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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).

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## Asylum Seekers and Refugees

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### **Assisted Voluntary Returns (AVR) to be run by Refugee Action from 1 April 2011**

The scheme, funded by the European Return Fund, has been run in the UK by IOM but Refugee Action will run it from 1 April 2011, with the same three strands available:

- Asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers (VARRP programme)
- Families and children (AVRFC programme)
- Irregular migrants (AVRIM programme)

They will offer independent, confidential and non-directive advice, before and after asylum claims are decided, at airport assistance and post-return support. At present this service is only available at detention centres for immigration detainees in this region. For those interested in the service, it will be offered via offices or outreach posts run either by Refugee Action or partner agencies in Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, Leicester, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and Wolverhampton. Please follow this link for more information about the scheme: <http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/ourwork/assistedvoluntaryreturn.aspx>

### **Proud to protect refugees - Refugee Council Campaign**

To mark the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention and 60 years of the Refugee Council, the Refugee Council wants 10,000 people to sign their Protection Pledge to say 'We're Proud to Protect Refugees'. In the first week of the campaign, over 2000 people signed.

Anyone interested in learning more about the campaign and signing the pledge should follow this link:

[http://e-activist.com/ea-campaign/clientcampaign.do?ea.client.id=121&ea.campaign.id=9202&dm\\_i=I6P,DTZT,31R5LZ,13JHF,1](http://e-activist.com/ea-campaign/clientcampaign.do?ea.client.id=121&ea.campaign.id=9202&dm_i=I6P,DTZT,31R5LZ,13JHF,1)

### **Meeting the health needs of refugees and asylum seekers - A resource for health workers**

This online resource was originally published as a resource pack by Angela Burnett & Yohannes Fassil in 2002. It has proved to be a valuable source of information for health workers. Angela and Yohannes have now updated the resource, which includes practical information, useful contacts and resources and examples of good practice. Please follow this link to access the guide: <http://nrif.homeoffice.gov.uk/Health/SpecialistSupport/index.asp>

### **Refugee resettlement, Libyan conflict – European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)**

UNHCR warned last week that refugees are being prevented from fleeing the conflict areas in Libya and that the situation for sub-Saharan nationals is "particularly critical." UNHCR, together with NGOs, are working hard to prepare emergency resettlement operations in Tunisia and Egypt for refugees and asylum seekers registered in Libya, and for the further 40,000 refugees already hosted in Egypt. By 15 March, 293,295 people had arrived in Tunisia, Egypt, Niger and Algeria from Libya. 11,822 people are currently living in the Choucha Transit camp on the Tunisian border with Libya. Despite this urgent need for resettlement, except for Italy, who welcomed the 58 Eritreans successfully evacuated from Tripoli with the help of the Italian Refugee Council, no EU Member State has stepped forward to offer places for emergency resettlement for those trapped in Libya who are unable to go home. To read the bulletin, please follow this link: [http://www.ecre.org/resources/ECRE\\_weekly\\_bulletin](http://www.ecre.org/resources/ECRE_weekly_bulletin)

### **European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) – UK and Sweden return a group of Iraqis to Baghdad**

The UK Border Agency (UKBA) together with the Swedish authorities and the EU Border Agency, Frontex, returned a group of Iraqis, numbering 17 according to refugee agencies, 8 according to the Home Office, to Baghdad from Stansted airport. The removal comes despite UNHCR criticism and Amnesty International warnings against forced returns expressed earlier this year. Please follow this link to read about the removal in an article in the Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/mar/09/deportation-flights-iraq-resume>

There is currently no comment on the UKBA website about this removal, but follow this link for news stories as they are released: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-and-updates>

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## Migration

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### **Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) closure: resource impact briefing note**

East of England LGA, Strategic Migration Partnership has issued a document for statutory and third sector advice agencies to use to assess and prepare for the impact of the closure of the WRS on 30 April 2011. Please follow this link to read the document in full:

<http://www.eelga.gov.uk/documents/Policy%20and%20Priorities/Strategic%20Migration%20Partnership/Migrant%20workers/WRS%20ceasing%20resource%20briefing%20paper.pdf>

### **Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) call for evidence on Tier 2 shortage occupations**

The MAC has launched its first full review of the UK labour market for highly skilled workers since 2008 to inform and revise the Tier 2 shortage occupation list and invites people to submit evidence for this review. The MAC will potentially recommend that occupations and job titles are added to, and removed from, the Tier 2 shortage occupation list. This review covers the whole labour market for highly skilled workers, but certain job titles and occupations will not be recommended for inclusion on the Tier 2 shortage occupation list because the MAC has recently assessed them as not skilled to National Qualifications Framework level 4 or above, such as work riders in the horse racing industry. The question which the MAC is asking to inform the review is:

- In which occupation(s) or job title(s) **skilled** to NQF level 4 or above is there a **shortage** of labour that it would be **sensible** to fill using labour from outside the EEA?

