

Number: WG34432



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government
Consultation Document

Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan

Date of issue: 22 March 2018

Action required: Responses by 25 June 2018

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Overview	The purpose of this consultation is to seek views on proposals which are intended to develop and improve access to help, advice and services for the refugees and asylum seekers across Wales. ‘Nation of Sanctuary’ aims to tackle inequalities and poverty experienced by these communities, promoting equality of opportunity and supporting them to more easily and readily access resources and mainstream services.
How to respond	This is a written, electronic consultation. Questions are summarised in a Consultation response form at Annex A. Please use this questionnaire or the online form to provide your feedback. Responses can be emailed or posted using the contact details provided.
Further information and related documents	<p>Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.</p> <p>The draft document can be accessed on the Welsh Government website at:</p> <p>https://beta.gov.wales/nation-sanctuary-refugee-and-asylum-seeker-plan</p>
Contact details	<p>For further information:</p> <p>Equality Team Equality and Prosperity Division Welsh Government Merthyr Tydfil Office Rhydycar Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1UZ</p> <p>E-mail: Refugees@gov.wales</p>
Data protection	<p>The Welsh Government will be data controller for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation. Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations.</p> <p>In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and</p>

address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

Names or addresses we redact might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

Your data will be kept for no more than three years
Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to access the personal data the Welsh Government holds on you;
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113
Website: www.ico.gov.uk

For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer:
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF10 3NQ

Email Address:

Data.ProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

Ministerial Foreword



Refugees and asylum seekers arrive in Wales following traumatic experiences in their countries of origin and on their journeys to the UK. We want to ensure that these individuals are supported to rebuild their lives and make a full contribution to Welsh society.

We believe that the skills, experience and resilience of refugees and asylum seekers are useful to Wales and their inclusion will enhance our communities. Many communities across Wales have seen this for themselves, particularly since the inception of the Syrian Resettlement Programme and the related Community Sponsorship Programme.

I am proud of the response that Welsh communities and public authorities have made since our last Refugee and Asylum Seeker plan was published in 2016. I want to ensure we maintain this momentum and ensure support is available to asylum seekers, as well as those arriving under resettlement schemes.

The UK Government is responsible for asylum policy, which includes asylum application decision making, the provision of support and accommodation for asylum seekers, and the operation of refugee resettlement schemes. Therefore, many of the challenges experienced by these communities cannot be fully resolved without policy changes by the UK Government.

In particular, the Welsh Government believes that improvements need to be made to the standard of accommodation for asylum seekers, the financial support asylum seekers receive and the funding support provided to Welsh public services to support integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Wales, regardless of their route to the UK. Although we will continue to work with the UK Government on these matters as far as possible, we have to accept that we cannot control their decisions. The proposed actions in this plan cannot contravene UK Government legislative rules relating to refugees and asylum seekers.

However, this consultation focuses on proposals within the devolved areas which the Welsh Government can influence. The draft 'Nation of Sanctuary' plan outlines the breadth of work which the Welsh Government is undertaking to ensure inequalities experienced by these communities are reduced, access to opportunities increased, and relations between these communities and wider society improved.

Whilst the draft plan includes many cross-Government actions, we will particularly prioritise key issues which have been highlighted by refugees and asylum seekers during preparatory work for this consultation and in response to the National Assembly's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee Inquiry in 2017. These include ensuring:

- Refugees and asylum seekers can access health services (including mental health) which they require throughout the 'asylum journey'. This includes health assessments on arrival and during the dispersal and post-trauma phases;
- Refugees and asylum seekers are provided with the information and advice they need to begin to integrate into Welsh society from day one;
- Asylum seekers are not prevented from accessing Welsh Government schemes which would support their integration;
- New refugees are less likely to fall into destitution;
- All refugees and asylum seekers (particularly unaccompanied asylum seeking children) are properly safeguarded and can access advocacy support.

