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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 Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) and Refugee Council appeal for help to rescue refugees from Libya

ECRE met with the Commissioner for Home Affairs to ask her to appeal to EU Member States to help evacuate and offer protection to the 4,000 sub-Saharan refugees trapped in Libya. While the international community is supporting the evacuation of Europeans, Egyptians, Tunisians and other foreigners, sub-Saharan refugees, mainly Somalis and Eritreans, are not able to get out of Libya to find safety. As refugees, they are cannot go back to their own countries, which they fled to save their lives. What is more, suspected of being pro-Gaddafi mercenaries, they are being targeted and are at risk if they try to reach the Egyptian or Tunisian border.

Please follow this link to tread the story in full:

http://www.ecre.org/files/2011_03_03%20Sub%20-%20saharan%20refugees%20trapped%20in%20Libya.pdf

The Refugee Council is calling on the UK government and European countries to work together to respond humanely to the crisis. Please follow this link to read their press statement:

http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/archive/press/2011/010311_press_libyan_refugee_crisis_Europe

UK Border Agency (UKBA) Case Resolution Directorate (CRD) hub closure – updated contact details

UKBA outlined in February the changes for processing of Section 4 support application forms. As a result of these changes, contact details for the cases that were to be considered by the Regional Asylum Support Teams (for those whose asylum claim was made on or after 5 March 2007) have altered. The details are annexed to the section 4 application form, available via the UKBA website. There are now specific e-mail addresses and telephone enquiry lines for each regional asylum support team for general section 4 support and accommodation queries. See the details below for contacts in our region and other centres nearby:

Midlands and East of England

Tel Enquiries: 0121 345 8690

Email: AsylumMidlandssupportteaminbox@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Please follow this link for more information about the

Central London

Tel Enquiries: 0207 238 1343

Email: AsylumSupportSectionFourLondon@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

West London

Tel Enquiries: 0208 814 5071 or 0203 014 8011

Email: AsylumSupportTeam-WestLondon@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Kent/Hampshire/Sussex

Tel Enquiries: 01303 299226

Email: ASTCaseworkSE&C@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

UK Border Agency (UKBA) announces new family returns process, with contribution from Barnardos

A new process for managing the return of families found to have no right to be in the UK has started. A new Independent Family Returns Panel is 1 part of an updated approach to managing family returns. The new 4-stage process aims to return those with no right to remain in the UK with dignity, ensuring the welfare of children at all times. The 4 stage process involves:

- strengthened decision-making, through the creation of specialist family case owners within UKBA, developing pilots to test new ways of working with families and continuing work with the UNHCR (the UK Refugee Agency) to test and improve the quality of decision making.

- assisted return, including family conferences to discuss the family's return home, welfare and medical concerns and the availability of tailored assisted voluntary return packages to help families resettle upon their return;

- required returns for families who fail to take up assistance packages, allowing them to remain in the community, but giving two weeks notice to board a flight home and allowing self check-in, avoiding the need for enforcement action; and

- ensured return, the last resort for families who refuse to depart the UK. The new family returns panel will advise UKBA on return plans to ensure the welfare of children is taken properly into account. Options will include a form of limited notice removal, the use of open accommodation, and – the last resort where families resolutely fail to comply - family friendly, pre-departure accommodation, supported by Barnardos.

The panel will provide expert advice to UKBA on the best way of ensuring the return of individual families, taking into account specific welfare needs of children. Please follow these links to read the statements from UKBA:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2011/march/03new-family-returns-process>

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2011/march/23-barnardos>

Please follow this link to read the article in the Guardian about Barnardos contribution to the process:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/mar/09/barnardos-play-facilities-yarls-wood-replacement>

UK Border Agency (UKBA): Detention Centre Rule 35 audit report & Refugee Council response

The report is provided following agreement with the Detention Users' Sub-Medical Group to conduct an audit of reports submitted by healthcare professionals in Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs) in accordance with Detention Centre Rule 35. The audit is intended to establish the extent to which UKBA complies with its policy concerning the detention of persons claiming to be victims of torture, and seeks to address the perception among some NGOs that UKBA fails to comply with the policy and detains thousands of torture victims every year.