Please supply evidence to the MAC which addresses this question, with supporting data where possible, by **10 June**. Please follow this link for more information:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/workingwithus/indbodies/mac>

### **National Audit Office (NAO) report - Immigration: the Points Based System – Work Routes**

The Points Based System introduced by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) in 2008 was for the most part designed well and provides an adaptable means of meeting the UK's work-related immigration policy objectives. However, according to the NAO, the system is not yet delivering its full potential for value for money. Its processes and systems are not efficient and customer service could be improved. UKBA can also provide little assurance that it is effectively managing the risk of non-compliance with immigration rules by migrants and their sponsors. Please follow this link for the press release and link to the full report:

[http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/press\\_notice\\_home/1011/1011819.aspx](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/press_notice_home/1011/1011819.aspx)

### **International students of vital importance to British economy – Home Affairs Select Committee report**

The Home Affairs Select Committee cautioned the Government against introducing measures which could damage the UK's educational export sector. After an inquiry into the Government's proposals to reform the student immigration system, the Committee remains concerned about the unintended consequences of some of the proposals. The international student market, estimated to be worth £40 billion to the UK economy is a growth market, with the UK is the second most popular destination in the world for international students.

The committee noted the value of the Post-Study Work route in attracting students to the UK and disagrees with Government proposals to close it. It suggests alternatives to the Government's proposed language requirements, specifically a change to the parameters of the student visitor visa so it can be used as a viable route for those attending pre-degree programmes. While it supports Government proposals to tighten language schools' accreditation, it is concerned that Government approval of current accreditation bodies has lapsed and calls for one streamlined accreditation system. The Committee notes progress made to close bogus language schools and supports this. The committee is not persuaded that students be counted as migrants and suggests they be excluded from net migration numbers, making that a cap on student visas is unnecessary and undesirable. To read the report in full, please follow this link: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news/110317-student-visas-release>

**Government 'rolls out the red carpet' for entrepreneurs and investors – UK Border Agency**

Foreign entrepreneurs and investors are being given incentives to come to the UK by new visa rules to reward those contributing to economic growth. Under changes to the Immigration Rules, people coming to the UK under Tier 1 (Investor) of the points-based system will be able to settle here faster if they invest large sums of money. Those investing £5 million will be allowed to settle here after 3 years; those investing £10 million or more will be allowed to settle after 2. This accelerated settlement right will apply both to investors already in the UK and new arrivals. Tier 1 (Entrepreneur) migrants will also be able to settle quickly in the UK if they create 10 jobs or turn over £5 million in a 3-year period.

The level of investment for an entrepreneur to qualify for a Tier 1 visa remains at £200k, but the government will allow high-potential businesses to come to the UK with £50k funding from a reputable organisation. Major investors can now spend up to 180 days per year, rather than 90, outside the UK without affecting their right to settle, to address the concern cited by investors of the need to be constantly mobile. A new type of visitor visa will be created for prospective entrepreneurs, allowing entry to the UK to secure funding and make arrangements for business start-up before transferring to a full Tier 1 (Entrepreneur) visa once here.

The government also published a statement of intent outlining how the new Tier 1 (Exceptional talent) route will operate from April 2011. This route for exceptionally talented migrants will be limited to 1,000 visas per year and is for those recognised, or having the potential to be recognised, as leaders in science, humanities and arts. Migrants seeking entry under Tier 1 (Exceptional talent) will not need an employer's sponsorship but will need endorsement from an accredited competent body. Once the competent bodies are announced, they will select those qualifying for endorsement. Please follow this link to read more:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2011/march/39-entrepreneurs-investors>

