

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Migration

Events

Funding

Jobs

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 Action inviting tenders for provision of reintegration support service in Afghanistan

Refugee Action is currently looking to appoint an organisation or organisations to provide a range of reintegration services for their Choices clients returning to Afghanistan through the voluntary returns programme they have been running since April 2011. This will include a 'Meet and Greet Service' on arrival at the airport, assistance with immediate reintegration needs, such as onward travel and accommodation and a range of other ongoing support services to help with the process of reintegration during their first six months back in Afghanistan. The contract is for service between June and December 2011 and during this time, they anticipate that there will be 250 returnees. For more details of the tender service specification please follow this link: http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/ourwork/documents/AVR-RSS-01_Service_Specification_25-05-11.pdf

UK Border Agency (UKBA) report – Asylum Improvement project progress report

The Asylum Improvement Project was set up to explore ways to speed up processing asylum applications. This document outlines the progress UKBA has made so far on 25 elements of the project and explains the next steps for asylum reform. While UKBA assess that it is too early to make a robust assessment of the impact of all 25 elements of the project, they will do so in the coming months, as part of the next phase of asylum reform. They find that the asylum system is performing better now than it has for many years:

- UKBA has completed reviewing the legacy of over 450,000 unconcluded asylum cases ahead of schedule.
- UKBA has ended the detention of children for immigration purposes.
- UKBA is making decisions more quickly and their quality remains high.
- UKBA has stopped returning asylum seekers to countries where their sexual orientation or gender identification puts them at proven risk of torture, imprisonment or execution.

The next phase of asylum reform will be to monitor the impact of changes and ensure that collectively they make the asylum system as efficient as possible, while also improving the quality of decision making. Please follow this link to read the report in full: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/reports/asylum-improvement-project/aip.pdf?view=Binary>

Skills funding agency – ESOL learner eligibility and contribution rules 2011/12

The document details which individuals can be funded by the Skills Funding Agency and the level of government subsidy they can receive to help pay for the cost of learning. It replaces previous guidance issued jointly with the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) in 2010/11 and by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) prior to that. Please read section 29 onwards for details of those learners eligible for funding – asylum seekers waiting upwards of six months for a decision on their claim are eligible, as are those on section 4 support. However, learning providers should note that the eligibility of failed asylum seekers receiving Section 4 support is being reviewed by the Government. If a change is made, it is the provider's responsibility to ensure that a learner's eligibility is correctly assessed prior to them starting a course. Spouses of British citizens from outside the EU will need to wait three years to be eligible. Please follow this link to read the document in full:

http://readingroom.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/sfa/Learner_Eligibility_and_Contribution_Rules_2011_12_-_Published_May_2011-V1.pdf

Refugee crisis in North Africa – European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) bulletin

The latest bulletin from ECRE includes an article reporting on the ECRE directors' annual forum where they agreed that the refugee crisis in North Africa and the inadequate response of the European governments is the most pressing challenge currently facing Europe. It also reports on the numbers of people fleeing Libya, which according to UNHCR is 417,981 who have arrived in Tunisia, including 44,781 Tunisians, 189,317 Libyans and 183,883 nationals of other countries. At the same time in Europe, the total number of new arrivals since mid-January has increased to approximately 37,111 people. Among them are 24,138 Tunisians and 12,973 other nationalities, including 827 Nigeriens, 789 Eritreans, 610 Ivorians, 412 Somalis and 425 Ghanaians. To read

these and other articles in full, please follow this
http://www.ecre.org/files/ECRE_Weekly_Bulletin_27_May_2011.pdf

Migration

Home Affairs select committee report – UK Border Agency (UKBA) failing to control immigration

The Home Affairs Committee criticises the lack of progress made by UKBA in effectively controlling UK immigration. In the second of what is intended to be a series of reports on UKBA's work, the Committee highlights concerns about the way the Agency approaches enforcement across its activities:

- 403,500 of the backlog of about 450,000 asylum cases have been concluded, but the Committee notes that just 38,000 (9%) of applicants had their claims rejected and were then removed from the UK, while 161,000 (40%) were given leave to remain, in what it believes amounts to an amnesty. Up to 74,500 cases are being archived as the applicants cannot be found and it is unknown if they are in the UK, have left voluntarily or are dead;
- UKBA does not carry out checks on all employers registered as skilled migrants' sponsors nor does it systematically follow up intelligence of possible illegal migrants. There are doubts as to its capacity to carry out such checks.

The net result is that a large number of people remain in the UK who either have no right to be here or who would have been removed had their cases been dealt with in a timely manner. Please follow this link to read the report:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news/110527-ukba-report>

Migration Observatory publishes briefing on health of migrants in the UK

The Migration Observatory at Oxford University has published a briefing on the health of migrants in the UK. The key findings of the report are:

- There is evidence on physical and mental health that suggests there are poorer outcomes overall for migrants but these vary according to migration histories and experience in the receiving society.
- Changes in some health behaviours over time in the UK may not be as marked or linear as some accounts suggest.
- Socio-economic circumstances of migrants and immigration regulations affecting some migrant categories impact negatively on access to and use of health care.
- It is currently difficult to gain a comprehensive account of the health of migrants because much evidence on health includes ethnic group but not migration variables such as country of birth, length of residence in the UK, or immigration status.