This draft plan will be built upon during the consultation period to ensure it supports us to work collaboratively with other public authorities, communities and refugees and asylum seekers themselves to make Wales a genuine Nation of Sanctuary.

I am grateful to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee for their recommendations, the 120 refugees and asylum seekers who volunteered their time to Welsh Government officials, the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership and Welsh Local Government Association, the Welsh Refugee Coalition and other stakeholders who have all helped to shape this draft plan.

Julie James
Leader of the House and Chief Whip

INTRODUCTION

Equality and Human Rights are central to the work of the Welsh Government and our vision for Wales. We believe in fair treatment of every person, especially those who are most marginalised by social systems that prevent people from meeting their basic needs. We work to ensure a fairer future and to achieve equitable access to services and human needs and support opportunities to thrive.

Human rights are embedded in all of the actions of the Welsh Government. We work closely with the UK Government and other devolved administrations to ensure we fulfil our international obligations and comply with the seven United Nations Conventions signed and ratified by the UK.

Responsibility for asylum and immigration rests with the UK Government rather than the Welsh Government. This means that some of the key levers to prevent harmful outcomes, such as timely and good asylum case decision-making, the quality of asylum accommodation and provision of legal aid, are out of our control. However, the successful integration of refugees and asylum seekers will require concerted effort on the part of the Welsh Government, Welsh public services and Welsh communities.

In this plan we frequently refer to ‘asylum seekers’ and ‘refugees’. These terms have precise meaning and relate to the immigration status of individuals. An asylum seeker is a person fleeing persecution in his or her homeland, has arrived in another country, made themselves known to the authorities and has exercised their legal right to apply for asylum. These individuals will be awaiting the outcome of their asylum claim.

Under the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is a person who *“owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”*

The UK Government recognises an asylum seeker as a refugee when they satisfy the above definition. Within this plan, the term ‘refugee’ also refers to those who have not been recognised as refugees, but have been granted indefinite leave to remain, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave following their asylum claim.

Each of the actions in the Welsh Government’s draft *Nation of Sanctuary* plan aligns to the themes and priorities of Prosperity for All: the National Strategy for Wales and, in turn the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The actions are also closely linked to our Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20.

The five ways of working set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations Act underpin our approach to tackling inequality and ensuring a fairer Wales. We are working alongside, and listening to the voices of, those who have the lived experience of inequality and disadvantage and doing

things with them rather than to them and for them. That includes involving the people who will be affected by our plans in every stage of their development. This is an important example of how we are implementing the Act.

This draft plan has been developed through the close **involvement** of refugees and asylum seekers themselves, organisations which support them, and a range of key public bodies whose work directly impacts on our aim for individuals to rebuild their lives and reach their full potential in Wales.

The Welsh Government firmly believes that the **integration** of refugees and asylum seekers should begin on day one of their arrival. This approach is key to ensuring we support the best possible outcomes for individuals and communities.

The actions in this draft plan are intended to provide holistic support to individuals and communities in Wales. For example, supporting refugee volunteering schemes would contribute to Welsh society, whilst also supporting language acquisition, mental health and the employability of individuals. As such, actions in this plan will be mutually reinforcing.

In developing these actions we have sought to **prevent** the most harmful problems experienced by refugees and asylum seekers in Wales. These include homelessness, mental health conditions, poor accommodation and the risk of destitution. We have already made some encouraging progress in some of these areas but there is much work still to be done to improve outcomes.

This draft plan seeks to set Welsh Government policy direction relating to these communities until the end of this Assembly term. Therefore, it forms an important part of a **long-term** aim for Wales to be a true *Nation of Sanctuary* for refugees and asylum seekers.

This aim is reflected in the new name for this plan and we encourage other organisations (Public or Private) to also consider what actions they can take and work **collaboratively** with the Welsh Government to support the concept of Wales as a *Nation of Sanctuary*.