**Forced migration: Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking: Service User Perspectives**

Since 2009, Newman University College has been working on a comparative study of community focused initiatives aimed at supporting women, children and young people who have been the victims of violence, exploitation or trafficking in 3 regions of the UK, Germany and Romania. This research, led by Newman University College in partnership with Alice Salomon University, Germany and Lucian Blaga University, Romania, was funded by the European Commission's Daphne III Programme 2007 -2013. Please follow this link to read the report and access related resources: <http://www.newman.ac.uk/daphne/?pg=2713>

**HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) offers employers of migrants bespoke tax help**

HMRC's Business Education and Support Teams offer a bespoke presentation aimed at organisations involved with migrant workers and those new to the UK. The brief covers a range of tax topics related to both employment and self-employment. If your organisation thinks this could be of benefit to its members or staff, please email [catherine.jackson@hrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:catherine.jackson@hrc.gsi.gov.uk) for further information.

**Tackling Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – A Trust for London research in collaboration with Esmeé Fairbairn Foundation and Rosa**

As part of this collaborative initiative between the three funders, Options UK has been commissioned to undertake an independent evaluation. The first stage of the process was to gather insights into attitudes and behaviours of practicing communities relating to FGM by asking the funded project to undertake qualitative peer research. The research highlights some issues and makes recommendations about how these should be taken forward as part of the initiative. A summary and full report of the research are now available by following this link:

[http://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/media-centre/news/tackling-female-genital-mutilation-fgm.html?dm\\_i=IMP,DUNO,3039NF,13LLK,1](http://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/media-centre/news/tackling-female-genital-mutilation-fgm.html?dm_i=IMP,DUNO,3039NF,13LLK,1)

**British Medical Association (BMA) publishes guidance for GPs on primary medical services for overseas visitors**

Please follow this link to read the latest guidance from the BMA:

<http://refugeehealthnetwork.org/library/2011/02/overseas-visitors-accessing-nhs-primary-medical-services-guidance-for-gps>

**Global mobility: an inescapable reality – an article from Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR)**

The article argues that the UK will never come to terms with the modern day reality of migration if its approach to it is to impose ever tighter restrictions. It concludes that the UK is increasingly a nation shaped by migration in all its forms, and part of future nation building has to involve embracing this reality in a positive spirit.

Please follow this link to read the article in full: <http://www.ippr.org/articles/?id=4378>

**myUKinfo portal goes live with new language - Nepali**

myUKinfo, the information portal providing access to information about living and working in the UK, has gone live with Nepali. Nepali is the 8th language on the myUKinfo site. Languages already on the portal in the order they were added include English, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Romanian, Lithuanian and Russian. Follow this link to visit the portal: [www.myUKinfo.com](http://www.myUKinfo.com).

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## Events

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**Men's International Community Group – football, from 29 March, Ipswich**

In partnership with the Police, Mind, Refugee Council and Suffolk Refugee Support Forum, Suffolk New College is hosting a free and friendly game of football, open to men of all communities. Anyone interested in playing should come to the Goals football Centre at Suffolk New College at 15:00 for two hours of play. They will continue to take place monthly for the next six months. Please contact Police Community Support Officer Richard Godfrey for more information: [Richard.godfrey@suffolk.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Richard.godfrey@suffolk.pnn.police.uk)

**Black & Multicultural Youth Work Conference - Taking on Funding Cuts, from MENTER, 30 March 2011, Peterborough**

MENTER invites delegates who work with black and multicultural young people to join them to explore funding cuts to young people's services and how this might impact black and multicultural young people. The day will debate what the future opportunities might be. Topics to be explored will look at responses to rising youth unemployment, inequalities and the limitation of access to education for young people from poorer backgrounds as well as discussing what solutions there are. It will take place at the Ramada Hotel, from 9am – 5pm.

The day features confirmed speakers:

- Zain Awan, UK Young Ambassador
- David Akinsanya, Producer of Channel 4 series *Family Me a Family*
- Jabeen Shafee, Step Up Consultants
- Yasmeen Maqbool, YMCA
- Maheeb Ladha, Director of Peterborough Racial Equality Council

For a copy of the programme and booking form, please follow this link to the MENTER website on the Events page: [www.mentor.org.uk/content/events#BMYWC](http://www.mentor.org.uk/content/events#BMYWC) The event is free to those in the third sector, unwaged or volunteers, £20 each to others.

