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The Newsflash is a weekly round up of publications, information, events, funding and jobs relating to asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers for anyone who wants to keep up to date with the latest developments.

The newsflash is produced in partnership with the East of England Local Government Association - Strategic Migration Partnership and the Partnership Development Project (MENTER).

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Oxfam report: Coping with Destitution - Survival and livelihood strategies of refused asylum seekers living in the UK

The report reviews the situation faced by an estimated 280,000 destitute refused asylum seekers in the UK, exposing the circumstances in which many find themselves living. The report calls for the following policy changes to reduce the likelihood of refused asylum seekers falling into destitution:

- Use the Asylum Improvement Project review to help improve the quality of initial decision-making and access to legal representation and advice
- Section 4 support to be replaced with cash-based support until the point of return
- Grant permission to work for those who are able to work but unable to return through no fault of their own.

Please follow this link to read the report in full:

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/right_heard/downloads/rr-coping-with-destitution-survival-strategies-uk-050211-en.pdf

Strategic Migration Partnership (SMP) East of England LGA response to Ministry of Justice Legal Aid reform consultation

The SMP from EELGA has compiled a response to the consultation on the reform of legal aid and its impact on the client group where it appears that the changes will have most impact – asylum seekers and migrant workers. The consultation has now closed and the findings of the consultation are expected in spring 2011.

Please follow this link to read the SMP response in full:

<http://www.eelga.gov.uk/documents/Policy%20and%20Priorities/Strategic%20Migration%20Partnership/Asylum%20and%20Refugee%20Integration/Response%20to%20Ministry%20of%20Justice%20Legal%20Aid%20consultation%20Feb%202011.pdf>

Please follow this link to read the parliamentary briefing issued by the Refugee Council:

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/Resources/Refugee%20Council/downloads/briefings/Legal%20aidrevised%20Feb2011v2.pdf>

Suffolk Refugee Support Forum (SRSF), Ipswich, needs trustees to sit on management committee

SRSF is a small independent charity committed to helping asylum seekers and refugees rebuild their lives in the UK. They provide services from their offices in central Ipswich, such as drop-in advice sessions, English conversation classes, a homework club and a crèche. They are looking for new members to join their management committee which meets monthly on the second Thursday of each month from 6.30-8.30pm. Anyone interested in joining the committee and would like an informal chat to learn more, please contact Rebecca Crerar, Team Manager on t: 01473 400786 or e:rcrerar@srsf.org.uk w:www.srsf.org.uk

Report from the Commission to the European Parliament – the results achieved by implementing the European Refugee Fund 2005-2007

The report details a country by country breakdown of how the fund was spent across the target areas for action:

- reception conditions and asylum procedures
- integration of those whose stay in the member state is of a lasting or stable nature
- voluntary returns.

The UK spent 25 million euros over the three years, 16% of the total spend across member states, with the majority of activity spent on voluntary returns (80%). To read the report in full, please follow this link:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0002:FIN:EN:PDF&>

Refugee Council Birmingham – service transformation from 14 February

From 14 February 2011, the Refugee Council in Birmingham will be operating telephone advice only. This is a pilot project lasting for two months. Clients will no longer be seen without an appointment. The new advice lines will be own language, confidential and free to call from landlines and mobiles. Anyone needing advice should call the number and follow the instructions to select the language needed. The service is open Monday to Friday 9.30 –5.30 on 0800 8082255. Those who are deaf or hard of hearing can use the text phone/Minicom service 0800 8082259

Migration

Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) publishes list of graduate level occupations for Tier 2

In November, the government announced its intention to raise the minimum skill level for jobs under Tier 2 from National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 to graduate level. The government asked the MAC to advise on two questions, and the report addresses itself to answering the first question which was:

- What standard occupational classification (SOC) codes should be considered as graduate level occupations for the purposes of Tier 2 of the points-based system?

The Committee was asked to use NVQ level 4 as the benchmark for graduate level for this commission. Its findings have resulted in the list of occupations for Tier 2 applicants being shortened from 192 at NVQ level 3 (56% of full time occupations) to 121 at NVQ level 4 (39% of all full time occupations). The Committee's report can be found by following the link: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/workingwithus/indbodies/mac/>

COVER – east of England voluntary and community sector survey

COVER is carrying out a piece of work to investigate the current state of the Voluntary and Community sector in the east of England. The results of this survey will be used to influence policy makers on behalf of the sector at regional and national level and will be available to the sector to use locally too. COVER would like to hear about experiences from the sector locally. The research is looking at the following questions.