Refugees and asylum seekers often experience similar issues upon arrival in Wales but they are drawn from many different cultures and countries of origin. The Welsh Government promotes a **person-centred approach** which ensures that individuals are supported to achieve integration, regardless of their background or circumstances. This should prevent 'one-size-fits-all' approaches which can leave some communities behind.

We also encourage Welsh communities and organisations to recognise the assets which refugees and asylum seekers already possess, as they will often be the experts by experience or offer skills which our society needs. For example, the Welsh Government-funded Wales Asylum Seeking and Refugee Doctors (WARD) Group, delivered by the Wales Deanery and Displaced People in Action, has been supporting refugee doctors to have their existing medical qualifications recognised and find employment in the NHS for 15 years. This scheme is estimated to have

saved taxpayers at least £25m over that time, empowered refugees to utilise their skills to 'give back' to Wales and saved countless lives in the process.

Welsh communities already provide an inspiring welcome to many refugees and asylum seekers, exemplified by the 'Refugees Welcome' campaign and the growth of Community Sponsorship organisations. The frequent thanks and praise given by newly-resettled refugees themselves are testament to the warmth of our communities. We want to build on this goodwill through more opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to meet with existing Welsh residents and promote good relations and community cohesion.

Four areas in Wales – Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Wrexham – have supported asylum seekers and refugees for many years, but Welsh communities now have new opportunities to engage with these individuals, due to the encouraging efforts of Welsh local authorities who have all participated in the Syrian Resettlement Programme. This commitment shows the type of country we wish to be. We expect Wales to continue to play its part in refugee resettlement programmes over the coming years.

We know refugees and asylum seekers face considerable challenges upon their arrival in the UK but much of the evidence which would help us to ensure we best target support is not yet collected. As a result, creating measurable actions is very difficult. Therefore, we will establish an evidence group to improve data collection and sharing with those who are best placed to support these individuals.

This draft plan represents an important step towards making Wales a Nation of Sanctuary but we will need the support and engagement of key stakeholders, such as the UK Government, Welsh local authorities, the Welsh Refugee Coalition, Welsh communities and people seeking sanctuary to ensure that this plan leads to positive change. We will continue to work with these partners to make this a reality.

Prosperous and Secure

Actions	Organisation	Link to Objectives
<p>Ensure refugees are supported to transition from asylum accommodation to sustainable accommodation.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fund support for new refugees to transition to new accommodation and access services during the 'Move On' period. (The 'Refugee Well Housing' project delivered by the Welsh Refugee Council is currently funded to deliver this support); - Seek to influence the UK Government's Asylum Accommodation and Support Services Contract (AASC) and Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) processes to ensure the new contracts for asylum accommodation (beyond 2019) support new refugees in the 'Move On' period; - Ensure the guidance underpinning local Homelessness Prevention Strategies takes account of the vulnerability of new refugees to homelessness; - Explore opportunities to reduce refugee homelessness by working with Registered Social Landlords, local authorities, credit unions and others to identify clearer pathways into accommodation during the 'Move On' period; - Ensure Rent Smart Wales landlords' training includes an explanation of the Right to Rent checks and how to easily check the status of refugees to prevent discrimination (once the rollout date is known); - Work with local authorities and others to ensure the Supporting People programme supports those refugees who are eligible to maintain their accommodation; - Implement the Agents Fees Bill to ban letting agent fees, which should have a positive impact on new refugees. 	<p>Welsh Government</p> <p>–</p> <p>Housing Division</p> <p>Equality and Prosperity Division</p>	<p>Prosperity for All objective ('PFA Obj.') 5; 10</p> <p>Strategic Equality Plan objective ('SEP obj.') 1; 7</p> <p>Prosperity for All – Priority Area – Housing</p>
<p>Promote good quality asylum accommodation provided by the UK Government.</p> <p>Welsh Government will request that the UK Government includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a regular property inspection regime which includes visual evidence of accommodation 	<p>Welsh Government</p> <p>–</p> <p>Equality and Prosperity</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 6</p> <p>SEP Obj. 1</p> <p>Prosperity for All – Priority</p>

