

# Newsletter - summer 2026



Warm greetings to all of you friends and supporters!

Since it's summer – and for once we can say that without the weather making us doubt it – it feels appropriate to start with positive news... so for that see pages 1,2,4 and especially p7 for news and pictures of our delightful new **RAMA Book Nook**. Beyond that, the following articles reflect life in the office (which alternates between joy in small successes and despair at the context in which we operate), as well as some thoughts on wider issues.

The changes to the immigration rules being introduced by the government continue to dismay and confuse clients, caseworkers and legal teams nationwide. Some are already law while others are still being debated by Parliament. We will have more of that in future issues. The negative rhetoric around migration has not abated, in spite of the stringent actions taken by the government, and overall public perception is still somewhat out of kilter with the current state of play (see pg 8). We look forward to seeing what ensues in the upcoming by-election in neighbouring constituency Clacton, with populist-in-chief Farage facing a challenge from Count Binface and a record 32 others!

It's really very hard to convey just how much is going on at RAMA. From our **Casework team** seeing individuals and families who are asylum seekers or refugees, helping with everything from daily concerns to dealing with lawyers; the **Ukraine team** ensuring hosts and guests are fully supported in many different ways; the **wellbeing team** providing countless activities as well as counselling and 1:1 psychotherapy; and our increasingly well qualified **legal team** dealing with complex cases involving such things as domestic abuse and modern slavery as well as making human rights applications among many others. In all of this we're grateful to the support we have from **numerous partners** in Colchester and beyond, without whom we would not have evolved as we have. Thank you all!



As you will all be aware, with the Ukraine War continuing and attacks increasing, our Ukrainian guests in Colchester have no chance of returning home any time soon. Funding specifically for them, from **Essex Community Foundation**, has enabled us to facilitate a series of cultural activities which are always much appreciated. A cohort of 53 Ukrainians enjoyed a trip to William Shakespeare's '**Much Ado About Nothing**' in Castle Park last month. Castle Park Theatre's outdoor production of what has been termed Shakespeare's 'rom com' proved very popular with our clients, both adults and children alike.

We were also pleased to be contacted by our friends at **Zeelandia** and invited to a special event attended by the MDs of both the UK and the Ukraine branches, David Amos and Andriy Vasylenko. Following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and significant disruption to the Ukrainian bakery industry, Andriy created **Bake4Ukraine**, a project intended to ensure a regular supply of bread and soup to families with disabilities and the elderly who had remained in the local area. Four years on, and with help from Zeelandia UK (instrumental in helping their Ukrainian partners find replacement kitchen equipment to refurbish bombed-out bakeries), Bake4Ukraine continues to provide support and purpose for the Ukrainian bakery sector. We have already hosted two events where Ukrainian guests had the chance to speak to Andriy online; a small number came along this presentation - also attended by MP Pam Cox - and were very happy to be able to chat with Andriy in person.



**MM & EL**

## RAMA out and about!



Summer is well and truly here and, as temperatures have risen (and risen), the Wellbeing Team has been out and about taking clients on a series of outdoor activities. May saw a **Colchester to Bures train trip**, funded by Essex and South Suffolk Rail Partnership and with the support of Jane Stewart, followed by a walking tour to see the legendary 'Bures Dragon' and lunch in the friendly and welcoming local pub, The Eight Bells.

This year's **Essex Book Festival** kicked off with a launch event at Colchester Community Football Stadium where clients enjoyed a World Cup-themed book discussion and tour of the fabulous Colchester United stadium.

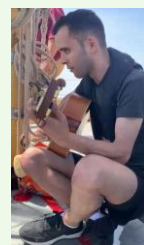


In June, some of our most vulnerable clients and families participated in **Clacton Rocks**; a day of family and community fun which included a *Seaside Explorers* beach workshop led by the amazing Libby Scarfe, a community litter pick and art session held at the CVST Clacton beach hut and, in collaboration with Essex Cultural Diversity Project, a fascinating and stereotype-busting 'Human Library'. Thank you to EBF and Ros Green for the tickets given generously to our clients, enabling them to attend events otherwise difficult to access.

