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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

European Countries commit to take 1000 refugees from North Africa, but Britain accepts none – European Council on Refugees and Exile (ECRE) weekly news bulletin

At a Pledging Conference on Relocation and Resettlement, held in the margins of the Justice and Homes Affairs extraordinary Council, European countries pledged to relocate about 300 people from Malta, and to resettle about 700 people coming from Libya. The relocation pledges were reportedly made by Poland, Portugal, Bulgaria, Germany, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Hungary, Denmark, Switzerland, Lichtenstein and Norway. Germany alone will take 100 migrants.

The UK Government decided not to accept any refugees who had managed to cross the Mediterranean fleeing turmoil in Libya. Last month, Home Secretary Theresa May said that the UK would not join the “burden sharing” scheme and this was confirmed by the deputy PM and Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg who backed the decision not to open the borders, and instead to provide practical support directly in Italy. To read this story in full, plus other articles on asylum and refugees in Europe, please follow this link to ECRE’s latest weekly bulletin:

http://www.ecre.org/files/ECRE_Weekly_Bulletin_13_May_2011_final.pdf

Refugee Action delivering assisted voluntary return service to the east of England

From April this year, Refugee Action have been newly contracted to deliver the 3 strands of UK Border Agency’s voluntary returns programme, previously delivered by IOM:

- Single asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers (VARRP programme)
- Families and children – both from the asylum system and irregular migrants (AVRFC programme)
- Single irregular migrants (AVRIM programme)

They provide confidential and impartial advice via their free to call telephone number **0808 800 0007**. In addition to advice, planning and obtaining travel documents, both VARRP and AVRFC have a financial reintegration package attached to them. Refugee Action has four hub offices across the UK, with the Birmingham office handling the majority of cases in this region and the London office handling a few in the south of the region. Whilst most enquiries can be handled by case managers over the telephone, Refugee Action is interested in exploring links with agencies across this region willing to host Refugee Action staff who can inform people face to face about return options. Please contact Phil Davis at Refugee Action if you are interested in exploring such a link: philipd@refugee-action.org.uk. Please follow this link for more information about the service, both in English and in refugee community languages: <http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/ourwork/assistedvoluntaryreturn.aspx>

Protection Pledge to mark 60 years of the Refugee Convention - Refugee Council campaign

The Refugee Council is marking the 60th Anniversary of the Refugee Convention through a ‘Protection Pledge’. British lawyers played a key role in drafting the Convention, which has saved countless lives, and to celebrate this they are aiming to have 10,000 people to sign the pledge, to say ‘We’re proud to protect refugees.’ Anyone who wishes to show support for refugee protection should follow this link and add their name to the list: <http://e-activist.com/ea-campaign/clientcampaign.do?ea.client.id=121&ea.campaign.id=9202>

What have I done? The experiences of children and families in UK immigration detention - Children’s Society report

The report looks at 32 families’ experiences of detention prior to the coalition’s May 2010 pledge to end the immigration detention of children. The research looks at safeguarding issues around the use of immigration detention and the impact on children’s physical and emotional health. Some experiences reported are those that the government should avoid in future provision and include:

- Children witnessing traumatic events, such as hunger strikes, suicide attempts and restraint used on parents.

- Heightened levels of stress, fear, confusion, and feelings of hopelessness and degradation experienced by family members in detention.
 - Many children did not eat, or lost weight, during detention. The majority of children displayed signs of emotional distress during detention, such as sleeplessness, constant crying and nightmares.
 - Families had medication removed upon arrival or missed medical appointments as a result of detention.
 - After release from detention, most families experienced on-going effects on their mental and emotional health.
- The Children's Society is concerned that UK Border Agency's new pre-departure accommodation could replicate some of these conditions as families can still be held for up to a week in 'exceptional circumstances'. Questions about the potential impact on children of separating families during the returns process also remain.
- Recommendations in the report include:
- There should be no attempts to split families in order to detain parents without their children.
 - Families held in pre-departure accommodation should have their children's health and welfare monitored and risks of harm managed.
 - Asylum seekers should receive good quality legal advice earlier on in the process.
 - Children's views should be taken into account on all issues affecting them.