<p>conditions, including additional Home Office inspections;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an independent complaints process for those living in asylum accommodation, including making it clear that asylum claims will not be affected by making complaints; - a central database of asylum accommodation properties shared with local authorities with the right to inspect properties with minimal notice; - Appropriate accommodation to support more vulnerable occupiers, such as unaccompanied children, pregnant women, families, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) individuals, disabled people and those fleeing domestic abuse; - A requirement for all landlords of properties used for asylum accommodation to be fit-and-proper persons; - Publication of service standards and response times online to aid transparency and accountability; - All contractors and housing managers should undertake mandatory equality, fire safety, safeguarding and regulatory compliance training; - A commitment to work collaboratively with the Welsh Government and other Welsh stakeholders during the mobilisation period and beyond to ensure positive outcomes for people seeking sanctuary. 	<p>Division</p>	<p>Area – Housing</p>
<p>Support asylum seeker tenants to advocate for improvements to their accommodation.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fund advocacy forums in the four current dispersal areas in Wales (Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Wrexham) through the Welsh Government-funded Asylum Rights Programme until 2020 to ensure asylum seekers can discuss issues with their accommodation and other topics chosen by participants; - Work with the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership to ensure the ‘NGO / COMPASS’ meetings between the asylum accommodation provider, the third sector and asylum seekers, continues under the new AIRE and AASC contracts. 	<p>Welsh Government – Equality and Prosperity Division</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 6 SEP Obj. 2 Prosperity for All – Priority Area – Housing</p>
<p>Support the employability of refugees.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p>	<p>Welsh Government – Employability</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 1;9 SEP Obj. 1; 3</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure the principles of equality and fairness are central to the development of the new 'Welsh Government Employability Delivery Plan,' which will include consideration of the needs of refugees into work and sustain jobs; - Ensure Welsh Government funded employment schemes promote their services directly to refugees during 2018 and amend data capture processes to identify positive examples of how the programmes have been able to support those eligible from within this community on a regular basis; - Research on the employability of refugees, commissioned by the Welsh Government, commenced in November 2017, the research will look at the employment aspirations of refugees and the support available to them in rural areas. A report and recommendations is due by the end of 2018. - Ensure the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales is promoted to refugees and asylum seekers and service providers during 2018 to assist with the recognition of qualifications; - Fund the Wales Asylum Seeking and Refugee Doctors (WARD) Group through the Wales Deanery to ensure that refugee doctors are supported to meet professional qualifications to support the NHS; - Work with Department for Work and Pensions and other stakeholders to improve understanding of refugees' skills and improve access to work; - Work with the Welsh Refugee Coalition and employers to explore opportunities to promote employment opportunities. 	<p>and EU Funding Division</p> <p>Welsh Government WEFO</p>	<p>Prosperity for All – Priority Area – Skills & Employability</p>
<p>Work with Business Wales to support refugees to establish their own businesses.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide face-to-face workshops and the Business Wales helpline to ensure refugees have access to business advice, information and links to investment opportunities, including through the provision of translation services (if required) through the Participation Fund; - Consider the specific needs of refugees in the development of the new Community Based Entrepreneurship Scheme; - Encourage existing refugee entrepreneurs to act as mentors for new-start refugee businesses; - Work with the Welsh Refugee Coalition to ensure Business Wales services are 		<p>PFA Obj. 1</p> <p>SEP Obj. 3; 7</p>