**Human Rights Film Festival, 24 March – 1 April, London**

This year, in association with the Festival, the Refugee Council, Congo Now! and Oxfam are presenting the UK Premiere of Beth Davenport and Elizabeth Mandel's documentary 'Pushing the Elephant', followed by a Q&A with the filmmakers and film subject, Rose Mapendo. Having survived personal atrocities during the 1998 conflict in the DRC, Rose Mapendo now lives in the US and uses her experience to campaign for the rights of refugees. The film tells the story of Rose's reunion with Nangabire, the daughter she was separated from during the conflict.

See the film on Saturday **26 March** 7.00pm, at the Ritzy, Brixton Oval, London - box office 0871 704 2065 or on Sunday **27 March** 4.00pm, Curzon Soho, 99 Shaftesbury Avenue, London - box office 0871 7033 988

Please follow this link for details of the full programme of films:

[http://www.hrw.org/en/iff?dm\\_i=l6P,DTZT,31R5LZ,13JHJ,1](http://www.hrw.org/en/iff?dm_i=l6P,DTZT,31R5LZ,13JHJ,1)

To read about 'Pushing the Elephant', please follow this link: <http://www.hrw.org/en/iff/pushing-elephant>

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## Funding

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### People's Postcode Trust (England, Scotland & Wales)

The People's Postcode Trust, a trust set up by the "People's Postcode Lottery" offers grants of between £500 and £10,000 (£2,000 if not a registered charity) to small organisations and community groups for projects lasting up to 3 months in the areas of Poverty Prevention; Advancement of Health; Community Development; Public Sports; Human Rights; and Environmental Protection. Applications for grants of under £2,000 are considered on a rolling quarterly basis in this region. For grants of over £2,000 the next round for applications will open on **11 April 2011** and will close on **27 May 2011**. Please follow this link for more information: <http://www.postcodetrust.org.uk>

### The Triangle Trust 1949 Fund Opens for Applications (UK)

The Triangle Trust 1949 Fund is inviting applications from charity organisations to support projects that support:

- Carers.
- Community arts and education.
- Disability.
- Older people.
- Poverty.
- Integration and rehabilitation.

Grants are normally in the range of £1,000 and £10,000. The objectives of the Fund are; the alleviation of poverty and the promotion of good health and welfare; the advancement and furthering of education. Successful projects will either maintain an open, inclusive society or promote integration (or reintegration) of individuals or groups into society. Preference will be given to smaller charities; charities which serve a locality or region of the UK, rather than national charities; and causes which find it more difficult to raise funds from the general public.

The next application deadline is the **14 May 2011**. Please follow this link for more information:

[http://thetriangletrust1949fund.org.uk/index.htm#Service\\_Provided](http://thetriangletrust1949fund.org.uk/index.htm#Service_Provided)

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## Jobs

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### Refugee Action: Voluntary Return Service Assistant Caseworkers – London, Birmingham, Leeds and Glasgow. £21,519 plus £3,300 (if based in London)

The post will support asylum seekers and irregular migrants with non-complex cases, and provide broad-based advice and information – as well as delivering operational and logistical support. The post will also offer essential assistance to caseworkers. The role calls for a good understanding of Refugee Action service users and the issues they face, particularly those specifically relating to voluntary return. Candidates should have good interpersonal skills and sensitivity to help people in traumatic, emotionally demanding situations.

The closing date for applications is noon **22 March**. Please follow this link for more information:

[http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/jobs/AVRAssistantCaseworker2011.aspx?dm\\_i=IMP,DUNO,3039NF,13LKI,1](http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/jobs/AVRAssistantCaseworker2011.aspx?dm_i=IMP,DUNO,3039NF,13LKI,1)

### Refugee Action: Assisted Voluntary Returns, Volunteer Coordinators – London, Birmingham and Leeds. £24,645 plus £3,300 (if based in London)

The post holder will lead the planning, co-ordination, recruiting and training of volunteers, and have previous experience of supporting volunteers and will ensure that recognised 'best practice' underpins the work of the volunteers. The candidate will be aware of the issues relating to refugees and voluntary return, and will know the key statutory and non-statutory organisations involved in handling asylum applications.

The closing date for applications is noon **22 March**. For further information and to apply please follow this link:

[http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/jobs/AVRVolunteerCoOrdinator2011.aspx?dm\\_i=IMP,DUNO,3039NF,13LKI,1](http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/jobs/AVRVolunteerCoOrdinator2011.aspx?dm_i=IMP,DUNO,3039NF,13LKI,1)

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