On the very hottest day of the year (so far!) we were lucky enough to take a group of 10 clients on a sailing trip aboard **The Pioneer**, a beautifully renovated 160-year-old fishing smack based in Brightlingsea. Sailing along the River Colne, the group enthusiastically participated in a range of maritime tasks such as rigging, changing the sails, steering the boat and, of course, making tea! The day required serious teamwork and the experience fostered a deep connection among the group. One of my favourite moments was, while seeking shade under one of the sails, participants spontaneously started to sing together in Arabic, French, English, and Sudanese languages. The therapeutic impact of the trip was clear to see and, as one client said afterwards: *"This was the best day. Thank you for this day. My mind was at peace."*

A heart-felt thanks to all the individuals, volunteers and partners who make these trips and visits possible and help make our clients feel more welcome and connected to their local community.

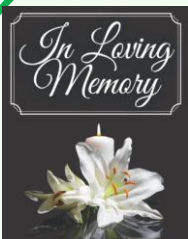
JW



In June the annual **Refugee Week football match** took place between RAMA & Colchester City Council. It was a fantastic match worthy of the World Cup, with CCC coming from two goals down to emerge eventually as 3-2 winners (with a little help from RAMA loanee players 😊). Food was provided afterwards and enjoyed in a great atmosphere of community and togetherness. Our thanks to all at CCC for the organisation and provision of delicious food and water bottles.

It is now one victory each after two years. Looking forward to next year's match already!! 🏆🏆🏆

CM



**Richard Curry**, a long-time RAMA volunteer, died on April 18<sup>th</sup> 2026, having been associated initially with Welcome Refugees, then RA-C and then what we now know as RAMA. In the early years, when everyone was a volunteer, he was a regular presence at our monthly Community Meetings catering to the needs of young children. A young mother of 4 children, who attended these meetings, said, *"He was a symbol of love, kindness and giving. I was telling the girls yesterday how he used to care for them when they were little, playing with them, helping them colour and watching over them when I was busy. He gave them such a sense of warmth and safety."*

Richard was very involved in the Big Garden project attended by many asylum seekers between 2020 and 2024. He was reliable and spent hours providing the clients and organisers with a constant supply of water, heated in the fairly primitive Kelly Kettle. One asylum seeker who became a refugee said, *"Richard showed us how to do things, listened and answered our questions, and for the time we were with him we felt that we belonged and that we were just like anybody else. It was very special to us."*

His unassuming patience was also apparent in the vigilant attention he gave to children at the Forest Schools run for RAMA by Tim Evans; and Richard also used skills he brought from Citizen's Advice to help clients fill in PIP and DLA forms. A CA colleague said, *"No one knows how much time he put into writing accurate, thoughtful things that helped people get their due in a system which is stacked against them."* Another said, *"He helped me to become less judgemental and to listen."*

Richard leaves behind many friends and colleagues he valued and who sincerely valued him. Most significantly, many of those who started as RAMA clients grew to be firm friends with this gentle and caring man. They, like everyone at RAMA, will sorely miss his intelligence, his wit and his humanity. We are all grateful to have known him. **EC**

### Operational report

**Client numbers** in general are up from last year, and in particular there has been an increase in clients suffering domestic abuse, in part attributable to new rules around settlement. These cases are dealt with by the legal team and are tough for the less experienced members. Their regular 1:1 meetings with personal supervisors are invaluable in helping with the stress, and the team is commendably resilient and mutually supportive. The second increase is in the number of **decisions** being made by the Home Office for asylum seekers. Each month 25 to 40 people receive a decision while in dispersed accommodation in NE Essex. Many are negative; and clients have the right to appeal. However, the strain in the legal aid system means we can rarely find anyone to represent them in their appeal even when the client comes from a country which would commonly give them an over 86% chance of a win. The legal team is now able to take on *very limited* appeals, chosen by vulnerability and likely success. With a **negative decision**, clients are asked to leave Home Office accommodation, and they also lose financial support. Contrary to what people think, these clients are *not* managed out of the country in any formal way, but mostly disappear, quickly becoming homeless and destitute as it may be risky to take on a job and they cannot claim benefits. Unless they can raise money for a private solicitor to undertake a fresh claim, they have no choice but to become an overstayer. This leads to exploitation and abuse, since such individuals easily fall prey to false promises and manipulation, modern slavery and, potentially, crime.

