

Asylum:

- Decisions remain high and there are also many cases under appeal. This creates a lot of uncertainty for people in the asylum system and beyond, but it also impacts upon the services people access for support. We've been requesting improved data on asylum decisions and appeals.
- The Home Office continue to offer a maximum grace period of 72 hours per person on evictions in any councils that have declared 'Severe Weather Emergency Protocol' (SWEP). That effectively pauses the eviction for up to 72 hours unless SWEP is deactivated within that time.
- Christmas discontinuations: The last eviction date will be Friday the 19th of December. Evictions will resume on Monday 5th of January 2026. No people should receive a support end date within that timeframe, as this will end their cash support. If someone is served with a support end date between 20/12/26 and 04/01/26, please advise them to contact Migrant Help.
- There have been some high-profile announcements lately. The [Asylum and returns policy on GOV.UK](#) as well as the [Earned settlement consultation on GOV.UK](#). We'll be engaging our partners across the region in due course as we seek to find the best way we can support partners and escalate matters of concern.
- The National Audit Office have produced a great resource about the asylum process with some visual guides. You can find their [analysis of the asylum system on the NAO website](#).

Resettlement:

- RSMP has awarded over 40 small grants to organisations in the North West supporting Ukrainians, Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders, and families arrived through some Afghan support routes. You can find out recipients of the grants on our website: [Funded VCFSE Organisations Delivering Integration & English Language Support - Northwestrsmp](#)
- Further updates will be posted on our website as we progress with the grants process.

Afghan Relocation Programme:

- The region has 1 transitional site that remains open.
- The MOD transitional sites are in the process of being shut down.

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Communities for Afghans:

- There have been no arrivals under the Communities for Afghans scheme in the region.

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UKRS:

- There has been a small number of arrivals under UKRS between October and December 2025.

Ukraine:

- The [Ukraine Permission Extension \(UPE\)](#) scheme is open to Ukrainians in the UK who previously held a Ukraine Scheme visa and we await further information on the 24 month extension announced 01/09/25.
- SMPs are working with LAs to assess the impact of thank you payments ending when UPE 1 (18-month visa) ends, considering how many of those still in sponsorship could be at risk of homelessness.
- We continue to escalate issues with central government linked to delays in UPE application approvals for children, incorrect advice being given by the UKVI helpline, and fraudulent sponsorship applications.
- While the HO [Earned settlement - GOV.UK](#) consultation does not include Ukrainians, as Ukraine scheme visas are not a route to settlement, there is valuable insight LAs, VCS and other support organisations can share about temporary protection, including studies on homelessness, mental health and wellbeing, as well as difficulties being employed, accommodated and educated on a short term visa.

Hong Kong BN(O)

- On December 4th 2025 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (the Government department that oversees the Hong Kong Programme) announced that the dedicated bespoke National Hong Kong Welcome programme will conclude on 31 March 2026. With BN(O) visa holders to be supported through mainstream programmes and cross-cohort initiatives. Government also announced that, alongside the bespoke English language funding to BN(O) visa holders ending on 31 March 2026, the dedicated funding to support BN(O) visa holders with destitution will also end. Funding to SMP's forms part of a separate Government planning process

and a decision will be made soon. More information on how the programme of support to BN(O) visa holders in evolving is available on Gov.uk: [Welcome Programme: Hong Kong British National \(Overseas\) visa holders in the UK - GOV.UK](#)

- The newly announced [Earned settlement - GOV.UK](#) changes and consultation could see significant changes to BN(O) visa holders' pathway to settlement. BN(O) visa holders will benefit from a 5-year reduction to the baseline 10-year residency requirements, retaining their 5-year pathway to settlement. However, Government is consulting on whether changes to mandatory requirements to applying for settlement (such as tougher English language requirements and income/tax requirements) will apply to BN(O) visa holders. We encourage all BN(O) visa holders and supporting organisations to respond to the consultation.

Health:

Adult Asylum Seeker Mental Health Grant

- Having received funding from the Home Office to deliver a mental health grant aimed at supporting adult asylum seekers, the RSMP have undertaken extensive cross-partner and cross-region engagement to shape a delivery plan based on localised need and priorities, gaps in existing care, and current evidence in supporting healing, mental health and wellbeing in asylum seeking populations. We have agreed funding on a range of programmes from holistic therapy, to football, therapeutically led community navigator support, the creation and development of LGBTQI+ spaces, and community gardening. Some programmes are supporting people from across the North West whilst others are concentrated in specific local areas. As part of the grant, the Family Refugee Support Project and Freedom from Torture are providing a programme of remote holistic therapy for adult asylum seekers with acute complex post-traumatic stress disorder who are living anywhere within the North West. For details of eligibility and for a referral form, please get in touch with amy.robinson@manchester.gov.uk . Please also get in touch for a full list of support funded by the grant.