<p>promoted effectively to refugees;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure refugee women, in particular, are encouraged to consider entrepreneurship opportunities. 		
<p>Promote financial inclusion for refugees and asylum seekers to avoid destitution, reduce or mitigate the impacts of poverty and improve living conditions for those on low incomes.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor the effect of recent welfare reforms, including the benefit cap and expansion of the Universal Credit ‘full’ service during 2018 to identify barriers for refugees; - Promote new process to enable new refugees to access the Discretionary Assistance Fund prior to receiving National Insurance numbers during 2018 ; - Raise awareness of the Financial Inclusion Strategy and Delivery Plan to ensure refugees are able to benefit from Credit Unions, the Discretionary Assistance Fund, debt advice and money guidance and other services during 2018; - Work with the Welsh Refugee Coalition to map the availability of support for destitute refugees and asylum seekers and explore options to improve support, including through consideration of a potential Crisis Fund and better sector collaboration during 2018. 	<p>Welsh Government - Equality & Prosperity Division</p> <p>Communities Division</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 5; 10</p> <p>SEP Obj. 2; 7</p>
<p>Promote the Welsh Government as a place for refugees (subject to nationality rules) to work. The Welsh Government’s Strategic Equality Plan objective for 2016-20 sets the organisation the aim of being an exemplar of diversity and inclusion by 2020.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve the current placement and outreach programme to broaden the appeal of the Welsh Government as an employer, demonstrating fairness, openness and transparency to allow as many people as possible the chance to apply; - ensure the outreach programme includes engagement with all protected characteristics; this includes refugee support organisations to make sure individuals within refugee communities (who are eligible as per the Civil Service Nationality rules) 	<p>Welsh Government - HR Expert Services Division</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 8</p> <p>SEP Obj. 3; 8</p>

<p>have the opportunity to apply for work experience or for a placement/internship, giving the opportunity to see what working in the organisation might be like.</p>		
<p>Support survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a scoping exercise by during 2018 to ascertain the key difficulties faced by asylum seekers and refugees who have experienced VAWDASV and the actions which the Welsh Government could take to ensure such individuals receive appropriate support; - Develop a sustainable model for the provision of funding to specialist VAWDASV services working with asylum seekers and refugees to ensure reliable support; - Ensure the needs of asylum seekers and refugees are considered within the national VAWDASV communications framework; - Directly engage with BME survivors of VAWDASV, including asylum seekers and refugees, via the development of National Survivor Engagement Mechanisms in 2018/19; - Further consideration will be given to whether the VAWDASV National Training Framework should be amended to include the circumstances of refugees and asylum seekers; - Roll out VAWDASV 'Ask and Act' training to front-line professionals. This training includes information on difficulties faced by BME communities, including refugees and asylum seekers; - Provide advice and support through the 24 hour, 365 days a year Live Fear Free Helpline, which incorporates 'Language Line' support. 		<p>PFA Obj. 5; 10</p> <p>SEP Obj. 4</p>
<p>Work towards preventing refugees or asylum seekers becoming human trafficking or modern slavery victims</p> <p>The Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to deliver training across Wales with the aim of improving awareness of 	<p>Welsh Government Community Safety Division</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 5; 10</p> <p>SEP Obj. 4</p>

<p>modern slavery, including those working with asylum seekers and refugees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Target and deliver specific training to Welsh First Responder organisations.- Work with businesses across Wales to highlight the impact of slavery in the employment supply chain.		
--	--	--

Healthy and Active

Actions	Organisation	Link to Objectives
<p>Ensure the health needs of refugees and asylum seekers are assessed and the results are fed into service planning.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with health boards to ensure services are able to meet the healthcare needs of new arrivals and throughout the asylum process in Wales; - Monitor Local Health Board completion assessments of refugee and asylum seeker health and proposed service changes. 	<p>Welsh Government – Mental Health & Vulnerable Groups Division</p> <p>Local Health Boards and Trusts</p>	<p>Prosperity for All objective (PFA Obj.) 5; 6</p> <p>Strategic Equality Plan objective (SEP obj.) 1</p> <p>Prosperity for All – Priority Area – Housing</p>
<p>Ensure barriers to healthcare for refugees and asylum seekers are reduced.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain free healthcare for refugees and asylum seekers, including those who have No Recourse to Public Funds; - Publish Healthcare practitioners policy guidance to support practitioners to deliver more accessible services during 2018; - Ensure health boards make available awareness training for staff and monitor uptake; - Work with the UK Government to ensure asylum seekers in Initial Accommodation are encouraged to attend health screenings and receive support with registering for primary healthcare services when they are dispersed to other accommodation. 	<p>Welsh Government – Mental Health & Vulnerable Groups Division</p> <p>Equality & Prosperity Division</p> <p>Local Health Boards and Trusts</p> <p>NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 4; 5</p> <p>SEP Obj. 1; 6</p>
<p>Establish mechanisms to promote sharing of good practice for the improved health outcomes of refugee and asylum seeker communities.</p>	<p>Welsh Government -</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 4; 5</p>

