found migrant workers more vulnerable to health risks and precarious work, and their cultural and economic integration has been hindered given the sectors in which they often work. It highlights the precarious situation for women in particular. The report proposes ways for recovery strategies to be inclusive, such as investing in entrepreneurs and the social sector, as well as developing partnerships with employers as part of employment support services. (Source: Migration Policy Institute)
 - 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place' is [a report on the response to COVID 19 in West Yorkshire](#) which aims the share stories of achievement despite the barriers, and reveals the important role migrant community advocates had in their communities during the lockdown. The report discusses how fear and suspicion prevented people from accessing help and how those with precarious status felt they had to work – even when they had Covid symptoms – out of fear of becoming destitute. (Source: Racial Justice Network).
 - ['Barriers to wellbeing' is a report considering the unmet health needs of migrants](#) with insecure immigration status during the pandemic. It calls for access to GP registration, alternatives to online registration, access to health

services from asylum initial/contingency accommodation, wifi for people to access online services, and increased understanding of charging in the healthcare system. (Source: University of Birmingham)

- Alongside examples of [good practice and recommendations to increase social cohesion at a local level](#) both during and post-pandemic, this report suggests government should build on the Integrated Communities Strategy where at the centre of the approach is the *idea of place* and understanding that different places need different strategies to deal with social cohesion. (Source: Belong Network)
86. A think tank report describes [a 'collapse' in community and belonging among young people](#). It found that people under 25 are three times more likely to distrust their neighbours than people over the age of 65, with only around half trusting their family 'completely'. (Source: Onward)
87. The [oldest children in Syrian families may need more immediate literacy support](#), due to a combination of factors such as having less fluency in English and needing to develop academic language before leaving school. (Source: The Conversation)
88. '[Gardens are better when migrants and refugees are included](#)' concludes this research which describes how refugees can be excluded from community gardening because of management structures and cultural expectations around gardening practices. The article calls for investment in volunteer groups managing these types of sites. (Source: the Conversation)
89. [Racist abuse towards England football players on social media generated discussion within the Conservative party](#), many feeling 'uncomfortable' with kneeling before matches being seen as 'gesture politics' and [calling for understanding of the motives](#) behind the act. (Sources: the Express, the Guardian)
90. A bit of thoughtfulness is needed for a more 'inclusive society', as suggested by an example from Blackburn. [Simple acts can make a massive difference in how one feels welcomed](#), such changing training sessions or how membership fees work to accommodate the needs of different religious and ethnic groups. (Source: the Guardian)
91. Recent polling suggests a range of findings:
- [Public attitudes on immigration have softened](#) over the last few years and the public is now more likely to see the impact of immigration on Britain as positive (46%) than negative (28%), (in contrast to 2015 when 35% saw the impact as positive and 41% as negative). Most respondents agreed that British businesses should be allowed to recruit from abroad to address labour shortages. (Source: British Future)
 - However, [immigration and asylum are returning to be top issues among the public](#) (after health, joint 2nd with the economy), a consequence of what has happened in Afghanistan. (Source: YouGov)
 - While there are mixed views amongst the public about NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan, most [people in the UK support the government's commitments to refugee resettlement](#) according to different public opinion polls. Similarly, polling commissioned by the Red Cross suggests [voters support prioritising asylum seekers from Afghanistan](#). (Sources: British Future, inews)
 - Two reports on public attitudes to labour migrants in the pandemic look at [health and welfare](#) and [nationalities and occupations](#). (Sources: Migration Observatory)

- Most [people in Wales say migration changed their local area for the better](#) although there are growing pockets of hostility, according to an opinion poll on identity. (Source: BBC)
92. [There was a 9% increase in hate crime offences recorded](#) in England and Wales in year ending March 2021 compared to previous year, with 124,091 hate crimes recorded. The majority were racially motivated. A new report found [evidence of antisemitism on every social media platform](#) including Facebook and Youtube. (Sources: Home Office, Hope not Hate).
 93. Children's author Michael Rosen, who recently won award for his poems on migration, has written about why [children's books should explore themes of migration and persecution](#). (Source: the Guardian).