Please follow this link to read the press release and details of how to read the full report:

<http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/news-views/press-release/new-research-reveals-renewed-child-detention-fears>

Fast Track to Despair: the unnecessary detention of asylum seekers – report by Detention Action

This report looks at the history of 'Detained Fast Track', the accelerated process for those asylum seekers whose claims are assessed as being 'straight forward', used in Harmondsworth for men and in Yarls Wood for women. It contrasts fast track process with the New Asylum Model, and the early legal advice project, being piloted in this region. The authors interviewed 45 people going through detained fast track between June 2010 and March 2011. It concludes that the process does not necessarily lead to a swift determination of asylum claims and recommends that it should be abolished, but that if it is retained, steps should be taken to improve it. Please follow this link to read the report in full: <http://www.detentionaction.org.uk/files/uploads/FastTracktoDespair.pdf>

Migration

End of late evidence in points-based system immigration appeals – UK Border Agency (UKBA)

From Monday 23 May, tribunals will not consider evidence submitted after an application has been made, in appeals relating to applications made in the UK under the points-based system. UKBA statistics show that around two-thirds of appeals allowed by immigration judges are due to late evidence being submitted. The rules change is designed to end unnecessary appeals and help make sure that applications are right first time. It will apply to all applications made within the UK through the points-based system. This change in rules was announced in a ministerial statement. Please follow this link to the report on UKBA's website and from there, follow the link to the ministerial statement: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2011/may/27-appeals-to-end>

Public Accounts Committee report - Immigration: the Points Based System – work routes

The report finds that the new points based system is better than the visa system it replaced, but identified areas where improvements need to be made. It recognised the difficulty UK Border Agency (UKBA) has of designing and operating an immigration system which enables the UK to get the skills it needs, while protecting the interests of workers already resident in this country.

The report identified a lack of control of workers entering Britain through the intra-company transfer system. This allows multinationals to transfer their workers to the UK and is not covered by the immigration cap. Most workers enter through this route and, for instance, tens of thousands of IT workers have been brought in through intra-company transfers at a time when UK residents with IT skills are struggling to find work. The report was concerned to find that UK Border Agency (UKBA) appears not to be able to ensure that migrant workers whose visas have expired actually leave the UK. UKBA estimates that 181,000 such workers are staying on without permission and does not try to enforce the employer's duty to ensure that the people they bring in leave when they are required to do so. Lastly, it found that UKBA was not exercising proper checks on sponsoring employers, having visited only one in five of those applying for licences and lacks the information required to take a robust risk-based approach. Please follow this link to read the report in full:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmpubacc/913/91302.htm>

Migrant drop-in, Suffolk – new multi-lingual Lithuanian & Latvian advice workers available, Ipswich

The migrant drop-in sessions have been extended to meet the needs of the Lithuanian and Latvian speaking communities in Ipswich. This service is running on Saturday afternoons (2pm-4pm) at CSV Media to complement the drop-in for migrants of all nationalities which also continues on Saturday mornings at CSV (10am – 12.30pm). Advice agencies needing new posters to advertise this or existing migrant drop-in services should contact Allison Coleman at Suffolk County Council Allison.coleman@suffolk.gov.uk

Scottish Health website available in a range of community languages

The Strategic Migration Partnership was alerted to a Scottish website which may be of help to those meeting the health needs of clients with ESOL needs. The website has been created by NHS Scotland and provides information about NHS services, health improvement, mental health, pregnancy and childbirth, immunisation and other matters in 13 migrant community languages, English and British sign language. Please follow this link to access the site: <http://www.healthinmylanguage.com/home.aspx>