Please follow this link to read the report in full:

<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/reports/detention-centre-rule-35-audit/det-centre-rule-35-audit?view=Binary>

Please follow this link to read a statement from the Refugee Council in response to the report:

http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/archive/press/2011/020311_Concerns_vulnerable_detainees_following_UKBA_review

Migration

Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) publishes report on shortage occupation list job titles for Tier 2

In December 2010, the government asked the MAC to advise on two questions:

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

2. How should the current shortage occupation lists for the UK be revised to remove jobs below graduate level?

The Committee's report addressing the first question was published in February 2011. The MAC report answering the second question is now published. It recommends 8 job titles be removed from the shortage occupation list, including work rider (horse racing) and skilled senior care worker. It also recommends amending some job titles: for example, the MAC found that only a small proportion of chefs are skilled to NQF4+ so chef jobs on the list are recommended to be restricted to those needing at least 5 years relevant experience and paying at least £28,260 a year. If adopted, these recommendations will mean Tier 2 applicants coming into the country via the shortage occupation route will be eligible for about 230,000 jobs (less than 1 per cent of the labour market) down from 1 million jobs on the MAC's first shortage occupation list of 2008.

Follow this link for the February 2011 report:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/workingwithus/mac/analysis-of-the-pbs>

Follow this link to read what the MAC recommends should be on the shortage occupation list:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/workingwithus/mac/mac-analysis-of-pbs/report.pdf?view=Binary>

Follow this link for the MAC and UKBA press release:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/workingwithus/mac/press-03-03-11.pdf>

Proposed fee increases to immigration and nationality applications from 6 April 2011

In a written ministerial statement, Immigration Minister Damian Green has proposed an increase in immigration and nationality application fees for those applying to study, visit, work or stay in the UK. The proposed fees will be laid in Parliament and if approved, will come into force from 6 April 2011. The fee increases are part of the current spending review with the Home Office implementing a budget reduction of up to 20 per cent for the UK Border Agency (UKBA). UKBA is seeking to offset this income gap with efficiency savings of about £500 million by reducing support costs, increasing efficiencies, boosting productivity and improving value for money from

suppliers. These measures alone will not be enough, so the proposed fee increase is to address the funding shortfall. Please follow these links for:

Ministerial statement: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/news/wms-fees-spring-2011.pdf>

Proposed new fees:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/fees-table-spring-2011.pdf>

Complete article from UKBA:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2011/february/66-propose-fee-increases>

Statement from UKBA confirming the end of Workers' Registration scheme from 30 April 2011

Please follow this link to read the Immigration Minister's statement and details of the scheme's closure:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2011/march/24-wrs-closure>

Briefing note from Homeless Link on ending of transitional arrangements for A8 nationals from 1 May

Homeless Link's briefing note is designed to support local authorities and partners to understand the implications of the ending of the transitional arrangements for those A8 nationals sleeping rough. Outreach and day centre services working in this region with this group currently encourage people to either find employment and become self sufficient, or return to their home country. After 1 May 2011 transitional arrangements for EEA nationals from the A8 countries will come to an end, with the end of the Workers' Registration Scheme. However, the existence of the Habitual Residence Test in the UK means that there is not automatic access to UK welfare benefits.

Please follow this link to read the note in full:

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/EndingOfA8TransitionalArrangementBriefing.pdf> and read in conjunction with their good practice note, Developing a Strategic Response and Offer for Central and Eastern European Rough Sleepers, available at:

www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/A8-A2RoughSleepersGoodPracticeNotes.pdf

Unfounded and misleading' rumours about A8 'benefit tourism': article from Migrants' Rights Network

Last week saw a series of negative articles in the written media about the lifting of restrictions on access to some welfare benefits for Central and East Europeans from this May. This article from Migrants' Rights Network explores the facts about patterns of migrants' employment and benefit claims and draws attention to the issue of preparedness – are local authorities ready to handle the change in regulations effectively? Please follow this link to read the article in full and to access the FAQ sheet which MRN has compiled:

<http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/blog/2011/03/latest-rumours-a8-benefit-tourism-may-are-unfounded-and-misleading>

Migrant Foundation – consultation on spending priorities

The Migrant Foundation is asking for views to help them decide how best to use their resources to encourage creative and constructive responses to migration in the UK. The Migration Foundation is an initiative of Metropolitan Housing Partnership with dedicated £10m of resources for benefiting new migrants and the communities they live in. They want to support initiatives that enable migrants to play an effective part in civil society, find work, build safe and stable homes, and take an active role in improving conditions for themselves and the communities they live in. They want to consult widely on how best to use their resources to achieve their vision of a society that celebrates the constructive contribution that migrants make to local and national development. They have set out potential priorities in the consultation document to enable money to be used where measurable, visible and lasting benefits can be achieved.

Please follow this link to learn more and then complete their online survey <http://www.migrationfoundation.org.uk>, or request a hard-copy from the Migration Foundation office e: keepintouch@migrationfoundation.org.uk or t: 020 7501 2202. The consultation deadline is **7 April 2011**.

In addition to the online questionnaire there will be a series of focus groups across the UK.