Where there is a **positive decision**, we must also manage the client's needs – help with bank accounts, housing, benefits, explain why they can no longer bring family to UK (family reunion was halted last year) and manage their distress. The diligent work of the casework team in acquiring housing means there is always an option for those to whom the council has no duty. In all the above cases, as one person leaves HO accommodation, another one arrives and the process begins again...

RAMA was pleased to be invited (as usual) to the annual **Essex Police Towards Excellence** conference in June: Building Trust and Confidence/Our Communities – a subject on which we have a lot to say! Maria was on the panel discussing the barriers clients face in accessing justice. We would be the first to acknowledge how supportive our local service has been over the years, especially via the dedicated liaison officer, a post that, after 5 years of 'building trust', has recently been lost. The service also takes hate crime extremely seriously and without fail visits every complainant to offer support.

We have been working with Professor of Global Public Health Reza Madjzadeh and the GEMMS team from **Essex University** who, as part of their global public health research, held a mini conference at RAMA. After hearing from us about how much time and money we devote to those with No Recourse to Public Funds, they have kindly taken on the job of writing a document for us to present to ECC, CCC and any other funders to demonstrate what we do, particularly when we intervene in domestic abuse cases in order to prevent crises. **MW**

At the summer festival organised by **Colchester Unite Against Racism (CUAR)**, our Immigration Team Lead Ayse and Lorcan Whitehead from the university led a workshop entitled ***Misconceptions About Migration***. The workshop explored common misconceptions about migration that we encounter in our daily lives, whether through conversations with people we know or do not know, social media, mainstream media, or our workplaces. We began by discussing common myths and the facts that challenge them before moving on to real-life stories of migration. Overall, attendees were surprised by some of the realities and personal experiences we shared, as they often contrasted with the narratives presented by politicians and the media. Some attendees were very aware of the truth, and others were interested in learning more. Through these stories, we also sought to humanise migration by highlighting the complexity and diversity of people's experiences.

AUD



Recently caseworker Hasina had the great pleasure of attending the **Bako Awards** at **Colchester Institute**.

This award holds a special place in the hearts of everyone at RAMA: Bako was an exceptionally kind, caring and generous client, greatly valued by our team, who was tragically murdered. This award, instituted by staff at the Institute, is a wonderful tribute to his life and legacy, and we were proud to play a part in keeping his memory alive. This year's Bako Award went to a very deserving young man. We have had the privilege of working with A for over 3 years now, in which time we have witnessed firsthand his strength, determination, and resilience in overcoming significant challenges. With the unwavering support of the Institute, and the dedicated guidance of his teachers, he has continued to move forward, even when the path has not always been easy. He has remained committed to his education and to building a brighter future. Today, he is thriving, developing new skills, growing in confidence and making outstanding progress. He is an excellent role model whose positive attitude and willingness inspire everyone around him. He reminds us that even in our most difficult moments - with support, determination, and belief in ourselves - great things are possible.

We are immensely proud of everything he has achieved, and we thank Colchester Institute for the wonderful work done with all those of our clients who attend. We look forward to maintaining our close, productive relationship.

HU

### A valuable new team member for RAMA

My name is **Jessica** and I joined RAMA at the start of this year. As a solicitor I worked in immigration law for some years before switching to criminal law. It was while at university that I started to volunteer with charities supporting refugees and asylum seekers. This led to the first part of my career in immigration law from 2014 to 2020, when I worked at various law firms and at a London charity providing advice to migrants facing homelessness. I qualified as a solicitor in 2018 and I switched to criminal law in 2020.



After a short career break I am glad to be once again working in immigration law and proud to be providing advice to some of the most vulnerable in our local community.

I grew up in Essex so I'm happy to have returned, and especially happy to be here at RAMA where my colleagues are dedicated to helping migrants in every way they can. As an added bonus, there always seems to be cake available!