- How have Voluntary and Community sector organisations fared during recent political and economic changes?
- What's the outlook for the coming months?
- What are the main issues that the sector is dealing with?

Organisations which are either a social enterprise, charity or not-for-profit organisation operating anywhere in the east of England, are invited to spend ten minutes completing their survey by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3BTB88R> . COVER would like a high response rate to maximize the weight that the findings will carry so as well as completing the survey, please also pass this on to relevant networks. The survey closes **4 March 2011**.

European Commission – UK to end unequal pay for seafarers

The European Commission has requested the UK to put an end to legislation allowing for differential pay for non-UK seafarers on the basis of their nationality. The request takes the form of a 'reasoned opinion' under EU infringement procedures. The UK has two months to make a response, and then the Commission may decide to refer the UK to the EU's Court of Justice. The Equality Act prohibits pay discrimination. Please follow this link for more information: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=979&further>

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) – European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey

In total, 23500 immigrant and ethnic minority people were surveyed in all 27 member states during 2008. Respondents were asked about their experiences of discrimination and victimisation in the year prior to the survey. The survey found that every fourth ethnic minority or immigrant respondent interviewed indicated that they had felt discriminated against on at least two protected characteristics and ethnicity or immigrant origin consistently emerges as the most significant ground for experiencing discrimination.

Please follow this link to read the report in full: http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/EU_MIDIS_DiF5-multiple-discrimination_EN.pdf

Events

We Are Here – an exhibition of images from young people from migrant and refugee communities from Serbia and Hungary and young parents from UK. 16 February onwards, London SW1P 3EU

'We Are Here' is produced as part of the European Year 2010: Poverty and Social Exclusion. Working with young parents from the UK and young people from migrant communities in Serbia, Hungary and Italy, the project reflects on the challenges they face in their everyday lives. The exhibition launch is 12.30-2.30pm 16 February at the 12 Star Gallery, 32 Smith Square, London and will continue until 25 February. The exhibition will be open Monday to Friday 10am – 6pm. Anyone wishing to attend the launch should contact Belinda Williams on e: belinda@media19.co.uk t: 0191 4909252.

Anyone who cannot attend the exhibition can watch the 'We Are Here' films on the Community channel at intervals on 21, 24 and 27 February.

Interfaith event for young people – Peterborough, 23 February 2011

Following their first event for young people in December, this next event will focus on the Sikh and Hindu communities and is open to 16-25 year olds who would like to learn about other people's culture, religion and faith. The event is from 4-6pm at the Unity Hall, Northfield Road, Peterborough PE1 3QH and refreshments will be available. Please contact Poor African Refugee Community Association (PARCA) for more information e: ukparca@yahoo.co.uk or the venue t: 01733 563420

Healthy communities in the East of England – a consultation and learning event about the health white paper – Newmarket, 28 February

This consultation event is for the voluntary and community sector to discuss the implications and impact of the changes proposed in Healthy Lives, Healthy People – the Public Health White Paper. The event gives delegates the opportunity to learn more about the proposed changes in the White Paper as well as attending workshops to discuss issues in depth. The White Paper on Public Health puts local government and local communities at the heart of improving health and wellbeing and tackling inequalities – improving the health of the poorest, fastest. This event is aimed primarily at the voluntary and community sector with an interest in any aspect of public health and health inequalities e.g. lifestyles, early years, environment, mental wellbeing, education and skills, healthy aging. Delegates from local authorities and NHS organisations are welcome to attend but places are limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Anyone wishing to attend should contact Jan at Cover on e: jan.cunningham@cover-east.org t: 07890 176715

Refugee Council conference agenda confirmed – 23 March 2011

The morning session of the conference will focus on the work of five refugee organisations from around the UK who have developed and delivered inspiring projects for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers in their local communities. Participants include RAMFEL, NILE African Development Organisation, Manchester Refugee Support Network, Churches Together Network and the Gateway protection programme. This will be followed by a panel discussion. Following the networking lunch, where delegates are invited to bring literature for display on the information stand, delegates will hear from the Keynote Speaker Roland Schilling, UNHCR Representative in London. This will be followed by a question and answer session to discuss challenges facing the sector and how to work more effectively together to protect refugees and asylum seekers. The panel will comprise Donna Covey, Chief Executive, Refugee Council, Roland Schilling, and Mike Kaye, Advocacy Manager, Still Human Still Here.