International news

Europe

94. Since the summer an increasingly tense situation has developed between Belarus and its neighbours. In retaliation for EU sanctions, Belarus has been encouraging migrants to cross into Europe through its territory. This has led to a stand-off with neighbouring EU countries including [Lithuania](#) and [Poland](#) who have built physical barriers at their borders, detained people at the border and stationed troops while [Germany offered to support](#) them with joint patrols and logistical support. [UNHCR requested access to asylum seekers stranded there](#), but at least [seven people trapped between borders are known to have died](#). [The EU has said it will not fund any physical border barriers](#) to stop migrants and [UNHCR has urged for an end to the stalemate](#). (Sources: BBC, EU Observer, Info Migrants, PBS, the Guardian, UNHCR)
95. People trying to reach Europe by sea rose in the first half of 2021 compared to 2020, [for example in Italy](#) and [the Canaries](#), although [there are indications of a shift from this route to the Balearics](#). As agencies reported that [deaths of migrants crossing the sea to Europe soared](#) in the same period, including up to [2,000 people estimated to have died trying to reach Spain](#), the EU border agency [Frontex was criticised for failing to protect](#) asylum seekers. (Sources: The National, Reuters, Infomigrants, UN, the Guardian, IOM)
96. [Far fewer migrants now live in camps on Greek islands](#) (5,400 in September compared to 40,000 in April 2020). This follows the transfer of thousands of people to the mainland who are likely to be granted asylum, as well as tighter border surveillance. However, [NGOs are outraged by a new migrant camp on the island of Samos](#), likening it to a prison. (Sources: UNHCR, the Guardian)
97. Criticism of returning migrants includes in Italy where [a boat captain has been convicted for taking migrants back to Libya](#) and [Spain was accused of violating international law](#) and children's human rights by sending unaccompanied asylum-seeking children back to Morocco from the enclave of Ceuta. (Source: Aljazeera, Euronews)

Beyond Europe

98. On the [70th anniversary of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention](#) the [High Commissioner Filippo Grandi](#) and [former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon](#) both reflected on their concerns about asylum policies of the 'Global North'. (Sources: UNHCR, Time)
99. [A Yemeni organisation, Jeel Albena, won this year's Nansen Refugee Award](#) for supporting many displaced people in deprived and dangerous areas of Yemen. The Nansen Award is for 'going above and beyond the call of duty to protect refugees, other displaced and stateless people'. (Source: UNHCR)
100. [A refugee from Zanzibar who fled to the UK in the 1960s won the 2021 Nobel Prize in Literature](#). Abdulrazak Gurnah's writing covers the effects of colonialism in East Africa, and its effects on the lives of uprooted and migrating individuals. (Source: the Guardian)
101. This year was [the first Olympics with a Refugee Paralympic Team](#), who said they wanted [to provide hope for people being forced to flee Afghanistan](#). [The Refugee Olympic Team](#) was set up for Rio 2016 to allow refugee athletes to take part. A significant story of the Tokyo Olympics was that [a Belarusian athlete was granted a humanitarian visa at the Polish embassy](#) after her family warned her about her safety in Belarus. (Sources: IRC, Irvine Times, IOC, Sky)
102. The UN Children's Fund found there were [15 million displacements of children in 2020](#) in total (41,000 per day). The 'Uncertain Pathways' report explores how this [experience of child migration is often gendered](#), with most unaccompanied asylum-seeking children making it to Europe being male. (Sources: UN News, UNICEF)
103. Back in August, the [UN voiced concern over worsening living conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon](#). UN agencies say almost the entire Syrian refugee population in Lebanon cannot afford the basic goods and services necessary for survival. The [UN Food Programme has welcomed a \\$20 million contribution from Germany](#) that will help avert planned cuts in food assistance for 110,000 refugees in Jordan this October. (Sources: Xinhua, UNHCR)
104. In the lead up to the withdrawal of NATO forces in Afghanistan, UNHCR warned of a ['worst case scenario' of up to 500,000 Afghans fleeing the country](#) while [EU leaders tried to coordinate responses to stop irregular migration](#) to avoid repeating the 'migrant crisis' in 2015, with most EU members only welcoming a limited number of Afghans. Some 'entry countries' along the eastern borders of the EU such as Poland, Lithuania, Greece and Turkey announced [new border wall construction](#) to stop crossings. (Sources: Reuters, New Humanitarian, the Guardian, Irish Times)
105. Since then, a number of countries announced resettlement schemes and places for evacuees, including [Canada \(pledging 40,000 places\)](#) and [the US \(pledging 50,000 places\)](#) while some [neighbouring countries closed their borders](#). [It's becoming increasingly difficult for people to leave Afghanistan](#) and enter neighbouring countries, while Turkey and European countries have been reported as turning people back at their borders. [Tens of thousands of Afghans are currently Europe seeking protection](#). (Sources: New York Times, CBS News, National Review, Infomigrants, Chatham House)
106. The ongoing crises in [Afghanistan and Ethiopia dominated the recent annual UN refugee conference](#) with concern expressed that Afghan society was 'barely functioning' since the Taliban takeover. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) subsequently predicted [the Afghan economy could shrink by up to 30%](#), escalating

the refugee crisis. [G20 members pledged help in relation to Afghanistan at a special summit](#), though China and Russia were absent, and the [EU has since pledged a €1billion Afghan aid package](#). (Source: UNHCR, Reuters, Info Migrants)