## Migration, Housing and the outsourcing of the British State: A parable for our times

Arguably the biggest driver of anger around immigration and hostility towards, recently arrived migrant and/or asylum-seeking communities is the effect on local housing stock. Toxic narratives are ten a penny about the alleged provision of full board, lodging, and welfare benefits to young men of ‘fighting age’ from ‘alien cultures’ in hotels and houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs) in areas of deprivation where there are acute shortages of affordable housing. The last three summers have seen demonstrations about the accommodation of asylum seekers in these sites and in disused military barracks. Some protestors have genuine concerns about the integration of these arrivistes in their communities and of the sheer ennui of the conditions of their temporary residence. For others, the motivations are arguably xenophobic and racist as is shown by the presence of far-right agitators such as Tommy Robinson, as well as other groups further to his right such as Britain First, the white supremacist Homeland Party and the neo-Nazi Patriotic Alternative. Riots have been sparked by the convictions of asylum seekers for crimes such as the murder of a hotel worker by a Sudanese national in Walsall in October 2024 and the sexual assault of a 14-year-old girl in Epping by an Afghan national residing in the Bell Hotel there in 2025. There was also the attempted murder of a Belfast man by a Sudanese national – captured in horrific social media images — and the Southport killings in August 2024. These disturbances, or pogroms, have been exacerbated by bad actors online who, through their wilful dissemination of misinformation, have sought to pour accelerant on the flames. Because lies and wilful ignorance have so often been the currency of debate over immigration and asylum, it is the aim of this article to shed some factual light on exactly how asylum seekers and migrants are housed. I argue that the outsourcing of the running of asylum accommodation to private facilities companies, such as Serco, is a metaphor for the hollowing out of the British state. The stark reality is that, in the words of Anoosh Chakelian in a *New Statesman* article (on the political temperature in the Greater Manchester satellite town of Wigan in the context of the Makerfield by-election), neither the state nor local councils have the capacity or the political capital to build, buy or rent out specific asylum housing. For her, the Home Office has been a ‘basket case’ that, in the words of insiders with knowledge of the issue, “*doesn’t know what to do*” about the failing accommodation system and “*isn’t doing anything about it*”, despite all the official clamour about wishing to close the hotels.<sup>1</sup>

In her tour of the Makerfield constituency and especially of Wigan, Chakelian points to Darlington Street as an archetypal symbol of Britain’s woes. A long road of redbrick terraces leading into Wigan town centre, it was built to house the major battalions of industrial England, mill workers and miners. Darlington Street and its offshoots are believed locally to have Britain’s highest concentration of **Serco**-run and other HMOs. Serco is one of the private outsourcing companies with a government contract to rent out accommodation to asylum seekers. Serco leases houses from private landlords and runs them on their behalf. Chakelian reports being told that some landlords receive between £1,000 and £2,000 a month in rent on these properties, depending on number of bedrooms, location, and condition. This money is paid by the Home Office, which agreed *ten-year* contracts with Serco and two other firms (Clearsprings and Mears) to accommodate asylum seekers in hotels and houses.<sup>2</sup>

On top of this, some property investors are buying up cheap properties, contracting them with Serco then advertising them to cash buyers as attractive investment opportunities with guaranteed rent. Anoosh Chakelian cites one property investor promising as high as 10.5% returns on cheap housing for as little as £148,600. Landlords have also been kicking out existing tenants (before the recent prohibition of no-fault evictions) in order to rent to Serco, adding to the perception of migrants being prioritised for housing. This was the picture painted by Wigan MP and Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy to Chakelian while out door-knocking for Andy Burnham: “*you’re often on a road where every other house been taken up as an HMO*” (whether for asylum seekers, ex-offenders, drug addicts and the homeless). “*Because the properties are cheaper, they all target the same areas*,” Nandy says, which drives up rents. According to her, her constituents now feel part of “*a very transient community*,” where they don’t know their neighbours, new people keep arriving, “*and a lot of social problems [are] concentrated in one area*.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Anoosh Chakelian *The failed state. How Britain outsourced its politics – and lost control*, *New Statesman*, 12-18 June 2026 pp 21-27

