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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

Refugee Council: East of England office closures – Ipswich and Luton

Following the Government's spending review, funding for advice services for asylum seekers was cut by 60%. As a result, the Refugee Council has had to reorganise its service delivery model and will be closing its offices in Luton and Ipswich to drop-in clients from 18 April. From 18 April, a telephone helpline will begin operating, which is own-language, confidential and free of charge from mobiles and landlines. Clients contacting the service will be given advice, information and support in their own language, and, where necessary, will be given an appointment to be seen in person in offices across the region (exact locations are still to be confirmed).

Please contact Sharon Holden if you would like supplies of information leaflets for clients, giving details of the helpline: e: Sharon.holden@refugeecouncil.org.uk t: 01473 297906

Please advise clients of the telephone number which they should be using from 18 April: **0808 808 2255**

Women's Asylum News from Asylum Aid – issues 99 & 100

The most recent editions include a comprehensive leading article on UNHCR and the drafting of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women, as well as articles on legal cases which contribute to updates in case law and international news which focuses on gender based inequalities.

Please follow this link to the publications:

http://www.asylumaid.org.uk/data/files/publications/154/WAN_February2011.pdf

http://www.asylumaid.org.uk/data/files/publications/157/WAN_March_2011.pdf

Vulnerable or invisible: asylum seekers with disabilities in Europe. A UNHCR paper from University of Oxford

The aim of this article is to render visible the relevance of disability in the context of asylum and investigate the causes for the limited attention it has received to date. With a focus on the Common European Asylum System, the research was guided by three specific questions:

- What is the relevance of disability in the context of asylum?
- To what extent is disability taken into consideration in the Common European Asylum System?
- What does this tell us about the perceptions and structural realities underlying the harmonization process?

To read the paper in full, please follow this link: <http://www.unhcr.org/4cd9765b9.html>

Some failed asylum seekers and unaccompanied children to be entitled to NHS care

The UK Border Agency and the Department of Health carried out consultations last year following a 2009 review to examine the rules on charging overseas visitors for access to NHS services in England. After considering the consultation responses, the government has announced how these rules will change. NHS measures for England include:

- allowing those failed asylum seekers co-operating on registered Home Office support schemes (but not other failed asylum seekers who refuse to return home) to be exempt from charges; and
- guaranteeing free hospital treatment for unaccompanied children while they are under local authority care.

As part of the Home Office measures, anyone owing the NHS £1,000 or more will not be allowed to enter or remain in the UK until the debt is paid off. It is hoped that the £1,000 threshold, which will be implemented later this year, will capture 94 per cent of outstanding charges owed to the NHS.

To read more about this change, please follow this link:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2011/march/51-getting-tough-on-nhs-debtors>

Detained and denied: The clinical care of immigration detainees living with HIV – a report from Medical Justice Network

“Detained & Denied” is based on the analysis of treatment of HIV+ immigration detainees in the UK and draws on medical evidence from 8 independent clinicians who assessed detainees. Many of the 35 men, women and children studied are torture survivors from countries where rape is used as a weapon of war. As a result of denial of medication some detainees have developed drug resistance, necessitating more complex drug combinations which are inaccessible to many in the country they are being deported to. Please follow this link to learn more about the findings of the report and its recommendations: <http://www.medicaljustice.org.uk/content/view/1723/89>

UNCHR concerned by limited response to Côte d'Ivoire crisis - European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)

The UN refugee agency has warned that the Côte d'Ivoire crisis is being overlooked. With some 370.000 people displaced in Abidjan and western Côte d'Ivoire, and 76.956 refugees registered so far in Liberia the total displacement numbers are nearing the half million mark. According to UNHCR the risk is that international attention focuses only on the Mediterranean turmoil and underestimates the situation in Ivory Coast, where the former president, Mr Laurent Gbagbo, refuses to step down and cede power to Mr Ouattara, recognised by the international community as the winner of last November's poll. Most people are fleeing Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire's largest city, where there has been a lot of violence for weeks and hundreds have been killed, mainly by the forces of Laurent Gbagbo. Violence is now spreading to the central and south-eastern part of Ivory Coast and many people trying to escape the country are reporting attempts to prevent them from fleeing, including cases of rape. The Danish Refugee Council has an aid mission to support Ivorian refugees, which has identified an urgent need for water, food, and shelter in the communities hosting the refugees. Please follow this link to read more about the situation in the Côte d'Ivoire as reported by the BBC: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12718544>

Migration

UK Border Agency (UKBA) issues latest partner bulletin update – March 2011

Please follow this link for the most recent edition of UKBA's partner update, which looks at news from inside UKBA, international activity, border control and immigration, including separate sections on managed migration, enforcement, removal and detention and asylum.