<p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with Health Boards and Public Health Wales to ensure access to a range of accessible health promotion materials by 2019. - Work with Health Boards to ensure the needs of refugees and asylum seekers are kept under review and services meet needs effectively by reviewing Welsh Government Healthcare policy guidance by December 2020. 	<p>Mental Health & Vulnerable Groups Division</p>	<p>SEP Obj. 1</p>
<p>Create the conditions for every child from these backgrounds to have a healthy start in life.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with Health Boards to ensure refugees and asylum seekers can access vaccinations and other aspects of the Health Child Wales Programme (HCWP) by October 2018; - Consider the circumstances of refugee and asylum seeker children in relation to work looking at Adverse Childhood Experiences; - Work with health boards and other partners to ensure Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are able to meet the needs of refugee and asylum seeker young people. 	<p>Welsh Government – Major Health Conditions Division</p> <p>Mental Health & Vulnerable Groups Division</p> <p>Equality & Prosperity Division</p> <p>Local Health Boards and Trusts</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 4; 5; 7</p>
<p>Reduce the prevalence of mental health conditions experienced by refugees and asylum seekers and support more effective diagnosis and treatment.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with the Welsh Refugee Coalition and other partners to develop volunteer and mentoring schemes which combat isolation and depression for those living in dispersed accommodation; 	<p>Welsh Government - Mental Health & Vulnerable Groups Division.</p> <p>Equality & Prosperity</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 4; 5</p> <p>Prosperity for All – Priority Area – Mental Health</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with health boards and other partners to ensure mental health services are able to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in a timely and effective manner by reviewing the Mental Health Care Pathway and associated guidance by December 2020. 	Division	
<p>Support refugee and asylum seeker participation in sport and physical activity</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with Sports Wales Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inclusion project to ensure refugee and asylum seeker participation. 		PFA Obj. 5

Ambitious and Learning

Actions	Organisation	Link to objectives
<p>Ensure access to independent counselling services for refugee and asylum seeking children.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update the Counselling Toolkit by Spring 2019, to highlight that asylum seeking and refugee children/young people are more likely to have been through particularly traumatic experiences ;; - Establish a working group to improve counselling data recording, including consideration of children from refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds. 	<p>Welsh Government - Support for Learners Division</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 5; 7</p> <p>SEP Obj. 4</p>
<p>Support and challenge Local Authorities and regional education consortia on actions they are taking directly, and through support to schools, to improve educational outcomes for all learners.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use our existing mechanisms, including our review and challenge programme and our engagement with the Association of Directions of Education in Wales (ADEW) and regional education consortia; - Work with ADEW to ensure 'Good Practice' sharing is included as a standing agenda item of discussion from 2018 at the Minority Ethnic Achievement Local Authority Forum. 	<p>Welsh Government - Education Business Planning & Governance</p> <p>ADEW</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 7; 9</p> <p>SEP Obj. 3</p>
<p>Explore ways to raise take-up rates of the Foundation Phase early education entitlement by refugee and asylum seeking families.</p>	<p>Welsh Government -</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 7</p>