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp21-22

That one vignette speaks to the progressive degradation of public and community spaces and the resultant seething discontent, cynicism and hopelessness that is so prevalent in affected areas such as Wigan. It speaks volumes of the lack of capacity of the central state and of local authorities to tackle such systematic blockages such as public housing and its accompanying infrastructure. Chakelian gives a necessary corrective to the “luxury hotels” falsehoods spread by the far right. There were nearly 5,000 complaints against asylum contractors escalated to the Home Office between 2022 and 2025, including payments issues, ‘property suitability’, food not making the legal standards, and staff behaviour towards asylum seekers, according to documents obtained via a Freedom of Information request. Serco featured in 1,816 of the 4,962 complaints escalated, surpassed only by Clearsprings’ 1,975. She cites a former Serco hotel worker at the Metropole Hotel in Blackpool who blew the whistle to the online publication the *Lead* last year on “*terrible conditions*” at the hotel, including collapsing ceilings and raw sewage leaks.<sup>4</sup>

Nationally, the statistics tell the story of a very dysfunctional set up. There are 93,653 asylum seekers housed in Home Office asylum accommodation in the UK, around 22 per cent of whom are in hotels, some of which Serco runs. The hotels coast around £170 a night per person, compared with £14 per night on average in an HMO. Since closing the hotels is a priority for the government due to being flashpoints for local discontent, the number of dispersals to houses has quietly risen annually – there are now 68,719 in tens of thousands of houses across the country. But with the number of irregular arrivals, 43,806 in the year ending March 2026, this number is likely to swell. A typical Serco HMO contract offers a seven-year lease with a one-year break clause, and includes ‘monthly property inspections, council tax and utilities paid’, ‘no call-out payments to contractors’, no management, legal restriction, or set-up fees, and ‘day-to-day maintenance and repairs undertaken at no cost to the landlord’. The landlord is responsible for structural repairs and fundamentals such as pipework. No wonder one landlord with HMOs in Norfolk has described Serco as “*the fairy godmother*.”<sup>5</sup>

In his book *Failed State: Why Britain Doesn’t Work and How We Can Fix It*, Sam Freedman explains how decades of over-centralisation and reckless outsourcing have hollowed out the state leaving public services expensive, inefficient, and unaccountable. With centralisation, Freedman explains, successive governments have stripped local councils of powers and funding, making communities dependent on Whitehall. In what he describes as the ‘Outsourcing Trap’, Freedman describes how from the 1980s, core municipal services once provided in-house were forced into the market. Refuse collection, cleaning and – most disastrously – children’s homes were handed to private contractors. Today, three quarters of residential care homes are run by private equity firms, charging councils up to £6,000 per child per week while making double digit profits. Vulnerable children are often displaced hundreds of miles from family networks, with damaging consequences.<sup>6</sup> However, Serco, in particular, is so integral to the delivery of so many services that, in the words of Margeret Hodge, Labour grandee and former Chair of the Public Accounts Committee who led an investigation into it, “*it is too big to fail*”. This frank admission speaks volumes about the democratic deficit concerning the oversight of these bodies. It must be addressed by the administration of PM Andy Burnham, otherwise British democracy faces peril.

To return to Makerfield one last time, Chakelian describes the experiences of those at the sharp end of Serco services – asylum seekers, immigration detainees, people wearing GPS ankle tags when on immigration bail. Hana, an Albanian airport worker who was tricked by a gang into slave labour on a cannabis farm in England, says she was made by Serco to feel “*like I was the criminal*” when detained. Mariam, now a trafficking campaigner, said her own experience of being detained as a trafficking victim (while her victors walked free) has given her “*lasting trauma*” – feeling haunted when she hears keys jangle, and when she sees a Serco escort van in public.<sup>7</sup> Not stories that the ‘Stop the Boats’ brigade want to hear.

**BG**

<sup>3</sup> pp 21-22

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p 25

<sup>5</sup> p 22

<sup>6</sup> Steve Conley *How Britain Outsourced Its Way Into Failure* Academy of Life Planning, 19 August 2025

<sup>7</sup> pp 25-26



We are the proud hosts of a new **Book Nook**!



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As the pictures testify, we were delighted in July to unveil this new facility for client families: a delightful space for children to relax, feel at home and **enjoy over 100 books** provided to us by the publisher **Hachette**.