Ending the abuse: Policies that work to protect migrant domestic workers – report from Kalayaan

Kalayaan, the charity which provides advocacy and advice to Britain's migrant domestic workers (MDWs), has published a new report which draws on evidence collected over the last decade and demonstrates that migrant domestic workers are highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. The research shows that the 'Overseas Domestic Worker (ODW) visa is an inexpensive and effective way of protecting MDWs, and that without this legal channel trafficking of domestic workers via illegal routes could increase. They do, however, identify areas in which they feel action is needed to improve protections particularly for domestic workers who enter the UK accompanying diplomats. Please follow this link to read the report in full: <http://www.kalayaan.org.uk/documents/Kalayaan%20Report%20final.pdf>

Immigration Minister's statement on the EU Directive on Passenger Name Records – Home Office

In a statement to the House of Commons, the Immigration minister confirmed the government's intention to opt into the draft Directive on Passenger Name Records (PNR). He said that while the directive as it stands is not perfect, overall it will deliver benefits to law enforcement agencies, giving them tools to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute terrorists, by sifting data quickly to reveal patterns which would otherwise not be readily apparent and by sharing data which carriers already capture. Please follow this link to read the statement in full: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/parliamentary-business/oral-statements/directive-name-records>

Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration – OxMo – appeal for papers for second edition

OxMo is the first student authored, edited, and managed journal dedicated to protecting and advancing the human rights of forced migrants. The first edition was issued in February and they are now looking for papers for the second, due for publication in September. Please submit articles to them by 24 June. To find out more, please follow this link: <http://oxmofm.com>

Events

Child Soldiers – Protection and Rehabilitation. Conference from Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, London NW3, 27 May

This one day conference is aimed at legal and therapeutic professionals who work with traumatised children involved in asylum proceedings, in particular those children who have been forcibly recruited as child soldiers. It offers the opportunity to explore the different roles and remit of lawyers and therapists in this process and the particular challenges facing practitioners. The event will be chaired by the Right Honourable, the Baroness Hale of Richmond, Justice of the Supreme Court and will cost £130 per delegate. Please follow this link for more information about the event and how to book: www.tavistockandportman.ac.uk/conferences

Safety through justice: Anti-trafficking conference, London EC4Y 1HT, 27 May

The Anti-Trafficking Legal Project and The AIRE Centre are organising a full day conference addressing key legal issues affecting victims of trafficking. This Conference, for Third Sector and Refugee Community organisations, is aimed at building individual and organisational capacity to identify victims of trafficking and respond effectively. Specialist legal practitioners working in the field of human trafficking will lead practical and interactive sessions on identifying victims of trafficking and their rights under a range of protective measures.

The conference is free of charge but advanced booking is required. Please follow this link for more information about the event and for details of how to book:

<http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/events/2011/safety-through-justice-anti-trafficking-conference>

Black and Multicultural Youth Work conference from MENTER – Peterborough, 9 June

MENTER invites those working with black and multicultural young people to join them at the Ramada Hotel in Peterborough 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 and is for those working with young people. Topics will look at responses to rising youth unemployment, inequalities and the limitation of access to education for young people from poorer backgrounds. This conference will explore pertinent issues impacting Britain's multicultural youth and focus on opening up discussion to begin finding solutions.

Delegates are asked to pay £20 to attend, but the conference is free to those from the third sector, unwaged or volunteers. Please follow this link for more conference information and details of how to book a place:

<http://www.mentor.org.uk/content/events#BMYWC>

Refugee Week 2011 – Celebrating 60 years of the UN Convention for Refugees – events across the region 20 – 26 June

Plans are well advanced across the region for events to celebrate sanctuary and the contributions that refugees made and continue to make to our society. In **Ipswich** there will be, films on the theme of refuge showing at the Film Theatre, a family picnic in Christchurch Park on Wednesday 22, a football tournament with teams representing countries from across the globe and a myth busting / art display will spend Refugee Week in the university, week 2 in Suffolk County Council offices and week 3 in the library.