107. Other stories of displacement around the world include:

- [This August article describes twice-daily flights from Hong Kong to London](#), a falling population and withdrawals from the city's pension fund suggesting permanent moves. Many people left before new measures came into effect on 1 August that can bar people leaving the city. [Hongkongers continue to withdraw funds from their mandated retirement plan](#), only allowed for those leaving the city permanently. (Sources: the Guardian, Bloomberg)
- In South Asia, [the killing of a prominent Rohingya community leader](#) brought attention to the [need to ensure protection of people in Bangladesh's refugee camps](#). (Sources: Aljazeera, Human Rights Watch)
- As many [migrants from Haiti have been travelling across Latin America](#) and up to the Mexico-US border, [UN agencies have been calling for a regional approach](#) to protect them. There are further [tensions in Chile where many Venezuelans have sought refuge](#). (Sources: [Reliefweb](#), UNHCR, Daily Mail, Reuters)
- Current situations causing displacement within Africa include [400,000 Somalis displaced](#) by armed conflict and climate disruption this year, and over [a million people in Burkina Faso are fleeing violence](#) by unknown groups. (Sources: UNHCR, Deutsche Welle)

108. This critical reflection argues that [rich countries increasingly outsource their migration controls to circumvent international laws](#), while other [research explores links between migration related to climate change and modern slavery](#). In the run up to the Glasgow climate summit, leaders were warned [more people will be displaced without a radical climate solution](#). [Wealthy countries reportedly spend 2.3 times more on borders than climate aid](#). (Sources: World Politics Review, Anti-Slavery International, Open Democracy, Gizmodo)

Local stories

109. Stories about migrant communities in Yorkshire and Humber include:

- Recent celebrations of diversity and migration include [Migration Matters 2021 festival](#) in Sheffield, [Bradford Intercultured Festival](#), the [Platforma 6 Festival](#) (until November) and [#BlackHistoryMonth](#) – that includes a [resource pack](#) with some eye-catching posters. (Sources: Migration Matters Festival, Telegraph and Argus, Platforma, Black History Month)
- Places of sanctuary are expanding. [Hull has the first 'CCG of Sanctuary' in the UK](#), so healthcare joins the city and university in holding Sanctuary status, a formal declaration of support to asylum seekers and refugees. A West Yorkshire cinema became [the UK's first 'Cinema of Sanctuary'](#). Relatedly, a local [theatre of sanctuary was retelling stories of young refugees](#). (Sources: the Hull Story, Hebden Bridge Picture House, [Twitter](#), Leeds Playhouse)
- A [North Yorkshire ESOL student](#) from Iraq won a [national English Language Learning award](#); he explained how learning English has helped him to feel more confident, settled and closer to requalifying as a nurse. (Sources: Northern Echo, Festival of Learning)
- Great exam results for these students with a migrant background. [Zainab Fadhal](#), originally from Iraq, is coming to study medicine at Leeds, her subject choice influenced by her mental health experiences, while Miriam Solomon, the [head girl at Leeds Grammar School](#) will study to become a paediatrician at

Hull York Medical School, with a plan to return one day to Eritrea to open a clinic. She explained that her English skills affected her ability to settle in here at first, but now she speaks 5 languages. More exam success included GCSE and A level [Rohingya students in Bradford](#). (Sources: BBC, Yorkshire Post, Telegraph and Argus)

- Pupils at [a local school raised funds for St. Augustine's Centre](#) by creating friendship bracelets. The money will go to the centre's work with refugees and asylum seekers. [Primary school children in Sheffield have been preparing clothing for Afghan children](#) facing their first winter here. (Sources: Halifax Courier, ITV)
- A gallery in Scarborough organised a [welcoming event for people who fled Afghanistan](#), and new arrivals were given annual passes to a local museum and gallery. (Source: The Scarborough News)
- The Syrian teenager Jamal Hijazi, who won damages from English Defence League founder, [plans to set up a charity](#) to help young people of any race with bullying. (Source: London Economic)
- Short [documentaries about Roma pupils in Bradford](#) during the pandemic show bringing [Roma staff](#) into the school helped to build trust and strengthen school bonds with Roma families. (Sources: YouTube, the Guardian)
- Fascinating stories include the [tales of people brought to Yorkshire as children fleeing Nazi Germany](#) and were housed temporarily in a Bradford hotel, and [how Mouseman furniture made by an Austrian carver was sold at a North Yorkshire auction](#). (Source: Yorkshire Live, Yorkshire Post)
- This [photo journal of Little Amal, the giant puppet](#) who made it to the UK after walking through Europe from Turkey. She has been to Sheffield then Barnsley on her way to Manchester, raising awareness of the experiences of many young refugees. (Source: the Guardian)

About this issue of the policy bulletin

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For an explanation of terms used in this report, see our 'Who are migrants?' document on our website at: www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/whoaremigrants