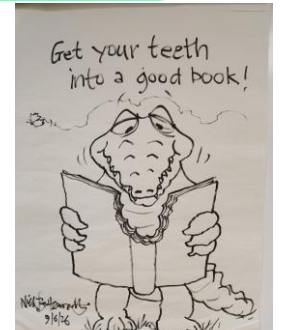
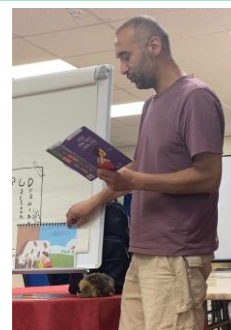
This is an initiative from Hachette and **The Reading Agency**, who together are rolling out Book Nooks as part of the 'Raising Readers' strategy (more below). The aim is to offer access to books to all children, particularly those who may not otherwise see many books, and to encourage children to read for pleasure, as well as to encourage parents to read with their children.

At the event, 4 charming representatives from **Little, Brown** publishers visited RAMA to set up our Book Nook and talk about the initiative. The brand-new books span a wide age-range and include firm favourites as well as newer publications. With the accompanying rug and cushions, they make a truly colourful and welcoming sight in RAMA's large meeting room. We invited colleagues from Colchester Library to share the event, along with RAMA staff. Also in attendance, the celebrities: children's author and illustrator, and RAMA patron, **Nick Butterworth** (who coincidentally had some of his early works published by Hachette), and our good friend **Abdullah Aktas**, a popular children's author in his home country, Turkey. Both authors read aloud to the assembled company, with all agreeing you're never too old to listen to a good story. And Nick left behind a signature improvised drawing, now in pride of place above the bookshelf.

RAMA will ensure the Book Nook is kept up to date with new books and will maintain a long-lasting connection with publishers to support the ongoing success of the reading space. We also hope to extend our existing links with Colchester library service to complement what we can offer. We're really looking forward to seeing our Raising Readers Book Nook being used and enjoyed by as many children as possible in our community.

Our HUGE thanks to Hachette for their generosity.

EL



### Information about Hachette **Book Nooks**

On **Raising Readers Day** in July, over 1,600 Hachette employees stepped away from their desks to lead a global day of *Raising Readers* social impact and fundraising projects. Timed to support the UK's National Year of Reading and created out of a desire to reverse the decline in children's reading for pleasure, Raising Readers Day brought together publishers, charities and communities behind a shared goal: encouraging more children to discover the joy of reading and helping families to make reading together part of everyday life.

Hachette partnered with **The Reading Agency** to create 200 Raising Readers Book Nook 'packages' (with shelving supplied by Peters; a curated library of 100 new titles donated by Hachette Children's Books; time from Hachette staff to support with set-up; and free materials for children and parents). Book Nooks have been created in community spaces that currently lack access to books, including women's shelters, refugee centres, mosques, doctors' surgeries, children's hospital wards, and churches.

Data from the National Literacy Trust highlights a stark reality: only 36% of 8–18-year-olds read for pleasure, with the percentage lower for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Because reading for fun is the *single biggest predictor* of a child's future life chances, outranking family income or parental education, Hachette is doing all it can to reverse this trend and encourage parents and carers to **read with their child for 10 minutes a day**.

More information can be found here [www.raisingreaders.co.uk](http://www.raisingreaders.co.uk).