Please follow this link to book a place on the conference:

http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/Resources/Refugee%20Council/downloads/eventsAndtraining/Conference%20011%20booking%20form.doc?dm_i=l6P,D3L0,31R5LZ,11A6G,1

Immigration – assessing the impact of new legislation – seminar, from Westminster Legal Policy Forum, 23 March, Central London

This seminar will be an opportunity to examine Government proposals to reduce net migration within the duration of this Parliament. With measures scheduled to come into effect in April, discussion will focus on the proposed permanent cap to be placed on non-EU economic migrants, as well as looking at how Government intends to tighten student routes of immigration via more stringent student visa regulations. There will be keynote addresses from the chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee, the UK Border Agency's Head of Immigration Policy, and the Migration Advisory Committee and planned sessions focus on:

- The view from stakeholders, including the business community and the further education sector;
- What reduced net-immigration may mean for the UK economy, including the future of public services;

- How measures will function in practice, including an assessment of how restrictions will vary across economic, student and dependant routes of immigration; and
 - Future challenges for the implementation and design of immigration policy.
- Places at the seminar will cost £190 plus VAT per delegate or £80 plus VAT concessionary rate for small charities or unfunded individuals. Please pay in advance by credit card on t: 01344 864796 and follow this link for more information: <http://www.westminsterforumprojects.co.uk/forums/event.php?eid=230>

Funding

Luton Borough Council – applications to provide floating housing support service: up to £5m over 5 years

Successful providers will deliver short term housing support enabling individuals to achieve and maintain independent living. The council anticipates awarding three contracts in total, including a generic floating support contract to include independent housing advice. The exact number of contracts to be awarded will depend on the quality and scope of applications. The council strongly welcomes applications from suitably qualified charitable organisations and consortia. Applicants are required to contact Catherine Winstanley
e: catherine.winstanley@luton.gov.uk t: 01582 547306 at Housing and Community Living at Luton Borough Council to express an interest. The deadline for completed expressions of interest is 5.30pm **24 February 2011**.

Jobs

British Red Cross, Learning and Development Service Assistant, Hertford. Fulltime, permanent post £11,135-14,490 per annum

This new position is to provide administrative support to the Learning and Development Manager. This is an opportunity to be part of a developing team responsible for delivering training to volunteers and staff, in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex. Candidates should have the vision and drive to strengthen the Red Cross's work across their area and have excellent communication skills, attention to detail and a commitment to working with volunteers. Candidates should be IT literate, have accurate data entry skills and the ability to prioritise their own work load. Full training and support will be given.

To apply online: www.redcross.org.uk or contact Kimberley Cole on 01992 586609 for queries. To discuss the position further please contact Nicolette Harris on 01992 585979.

Closing date for applications is **18 February 2011**. Interviews to be held on: 23/24 February 2011.

Click here for more information on this vacancy:

[Job+DescriptionLearning+And+Development+Admn+Assistant+\[1\].DOCJob+DescriptionLearning+And+Development+Admn+Assistant+\[1\].DOC](#)

Afghan Association Paiwand: Community Advocate, Barnet, London. Part-time post. Salary £14000 per annum

Afghan Association Paiwand is a registered charity, established in 2002 to provide services and assistance to the Afghan Community in the UK. It seeks an enthusiastic and highly motivated individual to work with its friendly team of staff and volunteers to develop the advocacy service for refugees and asylum seekers and to enable Afghan refugees living in Enfield and Haringey to successfully integrate and access services by providing support, information and representation.

This is a part time 20hours/week position. For an informal talk, application form and how to apply please contact Farid Mall on 020 8905 8770 or email faridmall@paiwand.com Deadline: **18 February 2011**, 5pm

European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM). Internship 6-9 months, Brussels. Paid post - net €700/month

EPIM is looking for an intern to support the EPIM Programme Manager in the development and implementation of all EPIM activities, under the overall supervision of the NEF Executive Director. EPIM seeks to improve the living conditions of regular and undocumented migrants by strengthening the role played by NGOs active on migration and integration issues. Through a grants and capacity building programme, EPIM partner foundations foster civil society initiatives that promote constructive integration policies for migrants and receiving communities. Grants focus on 3 priority areas:

- undocumented migrants,
- making the voices of migrants heard; and
- the role of the media in migrants' integration

Responsibilities of the intern will include assisting with the implementation of communication strategy, participating in the strategic learning and evaluation processes and analysing grantee progress reports for evaluation purposes.

Anyone interested should send their cv and covering letter to info@nefic.org by **20 February 2011**

Please follow this link for more information: <http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/news/2011/intern-vacancy-epim>

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