

## January - Issue 1

Welcome to our first e-bulletin of the year. Below are important updates on asylum, refugees, immigration, UASC, EUSS, vacancies and more. Please note this e-bulletin focuses on non-Coronavirus updates.

If you have any updates, notifications, or items for inclusion for our next bulletin please email [wmsmp@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:wmsmp@birmingham.gov.uk).

Subject	Announcement	Date/Source
Asylum	<b>Changes to the asylum process due to Covid-19:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">In response to the Covid-19 crisis</a>, the Home Office are now also doing some asylum screening interviews in Glasgow, Belfast (which was already a screening interview location if you arrived to the UK in Northern Ireland), Liverpool, Leeds, Solihull, and Cardiff.</li> <li><b>In all other locations</b>, the Home Office recommend first phoning the Asylum Intake Unit on 0300 123 4193 and you will be advised where you should attend your screening interview.</li> </ul>	<b>Right to Remain</b> <b>7 December 2020</b>
	<b>Asylum Accommodation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have been working with others across the sector to secure parliamentary scrutiny of the Home Office's decision, but as ever, our strength is always in collective action. We have produced some template resources with NACCOM that you can use to write to your constituency MP or Local Authority to join the call to halt evictions and protect everyone from homelessness and COVID-19, regardless of their immigration status.</li> <li>A <a href="#">template letter to local authorities</a> that you can use asking your local council to speak up to oppose these plans;</li> <li>A <a href="#">template letter to MPs for NACCOM members and groups engaged in frontline destitution services</a> prepared by our colleagues at NACCOM;</li> <li>A <a href="#">template letter to MPs for groups who aren't engaged in frontline service provision</a>;</li> <li>A <a href="#">template letter to MPs for individuals</a>.</li> </ul>	<b>Asylum Matters</b> <b>7 December 2020</b>
	<b>Inspection Report Published: Inspection of Country-of-Origin Information Thematic Report on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity or Expression:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">This report</a> covers a thematic review of CPIT products that deal with claims based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.</li> </ul>	<b>Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration</b> <b>8 December 2020</b>
	<b>Changes to Asylum:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Government have changed immigration rules to prevent people fleeing war or persecution from claiming asylum in the UK if they have passed through a "safe" third country, prompting accusations of a breach of international law.</li> <li>From 1 January, claims of asylum from a person who has travelled through or has a connection to a safe third country, including people coming from EU member states, will be treated as inadmissible.</li> <li>The UK government will be able to remove refused asylum seekers not only to the third countries through which they have travelled, but to any safe third country that may agree to receive them, an <a href="#">explanatory memo</a> states.</li> <li>A <a href="#">10-page statement</a> outlining the changes to the rules was published online without a press or public announcement.</li> </ul>	<b>Home Office</b> <b>10 December 2020</b>
	<b>Asylum accommodation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">This guidance is aimed at all staff involved in the support of asylum seekers in all accommodation settings</a>. This guidance is of a general nature and should be treated as a guide. In the event of any conflict between any applicable legislation (including the health and safety legislation) and this guidance, the applicable legislation shall prevail.</li> </ul>	<b>Gov</b> <b>15 December 2020</b>
	<b>Asylum right to work policy unlawfully overlooks trafficking victims:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home Office policy on permission to work for asylum seekers is unlawful to the extent that it does not make allowances for potential victims of human trafficking, the High Court held today. The policy will now have to be reworked to make clear that there is a discretion to allow asylum seekers to work in non-shortage jobs — a discretion that</li> </ul>	<b>Free Movement</b> <b>18 December 2021</b>