Please follow this link to read the report in full:

<http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/migobs/Briefing%20-%20Health%20of%20Migrants%20in%20the%20UK.pdf>

UK Border Agency (UKBA) partner update bulletin – May 2011

The UKBA bulletin is issued every two months and this latest edition includes a range of articles, such as:

- UKBA's business plan
- MPs' immigration workshop for MPs and their caseworkers
- A review of the independent chief inspector's report's findings into how UKBA receives and uses intelligence
- Information for visa overstayers from Libya

There is a section of articles dedicated to the new regulations designed to manage migration and another which reviews the national partnership meetings, such as the National Migration Group which looked at the issue of homeless rough sleepers from A8/A10 countries. To read the document in full, please follow this link:

<http://www.eelga.gov.uk/documents/Policy%20and%20Priorities/Strategic%20Migration%20Partnership/1905-UKBA%20News%20May%202011%20v1%202.pdf>

Events

Honour based violence and diverse community issues training – Ipswich, 22 June

"Honour" or "Izzat" is a word that describes the concept of a family's prestige and reputation within its community. A person's life can be governed by a code of behaviour, based on the need to maintain the "Izzat" of the family at all times. HBV is an extreme form of behaviour and control used by one or more members of the family, extended family and/or community. Similar abusive behaviours and beliefs can affect individuals in a diverse range of

community groups (including those of faith, culture, disability, sexual orientation). The training will also explore local issues.

This half day training course is for all staff and volunteers (including Senior Managers and Practitioners) working in Suffolk, but those attending should already have a general understanding of domestic violence and abuse issues and participants will be expected to have attended recent Domestic Abuse Awareness and Tools for Practitioners prior to this training. Please follow this link to find out more and to register:

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/EducationAndLearning/WorkBasedLearning/WorkingWithChildren/CYPMultiAgencyTraining/SectorSpecific/DomesticAbuseTraining/HBVDiverseCommunityIssues.htm>

Effective working with Eastern European Roma migrants 30 June 2011, 10:30-13:30, East of England LGA Offices, Flempton House, Flempton, Suffolk, IP28 6EG, – correction

The details of the course being run by the Roma Support Group are as shown in last week's newsflash, with one amendment – the rate for delegates from the statutory sector is **£65**.

Please follow this link for more information about the course, including details of how to register to attend:

<http://www.eelga.gov.uk/events/view-event.aspx?ID=2720>

Refugee Council summer training programme – 15 June to 6 July

Refugee Council have announced the next dates of its 4 most popular courses for practitioners working with refugee and asylum seeking children and for people who are new to the sector and looking to get the basic knowledge of key issues in asylum. They are available either at the Refugee Council offices in Brixton or if you can register five or more people for the training, they can deliver it at a venue of your choice.

- Introduction to asylum support – 7 July
- Age assessment awareness and working with age-disputed children – 29 June
- An introduction to working with unaccompanied children – 15 June
- Key issues in asylum – 6 July

Each course cost £109 for registered charities and £175 for all other attendees. Please follow this link for more information:

http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/eventsandtraining/training/service/fulldetails.htm?dm_i=I6P,FTG8,31R5LZ,1A4HQ,1#keyissues

Health issues of Eastern European Roma migrants 20 July 2011, 10:30 – 13:30, East of England LGA Offices, Flempton House, Flempton, Suffolk, IP28 6EG

This half day training session will be delivered by the Roma Support Group (<http://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk>) which has been working with Eastern European Roma refugees and migrants for over 10 years. The training is aimed at those from the health and voluntary sector who support migrants and would like to learn more about health issues of Eastern European Roma.

Issues covered during the session will include:

- Roma health issues
- Access to health and social care services for Roma
- Supporting Roma with mental health problems
- Good practice in improving Roma health

For further information please contact Gosia Strona, Strategic Migration Partnership, East of England LGA, e: malgorzata.strona@eelga.gov.uk t: 01284 729 433 or follow this link to register:

<http://www.eelga.gov.uk/events/view-event.aspx?ID=2721>

The cost to attend this event will be:

£65.00 + VAT for delegates from the statutory sector £45.00 + VAT for delegates from the voluntary sector

Kaleidoscope Culture Club, Hertfordshire – trip to the European Parliament, 5 & 6 September 2011

After last year's trip to the Houses of Parliament "Kaleidoscope Culture Club" led by Kaleidoscope Enterprise (previously known as WHEM Group) and supported by MENTER (East of England Ethnic Minority Network) are organising another trip, this time to the European Parliament. The trip will take place on the 5 and 6 September, leaving from Hatfield on the morning of 5 September, visiting Bruges en route to Brussels. On 6 September, the group will spend a few hours in the Parliament building and meet some MEPs representing the Eastern Region.

They will also visit the East of England LGA European Partnership Office and the Malopolska (Polish) Region Office. Overnight accommodation will be in the Etap Hotel in Bruges.

The trip will cost £140 and will include all travel, one night's accommodation (B & B) on a shared room basis. Deadline for deposit (£70) is 17 June and full amount must be paid by 22 July - only those paying the full amount will be able to attend the trip. For more information, please contact: Michal on e: michal@cvsbeh.org.uk or Kumiko on e: Office@kaleidoscopeenterprise.org.uk

Funding

BBC Children in Need Appeal

The grants are open to organisations working with disadvantaged children and young people who are 18 years old and under. Your organisation and project must be based in the UK and you need to be a registered charity or other not-for-profit organisation. There are four general grant deadlines each year: 15 January, 15 April, 15 July, 15 October. Within the general grants programme, you can apply for:

- small grants of £10,000 or less per year for up to three years
- main grants over £10,000 per year for up to three years

Application form is available from the website:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/pudsey/grants/general_grants.sht

Jobs

There are no job updates in this edition

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