<p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage increased take-up rates of the Foundation Phase early education entitlement by asylum seeker and refugee families. - Explore ways of promoting the Childcare Offer amongst eligible refugee working families. 	<p>Curriculum, Assessment and Pedagogy</p> <p>Local authorities and their regional consortia</p>	<p>SEP Obj. 7</p>
<p>Support engagement by refugee and asylum seeker families in Flying Start programmes to give children the best start in life.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with organisations who are engaged with these families to ensure support can be provided within eligible Flying Start areas and in ways which are culturally appropriate; - Ensure local authorities are aware that Flying Start Outreach funding can be used to target the children of specific communities of interest found in their local authority, even if this is outside the Flying Start areas. 	<p>Welsh Government - Curriculum Implementation</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 7</p> <p>SEP Obj. 7</p>
<p>Promote Essential Skills for refugees and asylum seekers to improve employability prospects, social cohesion and school attainment levels for children (Essential Skills, English for Speakers of Other Languages and Digital Literacy remain the key priorities for adult learning provision in Wales).</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) policy for Wales during 2018; - Work with Cardiff and the Vale College and Adult Learning Wales to develop the Regional ESOL Assessment Central Hub (REACH) to provide an integrated triage process for learners in need of ESOL classes; - Analyse the effectiveness of the REACH model with a view to considering rollout to 	<p>Welsh Government - FE & Apprenticeships Division</p> <p>Communities Division</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 7; 9; 10</p> <p>SEP Obj. 3</p>

<p>other dispersal areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adult Learning Wales, are working collaboratively with Cardiff and Vale College, and a number of smaller ESOL providers and charitable groups such as the Welsh Refugee Council and All Communities Engaged in Butetown, to develop flexible ESOL ('roll on, roll off') provision as part of the REACH project to significantly reduce the current demand for places on ESOL courses. - Work with Digital Communities Wales during 2018 to provide support to organisations which can help digitally excluded people improve their lives by developing their basic digital skills. 		
<p>Ensure refugees and asylum seekers are made aware of and are able to access support services provided through the Families First programme.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure local authorities are implementing the revised Families First Programme Guidance which requires them to consider the needs of refugee and asylum seeker families as they plan and deliver services; - Guidance also requires local authorities to make links with organisations working with refugee and asylum seeker families to ensure they are aware of the programme and the support it can provide. 	<p>Welsh Government - Children and Families Division</p> <p>Local authorities</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 5; 7</p> <p>SEP Obj. 7</p>
<p>Promote awareness of apprenticeship opportunities with refugees to enable increased employment and learning opportunities.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with the equality champion, hosted by the National Training Federation for Wales, to improve access to apprenticeships; - Develop greater understanding across the Work Based Learning provider network of the barriers that face refugees through the NTFW Equality Champion's Equality and Diversity Group meetings and create opportunities for partnership working; - Raise awareness of the Apprenticeship programme within refugee groups by 	<p>Welsh Government - Further Education and Apprenticeships Division</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 1; 9</p> <p>SEP Obj. 3</p>

