

North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership Newsletter

March 2026

Team Updates:

- On 17th March 2026 the North West RSMP held an in person ESOL conference in Manchester. We would like to thank all our partners who attended the day and helped to make it a success, in particular our guest speakers from Language Cert, Cycle of Life and CHAWREC.
- The RSMP held several consultation sessions with partners across the region to gather the views and understand the possible impacts of the proposed changes to settlement. The RSMP submitted a regional response to the consultation, trying to reflect the views of all partners.

Asylum:

- Since December, two hotel sites in the region have been closed. We expect further conversations around hotel closures due to the government priority to exit hotel sites, but there are currently no further known closures in the region.
- We expect the results of the Move On Evaluation to be released this spring, but it has been confirmed that from the 9th of March, individuals with a positive decision will receive no less than 42 days' notice from the date of their decision. They will also receive no less than 28 days' notice of the end of their asylum support.
- The Home Affairs committee released this recent report on the [Routes to Settlement](#), which details some of the challenges with recent announcements on earned settlement.
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- Policy announcements continue to develop, with the recent changes to the Immigration Rules. Some key points related to asylum include:
 - .1. A statutory instrument has been laid this month to revoke the 'statutory duty' to provide support and replace it with a discretionary power. This is to be implemented in June this year.
 - .2. From the 26th of March, people will be granted a 30 month 'core protection' status, if they made a new asylum claim on or after the 2nd of March 2026.
 - .3. A 12 week 'Family Returns' consultation is underway from the 5th of March. Part 1 considers the removal of support for families and adult care leavers without immigration status and Part 2 considers changes to the use of force policy.

Resettlement:

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- There have been updates to ARP policy to reflect the position on homelessness and separated families [Afghan Resettlement Programme: policy guidance - GOV.UK](#)

Ukraine

- The HfU visa scheme remains open for Ukrainian nationals outside of the UK, and the [Ukraine Permission Extension \(UPE\)](#) scheme is open to those in the UK who previously held a Ukraine Scheme visa for an initial 18 month visa.
- On the 4-year anniversary of the war in Ukraine, UK government provided further details on the 24-month extension to UPE with a 90-day application window. Submitting an application within the 90-day period, would not reduce the total length of time granted on the visa.
- Claims for asylum from Ukrainians has decreased by 72% in the last year. 2025 Q4 data shows that 343 out of 380 decisions for Ukrainians, 90%, were refused,
- RSMP received MHCLG funding for Ukraine, Hong Kong, and Communities for Afghans support July 2025 – March 2026, including additional funding to support ESOL availability and capacity in the North West. To date we have issued over 50 grant agreements and contracts for integration support, ESOL and support for young people, rural areas and mental health support.

Hong Kong BN(O)

The National, bespoke Welcome Programme for BN(O) Visa Holders is [ending at end of March](#), with support to Hongkongers to mainstreamed and picked up by LA's, VCFSE organisations and existing provision that their visa allows them to access – reminder what this is:

- No more funding from Govt to VCSE groups – the STEP ESOL & employment programme is taken separately from this, we wait to hear about future funding.
- Hate crime reporting service for ESEA communities will be ending
- The £850 English language funding to Local Authorities for BN(O) visa holders will end – instead BN(O) visa holders can access mainstream ASF ESOL funding
- The funding to Local Authorities to support BN(O) households who are destitute or at imminent risk of destitution will be withdrawn – However BN(O) visa holders can still apply to have their NRPF conditions lifted.

For organisations working with LA's, or LA's directly claiming funding for English language or destitution support - MHCLG have now sent confirmation of the final funding claims window.

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Claims opened on Monday 16th March and the window will close on 10th April. Funding can only be claimed for support delivered up to and including 31 March. For any support being delivered that will go beyond that date, only the proportion of support delivered before 31 March can be claimed for. **This will be the final claims period, please ensure all claims are submitted by the deadline as there will be no further opportunity to apply for funding.**

Health:

- Since October, more than 20 providers from across the region have been delivering a range of programmes aimed at supporting social connection, emotional stabilisation and access to specialist mental health services as part of the RSMP *North West Healing, Mental Health and Wellbeing grant for adults seeking asylum*.

Programmes range from holistic therapy and therapeutic community navigation to improving physical access to services, creative wellbeing sessions, community gardening, LGBTQI+ spaces, and football coaching, supporting over 600 people from over 40 nationalities, speaking more than 25 languages.

- Home Office changes earlier this year to the process for the provision of funded transport for people living in initial and contingency accommodation have raised a range of concerns. As we seek clarity on the new process, we would be grateful for help in gathering a strong picture of any repercussions on the ground, including as they relate directly to an individual or family, or to the wider impact on colleagues and services. Please use this form to share your feedback:

[NORTH WEST LOG OF CONCERNS: PROVISION OF FUNDED TRANSPORT – Fill in form](#)

Employment:

- We held our HK/Ukrainian Pathways end of programme celebration event on 26th February. We had over 65 people attend to celebrate the successes of the RSMP funded employment support programme.

Refugee Employment ESOL Support Network (REESN):

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- The REESN network saw a variety of speakers this quarter. We had GMCA speak about the Refugee Welcome programme in Greater Manchester, First Kick football spoke about their ESOL programme and Manoj from Skilled for Life spoke about his volunteering positions in IT startup companies. The network typically has 35 people attend each month. Please get in contact to join.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children:

- **Home Office to Resume Publication of Age Assessment Data**

The Home Office has announced that it will resume the publication of data on the **number and outcomes of age assessments** from **21 May 2026**. They also plan to publish additional detail to clearly distinguish between **Initial Age Decisions (IADs)** made by Home Office officials on arrival or encounter for immigration purposes, age assessments undertaken by local authorities (including Health and Social Care Trusts), and those carried out by the National Age Assessment Board (NAAB). “This development will significantly strengthen transparency across the age assessment system, responding directly to feedback raised by stakeholders”.

The statistical release will:

- Publish aggregate data on age assessments and outcomes using improved definitions and methodology, including refreshed historical data.
- Include, for the first time, disaggregated information on outcomes from Initial Age Decisions (IADs), local authority (LA) age assessments, and the National Age Assessment Board (NAAB), aligned with the updated system-wide dataset.
- Include, for the first time, information on whether earlier age assessments are overturned by later assessments.
- Provide clear guidance explaining the new data, sources, changes to methodology, and any relevant caveats.

Other:

- The NRPF Network has published a detailed and informative piece of work outlining the potential impact of the proposed earned settlement legislation [Earned settlement - GOV.UK](#) on local authorities and affected individuals, with significant implications also for the voluntary and community sector. 🖱️ Read the full piece



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here: [Earned settlement consultation | NRPF](#). If you would like to join the Regional NRPF forum, please email RSMP@manchester.gov.uk