In **Norwich**, there is a comprehensive programme of activities which starts ahead of Refugee Week, with some running throughout the week, such as the 'One Small Suitcase' / 'Simple Acts' activity, some one off events, including an evening of readings by three authors Hisham Matar, Tahmima Anam and Philo Ikonya on Wednesday 22 in the Norwich Playhouse, and culminates in a family fun day on 26 June at Eaton Park.

In **Peterborough**, Congolese singer, David Ntumba will perform on 24 June at Unity Hall as part of a programme of events from PARCA. The Red Cross is organising a football tournament on 26 June at the embankment pitches on Bishops Road. The tournament is 7 a side and will be held in a world cup format, with 2 group stages, a semi final and a final. They are looking for 12 teams to take part - those interested in fielding a team see below.

Colchester is holding a 'Football family fun day' at Shrub End Community and Sports Centre on 25 June, in partnership with the Essex Football Association.

In **Bedford**, the launch event will take place on Monday 20 at Harpur Square and that evening, Bedford library is hosting the best-selling authors of 'Talking about Jane Austen in Baghdad'. Later that week, on 22 June, there will be the chance to hear 'Asylum Monologues' in St Peters Church, de Parys Avenue. On 26 June there is a family football fun day at the Alexandra Sports Centre, which will comprise both a 5-a-side tournament and activities and games for children.

In **Luton**, there is an awareness raising event on 24 June in St George's Square, and amongst other things, Luton South MP Gavin Shuker will launch a book of children's poetry, reflecting personal experiences of asylum.

For more information about events in Ipswich, please contact Lucinda at the Suffolk Refugee Support Forum volunteer@srsf.org.uk. To see the activities running in Norwich, please follow this link to download the refugee week brochure: http://bridgeplus.org.uk/Norwich_Norfolk_Refugee_Week_2011_Events_Booklet.pdf

To find out about PARCA's programme of activities for young people, from Refugee Week and into the summer, please contact Moez moez@poor-refugee.org. To register a team for the Peterborough football tournament, please contact Andy Hewett before 10 June on ahewett@redcross.org.uk. To find out more about the football in Bedford, please contact Bob bob.bridle@bpha.org.uk and for the activities being run at Bedford library, please follow this link:

http://www.galaxy.bedfordshire.gov.uk/webingres/bedfordshire/vlib/0.books_reading/refugee_week.htm

For Luton & Colchester events, please contact the coordinator Sarah SElsing@redcross.org.uk

Funding

British Red Cross's Positive Images Programme

Grants of up to £1,000 are available to support activities that promote positive attitudes towards vulnerable migrants. The grants range from £50 to £1,000 and they are available to schools, colleges, universities, youth groups and student groups working with young people aged 12 to 25. The deadline for applications is **17 June**. Please follow this link for more information: <http://www.redcross.org.uk/positiveimages>

Salvation Army looking for partners to provide accommodation for victims of trafficking

The Salvation Army has been selected by the Ministry of Justice as Prime Contractor to manage the delivery of accommodation and support for victims of all types of trafficking; sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and forced labour. To achieve this they need to work with partners, and are keen to reach small and very small specialist providers who might be able to help to deliver the contract. Please follow this link for more information about this opportunity: <http://www1.salvationarmy.org.uk/traffickingresponse>

JP Getty Jnr Charitable Trust

The Trust supports projects which help to relieve poverty, support disadvantaged people, and effect long-term change where help is not readily available from the public or private purse. It also provides funding for the arts, and towards the conservation of the natural and built environment. Grants are between £10,000 and £250,000 over a period of one to three years. Grants of up to £5,000 are also available for smaller charities. They support projects assisting refugees and asylum-seekers and are interested in initiatives which help these individuals to gain skills and participate more fully in their new community, as well as providing them with the specialist information and advice they need to access basic welfare services, such as benefits and housing. They are also interested in projects which help members of different social or ethnic minority groups to become better integrated with their local community, and enable them to gain access to new opportunities.