Blog: Challenging Anti-Immigration Narratives and Creating Pathways for Belonging with People Seeking Asylum and Refugees

- You might be interested in this [blog](#) from the King's College London Refugee Mental Health and Place network. It reflects on a workshop that brought together people with lived experience of seeking asylum and refugees with community partners, artists, cultural practitioners and researchers, who used storytelling, dialogue, and drawing to surface dominant anti-immigration narratives; explore their impact on everyday life and mental health and co-create alternative narratives of belonging, grounded in lived experience to improve mental health.

Understanding Refugee and Asylum Seeker Mental Health and Effective Therapeutic Support for Asylum Seekers – Free Solace e-Learning

- Solace have produced these [two self-guided courses](#) aimed to support understanding of the factors that affect the wellbeing and mental health of those who have been forcibly displaced. The training includes ideas for how to develop working practice and offer wellbeing support to displaced people in your community.

Employment:

- **Refugee Employment ESOL Support Network (REESN):** October's meeting saw 33 stakeholders on the call from LAs, VCSES and employers from the North West. November saw 32 stakeholders on the call. In October, we had Aspire in Partnership and Amazy present. A in P provide a fully funded service for businesses to improve their EDI policies and procedures. Amazy provide ESOL materials to ESOL tutors. In November, we had Janice from WJR talk about the STEP employment programme and Nusrat for WEA talking about their ESOL offer. If you would like to attend the REESN please respond to this email and we can add you to the invite.

ESOL

- MHCLG funding has been used to help build capacity and increase informal ESOL provision across the region. The funding has gone towards several projects including:
 - A Train to TEFL course for 10 people.
 - A TERM ESOL CPD course for 18 people.
 - ESOL small grants have been awarded to 14 organisations
 - ESOL Young Peoples grants have been awarded to 12 organisations
 - Rural ESOL funding for Local Authorities
 - Subscriptions for the Amazy platform for the participants on the TERM and Train to Tefl courses.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children:

Overview

- We have continued to receive a steady number of children arriving in the region through the NTS. Over 800 unaccompanied children and young people (CYP) are currently looked after by North West local authorities, with a further 2,100 former UASC care leavers receiving ongoing support (RSMP, Oct 2025). Since March 2021, around 1,000 young people have been placed in the region through the National Transfer Scheme (NTS), representing significant progress in helping these children recover, rebuild, and thrive.
- These figures do not include Children & Young People arriving spontaneously or those identified in hotels, both of which continue to place substantial and unplanned demand on local services.
Three urban local authorities have now reached their 0.1% threshold, driven entirely by children presenting within the region rather than through NTS transfers.
- Local authorities are also reporting an increase in asylum refusals for young people. This is likely to result in Young People getting locked in prolonged appeals processes, negatively affecting wellbeing and creating additional financial pressures for councils.

Support and Capacity Building

- Training for partners will be delivered early in the New Year. Course details will be available on our website and Eventbrite page [Events Archive - Northwestsmp](#)
- The **A Safe Place in a New Place** campaign continues to focus on attracting new carers for young refugee children. Partners are encouraged to share the campaign link [A Safe Space in a New Place - Northwestsmp](#) widely to increase placement capacity across the region.

Legal Advice Project

- Following a positive evaluation of the North West collaborative project providing legal and immigration advice to unaccompanied children - highlighting significant benefits for both CYP and local authorities - regional LAs have agreed to extend the scheme for two further years. This extension will ensure that at least 200 children receive timely legal advice to regularise their immigration status. We thank UASC Leads, DCSs, Members, and GMIAU for their continued commitment to this partnership, which is achieving strong, life changing outcomes for young people.
- Referrals to the GMIAU project can be made directly via their website [Form Unaccompanied Young Person - GMIAU Referral](#)



North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership Newsletter December 2025:

Other:

- Migrant Help have around 700 women's coats available, if you know of anyone in need of coats please contact Sara – sara.rego@migranthelpuk.org.
- African Rainbow Family are recruiting an Operations Manager, to find out more and apply please check their website - [Work with Us](#)