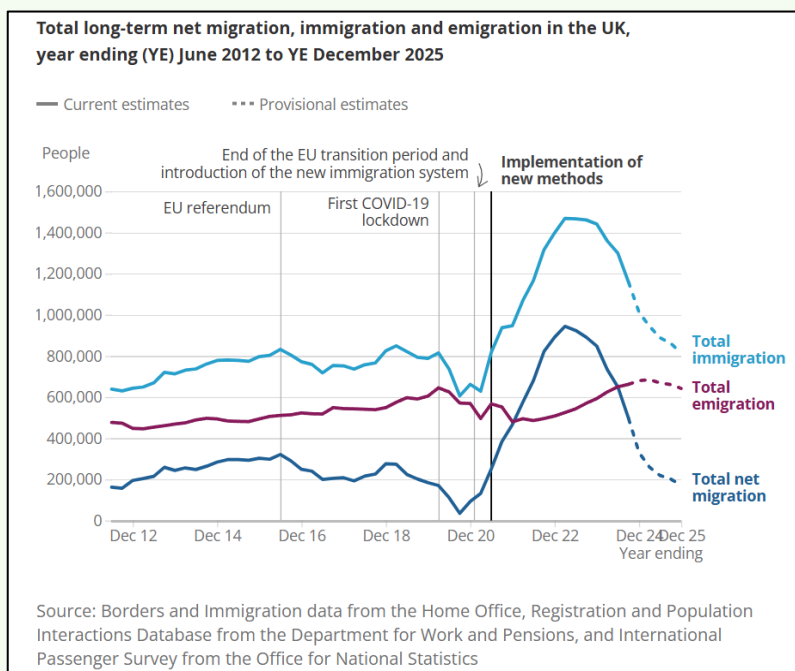
Maura Wilding, *Group Communications Director, Hachette*

## Migration and public perception

Given the fact that immigration remains at the top of the political and media agenda, we'd be forgiven for believing that nothing has changed in terms of numbers. In fact, recent data from the ONS indicate that – to December 2025 – **net migration** has *halved* in the past year to 171,000 and is projected to decline still further in the coming year.

Long-term *immigration* for the year ending December 2025 was 813,000, down 20% from the year before. Most people immigrating into the UK in were **non-EU nationals** (627,000) coming to study (47%), work (23%), and claim asylum (14%). Total immigration figures also include 76,000 **EU nationals**, and 110,000 **British nationals** – also both reduced from the year before. When the figures for *emigration* are compared, as shown on the right, the picture shows reasonable balance.

In other stats, there were 12% fewer asylum claims in the year to March 2026, and numbers housed in hotels – the trigger for numerous riots in recent times – have fallen by 2/3 since 2023.



The government will claim that the reduction in immigration is a result of the tough stance, initially introduced by the Conservative government in 2024 and continued under Labour. Let's not forget that the significant increase in overall immigration post-Brexit was also a result of government policy: the relaxing of routes for health and social care workers from outside the EU to fill gaps in our workforce (resulting in the so-called 'Boris wave' visible in the table above). In more recent 'correctives', overseas care workers – and students – can no longer bring family members with them. Those coming on a skilled worker visa must now be earning a salary of £38,700 (up from £26,200), with another increase – to £41,700 – already announced. Furthermore, migrants will be expected to speak English to CEFR B2 or A-level standard.

Given all this, it is striking that public opinion, and the rhetoric of the government, are not keeping pace with reality. According to British Future's annual Immigration Attitudes Tracker, only **16%** of people overall think migration fell in the past year; **49%** believe it increased, and **51%** expect it to rise again next year, with only one in six thinking it will fall. These figures differ according to political leanings: 67% of people with negative views on immigration believe it increased last year, while only 37% of those with more positive views felt the same. Government policies – focused as they are on stricter control – and an agitated media have tended not to present the current reality, exacerbating the public's perception that nothing has changed.

There is also a misconception around the proportion of immigrants who claim asylum. According to public opinion, 33% of immigration is people claiming asylum; the real figure is only **9%**. A small cohort believes that asylum makes up *half or more* of all UK immigration. Conversely, the public puts the figure of those arriving for study at 24%, while the real figure is **52%**. Immigration for work is estimated at 23%, while the real figure is **31%**.

As Sunder Katwala, Director of British Future, points out, "Currently there is very little talk about how much immigration has decreased. We still need to manage the pressures that immigration can bring, such as on housing and public services. But politics also needs to consider what lower immigration means for employers, university funding and the fiscal impacts on the public purse."

British Future predicts that immigration could reduce to zero by 2028 and that the knock-on effects on the economy, education and the health and social care sector are not being adequately borne in mind. We all need the dialogue around immigration to be far less emotionally charged and far more nuanced, pragmatic and rational. Only then will there be any hope for the emergence of a coherent approach that keeps the majority of the public onside.

EL