	<p>people in the trafficking system should be able to rely on in future. The case is <i>R (U (Kosovo)) v Secretary of State for the Home Department</i> [2020] EWHC 3487 (Admin)</p>	
	<p><b>Temporary Accommodation Handbook:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asylum Matters, Immigration Law Practitioners Association, and Deighton Pierce Glynn (DPG) Law have produced a guide that highlights the entitlements of those seeking asylum in temporary accommodation.</li> </ul> <p>Please find the link to the guide here: <a href="#">Temporary Accommodation Handbook - Google Docs</a></p>	<p>Asylum Matters ILPA DPG December 2020</p>
Refugees	<p><b>New Right to Remain Toolkit page on EEA nationals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Right to Remain have <a href="#">updated</a> their “EU Law” page in the Right to Remain Toolkit.</li> <li>This page now looks at applying to the Settled Status scheme if you are an EEA national and in the UK before 11pm on 31 December 2020.</li> <li>The page has information on Pre-Settled Status, Settled Status, if you are refused (or not given the right status), deportation and applying for British citizenship.</li> <li>The page will be updated again after June 2021, when the Settled Status scheme closes.</li> </ul>	<p>Right to Remain 15 December 2020</p>
	<p><b>Migrant Voice</b> have launched a <a href="#">report</a> which highlights the UK’s media coverage of migration to the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>899 articles in the media were analysed.</li> <li>Of the 889 articles, 529 were related to Covid-19. At least one of four predetermined ‘frames’ was identified in most of those articles. The ‘Disadvantaged’ frame was identified most frequently at 49.7%, ‘Heroes’ at 20.9%, ‘Threats’ at 15.9% and ‘One of us’ at 13.5%. The ratio in framings varied significantly across outlets, however. ‘Disadvantaged’ was most common in all but the Express.</li> </ul> <p>Across all outlets, 21% of articles analysed included a migrant voice - the perspective of an individual whose lived reality reflects the topic of the article. Migrant voices were found most commonly in The Guardian (33.5% of articles), with The Independent a close second. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the Express included a migrant voice in only 3.9% of articles. Across all outlets, a migrant voice was more likely to be included in articles where a ‘Disadvantaged’ frame was identified (59.3%) and least likely in those that portrayed migrants as ‘Threats’ (2.8%).</p>	<p>Migrant Voice 16 December 2020</p>
EUSS	<p><b>Migration Observatory Briefing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some migrants to the UK stay permanently while others leave after a period. <a href="#">The Migration Observatory briefing</a> explains what we know about how long migrants stay in the UK after arrival.</li> </ul>	<p>The Migration Observatory 16 December 2020</p>
	<p><b>Court of Appeal: EU citizens with pre-settled status can claim benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Court of Appeal has handed down a ruling that should, if not successfully appealed, make it <a href="#">easier for millions of EU citizens with pre-settled status to claim benefits</a>. The case is <i>Fratila and Tanase v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions</i> [2020] EWCA Civ 1741.</li> </ul>	<p>Free Movement 18 December 2020</p>
	<p><b>EU Settlement Scheme: community support for vulnerable:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisations funded to provide support to vulnerable and at-risk EU citizens applying to the EU Settlement Scheme.</li> <li>Charities, local authorities, and voluntary organisations across the UK are being funded to provide help and information to vulnerable EU, EEA and Swiss citizens applying to the EU Settlement Scheme.</li> <li>Practical support is available for a range of needs including disabled people, children, those with severe mental health conditions, victims of human trafficking or domestic abuse, those without a permanent address, those who are homeless and those who are elderly or isolated.</li> <li>The 72 grant funded organisations are located across the UK to ensure services are available to those who most need it.</li> </ul>	<p>Home Office 23 December 2020</p>
Immigration	<p><b>Statement of changes to the Immigration Rules: HC 1043, 10 December 2020:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">On the 10<sup>th</sup> December, the Government laid out new immigration rules</a> that will prevent people from making an asylum claim in the UK if they have passed through a safe third country.</li> <li>From 1<sup>st</sup> January, the new rules will mean that the Home Office may not have to assess a person’s asylum claim if they have travelled through, or have a connection to, what is deemed a safe third country.</li> </ul>	<p>Gov 10 December 2020</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new rules also give the Home Office the power to remove people seeking asylum to a safe country that agrees to receive them, even if they have never been there or have any connections to it.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Committee to question Government's preferred candidate for Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration:</b></p> <p><a href="#">The Home Affairs Committee</a> will hold a pre-appointment hearing for the Government's preferred candidate for the role of Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, David Neal, on Tuesday 15 December.</p>	<p><b>UK Parliament</b> <b>14 December 2020</b></p>
	<p><b>Migration Advisory Committee: annual report 2020:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The UK immigration system is facing the most substantial changes in a generation as we complete our exit from the EU. At the same time, the economic and social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic present enormous challenges. <a href="#">The Migration Advisory Committee provide an overview</a> of the current landscape and the implications for migration. They also examine the migration routes currently in place and coming in as part of the future immigration system from January 2021 and provide views on their functioning.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Migration Advisory Committee</b> <b>15 December 2020</b></p>
	<p><b>Visiting the UK from 1 January 2021:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and EU has finished, there are new regarding crossing the UK border which are outlined <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Home Office</b> <b>16 December 2020</b></p>
	<p>The Home Office recently introduced a set of new validity requirements for visa applications under the <a href="#">Points Based Immigration System</a>, such as the Skilled Worker route. This is significant because an invalid application does not extend your permission to be in the UK whilst it is being considered (what is called "section 3C leave").</p>	<p><b>Free Movement</b> <b>23 December 2020</b></p>
	<p><b>New Immigration Rules:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Immigration Rules are some of the most important pieces of legislation that make up the UK's immigration law. They are updated on a regular basis and all changes can be found in the <a href="#">Immigration Rules: statements of changes</a>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Home Office</b> <b>31 December 2020</b></p>
	<p><b>Home Office floats automatic deportation after six-month sentence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Home Office may cut the minimum prison sentence required to trigger automatic deportation from 12 months to six months, it <a href="#">emerged</a> over the holidays.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Free Movement</b> <b>05 January 2021</b></p>
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	<p><b>Together in the UK</b> have launched a <a href="#">creative writing competition</a>. The competition is open to first- and second-generation migrants to the UK.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Together in the UK want to hear stories about migrating to the UK, it can be a poem or a short story/essay. Prizes include a Chrome Workbook, iPhone 6, cinema vouchers, a scooter, £100, and a place on Migrant Voice's media lab training. The winner will also be invited to perform entry at Together in the UK's next event.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Together in the UK</b> <b>December 2020</b></p>
<b>Family Reunion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This <a href="#">House of Commons briefing</a> provides further information about Brexit and the end of the Dublin III Regulation on the UK, including its impact on family reunion. It notes that the Government has committed to make a statement to Parliament by mid-February on a review of family reunion for refugees and asylum seekers and a public consultation on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the EU seeking to join relatives in the UK.</li> </ul>	<p><b>UK Parliament</b> <b>21 December 2020</b></p>
	<p><b>Letter to the Home Secretary on family reunion arrangements following the UK's exit from the EU, dated 21 December 2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link to the letter can be found below:</li> <li><a href="https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4118/documents/40775/default/">https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4118/documents/40775/default/</a>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>UK Parliament</b> <b>21 December 2020</b></p>
	<p><b>Overview of family reunion options in the Immigration Rule:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">The instruction</a> provides an overview of family reunion routes in the Immigration Rules and outside the rules. The UK has left the European Union and is no longer bound by the Dublin III Regulation from 11:00pm GMT on 31 December 2020.</li> <li>This means we will no longer accept new referrals for the purposes of family reunion under the Dublin III Regulation. Those previously eligible for a transfer to join a relative in the UK under the Dublin III Regulation will now need to consider alternative routes if they wish to seek entry to the UK.</li> <li>This guidance tells you about options for family reunion for individuals who are outside the EU as well as those in the EU as the same rules apply.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Home Office</b> <b>31 December 2020</b></p>