Events

Overview of immigration law in relation to EEA citizens – 24 March, Norwich

Leathes Prior solicitors, Norwich are hosting this seminar at their Tombland offices from 3.45-5.30 on 24 March. The seminar will provide practical guidance on how to navigate the United Kingdom's immigration rules and policy guidance in relation to EEA and Swiss Nationals. The seminar will cover the following topics:

Rights of EEA Nationals:

- The right to free movement

- The right to live in the UK
- The right to work
- The right to social security support
- The rights of family members
- The right to permanent residence

The seminar is free of charge. Anyone interested in attending should contact Kristina Barnard at Leathes Prior to book a place without delay: e: kbarnard@leathesprior.co.uk f: 01603 610088

Public participation - A challenge for BME Communities - 26 March, Harlow

MENTER in partnership with Harlow Ethnic Minority Umbrella (HEMU) will be hosting a half day roadshow from 1-4pm at the Latton Bush Centre, Western Avenue, on "Public participation - A challenge for BME Communities". It is a free event and will have speakers, including Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP and Jacky Sully, covering aspects of:

- The Big Society
- Digital Switchover
- Workshops regarding "public involvement – How can BME communities get involved?" and "Volunteering - the new emphasis on informal volunteering and what this means for services"
- How do BME communities access new funding?

For more information about the day's event contact John Day e: John@menter.org.uk or see the MENTER website [Events](#) page.

40th Anniversary of Bangladeshi Independence, celebration event – 27 March, Ipswich

The whole community is invited to come to this event, organised by the Ipswich Bangladeshi Cultural Group, at Trinity Park on 27 March, from 12-4pm. As well as refreshments and entertainment for the whole family, their special guest will be the former British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury. For more information please contact: m: Boshor Ali 07958 795795, or Moshud Ali 07885 269296, or Shetu Choudhury 07507 574567 or Soyful Alom 07538 238626 e: ipswichbcg@gmail.com

Immigration Law Practitioners Association (ILPA) – April 2011 and beyond: points, caps and settlement. 30 March 2011, 4 - 7.15pm London

This session aims to arm practitioners with everything they need to know about the changes to be introduced on April 6 2011 and to analyse the potential pitfalls and strategic solutions. Topics to be covered include permanent caps and criteria changes for Tier 2 General and Intra-Company Transfers; changes to Tier 1 (General), Tier 1 (Entrepreneur and Investor) and the fate of Tier 1 (Post Study Worker); the new Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route and transitional arrangements. Course costs vary: ILPA members £180, CR*£120, others £360. For more information and to register, please follow this link: <http://www.ilpa.org.uk> and use the training tab.

ILPA: Refugee and international protection update, 13 April 2011, London, 4pm - 7.15pm

This will help legal practitioners make sure they are fully up to speed with legal developments on refugee law, subsidiary protection, other human rights conventions relevant to protection of migrants, and have identified litigation likely to arise out of these developments. The course will review recent developments, understand the full potential of the caselaw, are conversant with the latest procedures and understand the areas in which the law is developing. The course costs vary: ILPA members £120, CR*£60, non-members £240. Please follow this link for more information and to register: <http://www.ilpa.org.uk> and use the training tab.

Robust Housing eligibility for migrants: Training from Shelter at East of England LGA, 16 May 2011

This training was first offered in February, but was over-subscribed, so is to be repeated on 16 May. For those housing and advice sector professionals who are working in support of migrant workers presenting with housing needs who are finding it difficult to assess what different nationals are entitled to, then this event is a must. Delivered by Richard Lee from Shelter, the course will use case studies to walk delegates through a range of 'pathways to housing' guides to demonstrate how robust, consistent and legally compliant housing entitlement decisions can be made for foreign nationals. The event will conclude with a round table discussion of forthcoming issues and their implications - such as what plans your organisations have in place for the demise of the workers' registration scheme and how the impact is being felt. Places cost £40 plus VAT.

For more information and to book a place, please follow this link: <http://www.eelga.gov.uk/events/view-event.aspx?ID=2691>

Child Trafficking - Advanced Course on Safeguarding Children delivered by ECPAT UK at East of England LGA 24 May 2011

This advanced course aims to build on practitioners' knowledge of child trafficking and assumes a basic understanding of the key issues. The focus will be on supporting and safeguarding suspected victims of child trafficking and some of the complexities this area of practice can create. The course will include new changes in practice since the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against the Trafficking in Human Beings including the National Referral Mechanism and new Trafficking Toolkit. The need for a multi-agency approach will underpin the course content, which is why delegates are welcome from social care professionals working in child protection, police working in child protection, UKBA local immigration teams, health professionals working in child protection, Education professionals who work with children and child centred third sector organisations who receive referrals from the public.