In accordance with the wishes of Sir Paul Getty the trustees have now decided to wind down the Trust over a period of between five and ten years. This means that they will be increasing the level of annual spend and will be looking for opportunities to award a number of more substantial grants that will have an enduring impact. There are no deadlines for submitting the initial application. Please follow this link for more information: <http://www.jpgettytrust.org.uk>

Rayne Fellowships for refugees aged 18-25

The Rayne Fellowships for Refugees aims to give opportunities for refugees living in the UK with a Big Idea that, with the right help, could be brought to flower. Rayne Fellows will receive support, resources and training to turn a vision into reality and make a real difference to people's lives. Each year, five people will be selected for a Fellowship. They will be able to draw upon a resource fund of up to £15,000 to be spent on personal development, further training or education, resources, expert advice, one-to-one mentoring or attending networking events.

Anyone interested in applying should submit an application outlining their Big Idea and giving the funders some information about how the idea could be made to work, what support and resources might be needed and what impact within the wider community would be. Applications are now open, and the deadline for submitting an application is **29 July at 5pm**.

Please follow this link for more information about the scheme and how to apply: http://www.praxis.org.uk/index.php?page=2_28

Jobs

Inclusion project Manager - Norwich and Central Norfolk Mind's Inclusion pro. Full time £21,754 to £23,930

The Inclusion project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, is recruiting a Project Manager. Inclusion provides support and services to Black and Minority Ethnic people in Norwich. They are looking for a full-time Inclusion Manager working 37.5 hours per week. They are looking for a candidate who has:

- Successfully worked with Black and Minority Ethnic groups
- Knowledge and understanding of mental health issues relating to Black & Minority Ethnic communities in Norwich
- Excellent project, events and budget management skills
- Successfully provided training/workshops to Black and Minority Ethnic groups
- Worked in partnership with voluntary and public organisations

For more information and/or an application pack, please contact Rosita Juzenaite t: 01603 432 457 or e: inclusion@norwichmind.org.uk or write to the project at 50 Sale Road, Norwich, NR7 9TP.

Deadline for applications: 12 noon of the 26 May. Interviews: 1 June

Integration Support Services (ISS), Essex – Voluntary Trustee needed - Expenses paid

ISS support the successful integration of all migrants, refugees, BME community members and groups in Essex and Hertfordshire. As part of their expansion, they are looking to appoint new trustees to their board who will bring their skills in one or more of the following areas: public relations, marketing, fundraising and advocacy.

Those appointed will need to attend at least one Management Committee Meetings per month lasting around two hours, one AGM, and one Away Day.

For further information, or to apply please contact Marlene e: info@iss.org.uk or t: 01279 639442

Alternatively to learn more about ISS, please follow this link: www.iss.org.uk

Fundraising and Development Worker – Refugee Therapy Centre, London N4. Part time 2-3 days per week £21,000- £31,000 pro rata

The Refugee Therapy Centre is a growing charity providing psychotherapy, counselling and associated treatments to refugees and asylum seekers. It works in 21 languages, and aims to respond sensitively and respectfully to the cultural and linguistic needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

The successful candidate will be expected to have a minimum of 2 years experience in the field and have excellent interpersonal and organisational skills. The job purpose includes:

- Building an awareness of the services at the RTC and raise the funds needed for the charity's ongoing activity
- To liaise with relevant officials in order to maximise opportunities for service development
- To develop fundraising strategy and capacity within the organisation that generates agreed levels of income.

Deadline for applications is 5pm **3 June**. Please follow this link to find out more about the role and how to apply:

http://www.refugeetherapy.org.uk/Vacancies.aspx?dm_i=IMP,FFMC,3039NF,18UKM,1

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