<p><b>The Windrush Compensation Scheme</b></p>	<p><b>Radical Reforms to the Windrush Compensation Scheme:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The link to the updated factsheet can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>• Anyone who has already received an offer of payment under the scheme will have their cases reviewed, with a basic minimum award of £10,000 set to be offered to everyone who can show that the scandal has had an impact on their life.</li> <li>• This £10,000 award will be fast-tracked and paid out as soon as claimants have demonstrated that they have suffered as a result of the Windrush scandal, which saw thousands of people who had lived legally in the UK for decades being miscategorised as immigration offenders.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Here</a> is the letter from the Windrush Compensation team to all eligible applicants following the changes announced in December 2020.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Home Office</b> <b>14 December 2020</b></p>
<p><b>Vacancies</b></p>	<p><b>Migrant Voice</b> are looking for a full-time, short-term Communications Officer and a part-time London Project Worker to join from March 2021. Full details can be found on their <a href="#">website</a>, with the deadline for receiving all applications on 15 January 2021 @08:00am. Interviews for those short-listed will take place on 22 January 2021.</p> <p><b>Refugee Action</b> are looking for a Policy and Research Officer to support the development of Refugee Action’s policy work. This is a full-time permanent position working from home. Full details can be found <a href="#">here</a>, with the deadline for receiving applications on 11 January 2021 @09:00am. First round interviews will take place on 27 January and second round interviews will take place on 3 February, both via Zoom.</p>	

The West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership works with national, regional, and local partners to ensure that the region can deal with, and benefit from, migration. We are hosted by Birmingham City Council.

*We would like to thank you for all contributions to this bulletin. Information in this bulletin and any references or links to external sources or agencies do not necessarily reflect the views of West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership nor receive its endorsement. WMSMP is not responsible for the accuracy of this information which is intended as a general guide only. If you would like to be removed from the distribution list, please email [WMSMP@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:WMSMP@birmingham.gov.uk).*