For further information please contact Louise Gooch, Strategic Migration Partnership, East of England LGA, e: louise.gooch@eelga.gov.uk t: 01284 729438

Please note: If you book your place before **28 March** early you will receive a lower rate of £75 plus VAT.

Bookings after that date will be charged at £90 plus VAT.

To book a place, follow this link: www.eelga.gov.uk/events/view-event.aspx?ID=2690

Funding

John Lewis Golden Jubilee Trust – seconded member of staff for up to 6 months, to UK charity

Charities that want to host employees from the John Lewis Partnership on fully-funded six-month placements should apply by either **April** or October, the organisation has announced. The partnership's Golden Jubilee Trust programme enables John Lewis and Waitrose employees, known as partners, to spend six months working in charities. The programme, funded by the partnership, is in its eleventh year. Charities that have been selected before include the National Trust and the RSPCA. A spokeswoman for the trust said the trustees would decide how many secondments would be awarded this year at their next review in April, depending on available funds. The programme usually consists of 22 placements every six months, but the partnership funded an extra 10 places last year to mark its 10th anniversary. Employees taking part in the scheme will choose which charities they will work for from the list of applicants. Please follow this link for more information:

<http://www.johnlewispartnership.co.uk/Display.aspx?&MasterId=302088b7-fc0b-4b0c-b0d3-fe2389abdbca&NavigationId=624>

Big Lottery Fund (BLF): Reaching Communities, England

The Reaching Communities programme has two strands:

- Reaching Communities – funds from £10k to £500k for revenue projects/small capital projects up to £50k
- Reaching Communities buildings – funds of between £100,000 and £500,000 for large capital projects

Reaching Communities funds projects helping people and communities most in need. Projects can be new or existing, or be an organisation's core work. Every project that the BLF funds must:

- Respond to need - a problem or issue, or situation where something needs to change to make things better for a person, or group of people or environment.
- Involve the people who will benefit from the project in planning and running the project
- Achieve one or more of the following four outcomes:
 1. People having better chances in life: better access to training and development to improve their life skills.
 2. Stronger communities: more active citizens working together to tackle their problems.
 3. Improved rural and urban environments, which communities are better able to access and enjoy.
 4. Healthier and more active people and communities.

To fund revenue or small capital projects, applicants can be voluntary or community organisations, schools, local authorities, not for profit organisations or social enterprises. Large capital fund applicants should check with the BLF's eligibility checker.

For more information, please contact as follows: t: 0845 410 20 30 e: general.enquiries@biglotteryfund.org.uk

Or follow this link: http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_reaching_communities?regioncode=-uk

European Refugee Fund call for proposals for Gateway projects - £4.5 million available

The call is aimed at organisations involved in setting up projects that assist in the resettlement of refugees through the Gateway Protection Programme. Eligible applicants include non-governmental organisations, charities, local government, inter-governmental organisations, limited companies and any partnership made up of these organisations. Project proposals from local, regional and national organisations will be considered. The funding will be available annually to fund the management and delivery of activities during the period 1 June 2011 to 31 May 2014. Activities can relate to both pre and post arrival services for eligible refugees. Suitable UK projects are expected to serve at least 100 refugees a year and will be funded to provide housing and casework support for a year.

Further details - including the application form, documents and guidance - are available on the Home Office's Emptoris e-procurement site. To register, please email Emptoris at EUfunding@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. Even those who have previously registered for other European funding calls for proposals must submit a new request for access to the Gateway call for proposals. The closing date for completed applications is **16:00 on Thursday 21 April 2011**.

To assist bidders in preparing their applications, UKBA are hosting 1-day workshops in Croydon on Thursday 17 March and in Sheffield on Thursday 31 March. Limited spaces will be available on a 'first come, first served' basis. To register for one of the workshops, please email EuropeanSolidFundsEnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Jobs

The Female Prisoners Welfare Project (FPWP) Hibiscus: Project Worker, London, part time (3 days a week) £22,111 - £23,450

FPWP provides support for females of all ethnic origins and nationalities within the UK criminal justice system. It is currently looking for a part time Project Worker to provide early intervention community support and develop a programme for Eastern European women with a specific focus on women from the Roma community. Candidates will need to speak an East European language and one of the Romani dialects. The post holder will be based at FPWP/Hibiscus offices, currently at 12 Angel Gate, City Road, London EC1V 2PT. The closing date for applications is **28 March**. To find out more about the role and to apply, please follow this link: http://fpwphibiscus.org.uk/?p=727&dm_i=IMP,DPEU,3039NF,13503,1

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