[http://www.eelga.gov.uk/documents/Policy%20and%20Priorities/Strategic%20Migration%20Partnership/1809-UKBA_News_Mar_2011_v1.3\[1\].pdf](http://www.eelga.gov.uk/documents/Policy%20and%20Priorities/Strategic%20Migration%20Partnership/1809-UKBA_News_Mar_2011_v1.3[1].pdf)

Government announces changes to student visa system

Tougher entrance criteria, limits on work entitlements and closure of the post-study work route are among the changes to the student visa system announced by the Home Secretary. The announcement follows public consultation on reforming Tier 4 of the points-based system. The main changes are:

- From April 2012, institutions wanting to sponsor students need 'Highly Trusted sponsor' status and will need to become accredited by a statutory education inspection body by the end of 2012. The current system does not require this, allowing some poor-quality colleges to become sponsors.
- Students studying at degree level will need to speak English at an 'upper intermediate' (B2) level, rather than the current 'lower intermediate' (B1) requirement.
- UK Border Agency staff will be able to refuse entry to students who cannot speak English without an interpreter, therefore not meeting the minimum standard above.
- Students at universities and publicly funded further education colleges will retain current work rights, but new students will have no right to work plus there will be work placement restrictions in courses outside universities.
- Only postgraduate university students and government-sponsored students will be able to bring dependants with them. Currently, all students on longer courses can bring their dependants.
- There will be a new limit on the overall time that can be spent on a student visa of 5 years at higher levels. At present, there is no time limit for study at or above degree level, but the three year lower level limit is unchanged.
- The Tier 1 (Post-study work) route is to be closed. This route allows students 2 years to seek employment after their course ends. Only graduates with an offer of a skilled job from a sponsoring employer under Tier 2 of the points-based system will be able to stay to work.

The government has also pledged to develop a new entrepreneur route for bright and innovative students who have a business idea and want to make it work in the UK. To read more about the changes, please follow this link: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2011/march/54-student-visas>

Forced migration: government seeks to join Europe-wide accord to tackle human trafficking

The government will apply to opt in to the European Union Directive on Human Trafficking, a Europe-wide effort to help tackle human trafficking, subject to Parliament's views. In June the government had announced it would not opt in to the Directive at the outset but would review its position when there was a finalised text to ensure that it would benefit the UK. This has now taken place.

The government will publish a Human Trafficking strategy in the spring. Support for victims will be a key part of this coupled with action to stop trafficking happening in the first place. The strategy will focus on:

- strengthening work with countries where criminal gangs are based;
- improving the co-ordination of policing efforts in the UK to tackle trafficking;
- using the new National Crime Agency with its border policing responsibilities to improve security and provide a stronger border deterrent; and
- working with professionals to improve help for victims of trafficking

Please follow this link to read about this in more detail:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2011/march/61-government-seeks-to-join>

Sojourner pilot to be made permanent, for those with no recourse to public funds fleeing domestic violence

Overseas spouses and partners of UK residents who are forced to flee relationships as a result of domestic violence will be able to access support services, the Home Secretary has announced. At present, some partners feel they have to stay in abusive relationships because they are in the UK on a spousal visa and have 'no recourse to public funds', meaning that they cannot access support services during the 2-year probationary period before they can apply for settlement. Following a successful pilot project, these victims will be able to access services to ensure that they do not need to remain in violent relationships. Access to these services will be for a strictly limited period while the victim gathers evidence and makes a claim for residence based on the domestic violence, and while the UK Border Agency considers the application. For more information, please follow this link:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2011/march/27-dv-support>

Events

Stop the Traffik, Global Freedom Summit, 11 April, London

In the run up to the London Olympics, The STOP THE TRAFFIK Global Freedom Summit will:

- assert the right of people to travel safely.
- raise awareness of how to create communities in which there is no room for trafficking.
- call on communities to hold their own Freedom Summits to send out a Global Travel Alert.

Join Cherie Blair, UN representatives, community activists and global leaders.

The summit will be happening on 11 April, from 2.00pm – 5.00pm at Oasis Academy Enfield, 9 Kinetic Crescent, Innova Park, Mollison Avenue, Enfield, London EN3 7XH

Registration cost is £5 per person. ACT groups and schools can apply for sponsored places.

Those interested should register by email to e: info@stopthetraffik.org with details of the number of places needed. Please follow this link for more information about the summit:

<http://stopthetraffik.wordpress.com/2011/01/26/stop-the-traffik-global-freedom-summit>

Equality and Diversity Forum (EDF) – Who's still missing? Refugees, migrants and equality – 17 May, London

The EDF is inviting attendees to a conference to consider how to promote equality for refugees and migrants. The conference is the culmination of a project supported by the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and the Trust for London to identify the inequalities experienced by refugees and migrants and consider how the new equalities framework and measures in the Equality Act 2010 might be used to address them. The report of the research commissioned by EDF as part of this project will be launched at the event and there will be an opportunity to hear from equality, refugee and migrant specialists before opening up to debate with participants on how to ensure that the equality framework supports all individuals – including refugees and migrants.

This is a free event taking place at the Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre, London SE1. Registration is on a first-come-first served basis, and EDF may need to restrict places to one per organisation. They have a small amount

of funding to cover travel expenses for refugee and migrant community organisations, so email them if you are interested in a travel bursary e: info@edf.org.uk The draft agenda includes contributions from Refugee Council's Donna Covey and Migrant Rights' Network's Don Flynn. Those wishing to attend should send their details by email by **29 April**. Confirmation and the final agenda will be circulated to participants a week before the event.

Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Real Equality and Diversity Conference, 19 May, London

This conference will address questions relevant to the social housing sector, such as:

- How do housing organisations make equality and diversity relevant with no more markers or indicators given through regulatory bodies such as the Audit Commission and the TSA?
- Without what some see as "red tape" will diversity just fall off the radar?
- How can service providers be made aware of their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act?
- What is the role of the Equality and Human Rights Commission in all of this?
- Given the new world of "co-regulation" what role is there now for tenants in the equalities agenda?

Delegates will be able to explore, exchange and develop innovative ideas with fellow delegates and then implement these practices in their places of work and learn from high profile speakers, such as Clifton Robinson from the Housing Diversity Network and Helen Hughes from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Those interested in attending should call the Events Team t: 024 7685 1722 or by following this link for more information: <http://www.cih.org/events/conferences/RED2011> The cost of attending starts at £269 plus VAT for CIH members.

Funding

United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking – 2011 small grants facility

The small grants facility (SGF) aims to provide tangible support, through established channels, to victims of trafficking in persons. The 2011 SGF will accept project proposals from eligible not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs can submit applications on behalf of a coalition (more than 4 organizations), a consortium (minimum of 2 other organizations and a maximum of 4), but the NGO applicant will be the primary focal point and will be financially responsible for the delivery of the grant. Applicants may request grants of up to USD 25,000 per year, for project proposals ranging between 6 and 36 months. The SGF 2011 launched on 8 March 2011 and will close on **30 April 2011** at 24:00 CET.

The fund is looking for applicants who can address one or both of two thematic priorities:

- Cross-border and inter-regional activities providing direct humanitarian, legal and/or financial assistance to victims.
- Effective remedies for victims of human trafficking, including, but not limited to, legal support, access to justice and compensation.

To find out more about the fund and how to apply, please follow this link: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking-fund/2011-Small-Grants-Facility.html>

Norfolk Black History Month - £200 per community group to host an event

The Norfolk Community Cohesion Network in partnership with Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Black History Month Steering Group is offering groups the chance to join in the celebrations for 'Black Excellence', their theme for Black History Month in October 2011. There is a £200 grant available for 14 groups or communities to put on an event to celebrate Black excellence in Norfolk.

Black excellence simply means excellence in culture, arts, science, education, sports or health. It could also mean excellence in the contribution someone has made volunteering their time and skills to their local community. It is an opportunity to recognise someone's achievements – whether past or present day.

To apply, applicants must explain in no more than 500 words, how you are going to celebrate Black excellence in Norfolk, although applications by video or in pictures/drawings are accepted. Entries will be considered by a panel of members of the Cohesion Network and Black History Month organisers. The closing date for applications is **6 May 2011**. For further information about this please contact:

Norfolk Black History Month 2011, C/o Neil Howard, Equality and Cohesion Officer, Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DU

t: 01603 224196

m: 07901517721

f: 01603 223096

e: neil.howard@norfolk.gov.uk

Jobs

Purfleet Trust, West Norfolk – Smartshare Private Renting Sector (PRS) Access Scheme Co-ordinator, full time, £17161 - £22,221 per annum

Following a successful bid for funding from CRISIS, Purfleet Trust, which helps homeless in Kings Lynn and West Norfolk who aren't eligible for help from the council, is planning to develop a flatshare scheme which will provide opportunities for accommodation to single people under 35 in West Norfolk. The scheme acts as broker between people who are homeless and good quality landlords, as guarantor to reduce the financial risk to landlords and connects new tenants with support services. Key to the scheme's success will be publicising the scheme, building relationships with PRS landlords and liaising with Housing Benefit departments and other stakeholders in order to deliver an effective service.

This post will suit anyone who has experience working with young people, homeless or difficult to engage. To find out more and obtain an application pack, please contact Purfleet Trust t: 01553 767829 F: 01553 776109 e: enquiries@purfleettrust.org.uk. Anyone wishing to discuss the post is welcome to contact Paula Hall, Chief Executive, on m: 07760785285 or e: paulahall@purfleettrust.org.uk. The closing date for applications is **8 April**.

Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality – Office Manager, 30 hours a week, £19000 pro rata, maternity cover post (1 year)

The successful person will report to the Chief Executive and is directly responsible for:

- The organisation and coordination of ISCRE's busy Ipswich office
- Administration, Human Resources and Finance
- Management of staff and volunteers
- The Chief Executive's diary
- The Board of Trustees activities and associated activity

The successful candidate should have:

- A Human Resources background with experience of managing a team
- Understanding of basic bookkeeping and management accounts
- Effective IT skills and general office technology
- Ability to write reports
- Understanding of Human Resources and Employment Law principles
- The ability to work flexibly, including some evening and weekends

For further details and an application pack please contact ISCRE, 46A St Matthew's Street, Ipswich, IP1 3EP; t: 01473 408111 e: office@iscre.org.uk f: 0871 900 4218

For an informal discussion about this role please ask to speak to Maria Mughal, Office Manager. The closing date for applications is **8 April**.

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