engaging with the Welsh Refugee Coalition.		
<p>Tackle bullying in schools against refugee and asylum seeker children</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publish revised anti-bullying guidance <i>Respecting Others</i> in 2018, which supports the needs of refugees and asylum seekers; - Work with education practitioners, relevant authorities, children and young people to ensure the revised guidance has the maximum impact possible. 	Welsh Government Support for Learners	PFA Obj. 5 SEP Obj. 4
<p>Increase opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to access further and higher education</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure Further Education and Higher Education institutions provide information, advice and guidance to support the application process and financial support available; - Explore possible changes to the Education Maintenance Allowance and Financial Contingency Fund to enable asylum seekers to be eligible from the September 2019 term; - Ensure refugees are eligible for student support funding through Student Finance Wales; - Work with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), Universities and their partners to audit and publish practice on supporting refugees and asylum seekers; - Work with Higher Education 'Widening Access' teams to identify opportunities to engage with refugees and asylum seekers and reduce barriers to education. 		PFA Obj. 7; 8; 9 SEP Obj. 1; 3
<p>Support unaccompanied refugee and asylum seeking children to ensure they have access to the advice and advocacy they need.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p>	HSS Social Services & Integration Directorate	PFA Obj. 5; 7; 10 SEP Obj. 1; 2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore options to develop a ‘Guardianship’ service to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children in their navigation through the asylum system, building upon existing advocacy support under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Independent Child Trafficking Advocacy service; - Fund Tros Gynnal Plant, through the Asylum Rights Programme, to provide advocacy support to asylum seeking children and young people; - Work with Third sector partners to gather the views of asylum seeking and refugee children, to help inform future working. 	<p>Equality & Prosperity Division</p>	
<p>Support local authorities to ensure unaccompanied refugee and asylum seeking children can be adequately looked after.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide funding to enable social workers to be appropriately trained on the age assessment process; - Review and republish the Age Assessment Toolkit to ensure it is fit-for-purpose; - Provide funding to train foster carers and social workers in a range of skills and knowledge to improve their capacity to deliver for refugee and asylum seeking children; - Provide funding to develop a suite of Wales-specific information resources for practitioners working with asylum seeking and refugee children and for the children themselves; - Work with the All Wales Heads of Children’s Services and the National Fostering Framework Strategic Steering Group to explore ways in which a pool of foster carers can be developed from refugee backgrounds; - Monitor and report on the risks of trafficking to looked after asylum seeking children; - Work with the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership to review and republish the All Wales Practice Guidance on Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. 	<p>Welsh Government – Enabling People Division</p> <p>National Fostering Framework Strategic Steering Group</p> <p>All Wales Heads of Children’s Services</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 5; 7</p> <p>SEP Obj. 1</p>

<p>Support local authorities to ensure their staff and partners are able to safeguard refugee and asylum seeking children and adults</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure refugees and asylum seekers are included as a standing item for the meetings of the Cross-Government Safeguarding Group; - Ensure that the current review and development of National Protection Procedures takes account of the specific needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children, including in respect of children going missing and child sexual exploitation; - Ensure that the updated National Protection Procedures are aware of and sensitive to the cultural differences of refugees and asylum seekers when dealing with child protection issues. 	<p>Social Services & Integration Division</p>	

United and Connected

Actions	Organisation	Link to objectives
<p>Provide cohesion support around the widening of dispersal areas and the resettlement of refugees.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to fund the work of the Community Cohesion Coordinators; - Support the effective implementation of refugee resettlement schemes in Wales; - Monitor community tension as new dispersal areas are proposed. 	<p>Welsh Government - Equality and Prosperity Division</p>	<p>Prosperity for All objective (PFA Obj.) 10</p> <p>Strategic Equality Plan objective (SEP obj.) 6</p>
<p>Refugees and asylum seekers will be supported to report Hate Crime</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fund the All-Wales Hate Crime Support Service and Asylum Rights Programme until March 2020 to raise awareness of hate crime amongst refugees and asylum seekers and promote increased reporting; - Encourage opportunities for Police Community Support Officers / Liaison Officers to engage with refugees and asylum seekers to counter negative perceptions of the police which may arise from treatment in their countries of origin and build positive relationships. 	<p>Welsh Government - Equality and Prosperity Division</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 5; 10</p> <p>SEP Obj. 4; 6</p>
<p>Foster good relations between refugees and asylum seekers and wider society.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to develop and implement a communications plan to promote equality and diversity during 2018-2020; - Work with the media to promote more balanced reporting of refugees and asylum seekers during 2018-2020; - Ensure the Asylum Rights Programme will train community members to become 	<p>Welsh Government - Equality and Prosperity Division</p> <p>Asylum Rights</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 10</p> <p>SEP Obj. 6</p>

<p>'Sanctuary Speakers' during 2018-2020;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure the Asylum Rights Programme will develop activities and communication between refugees and asylum seekers and the wider community between 2018-2020; - Promote participation of all sections of society in Refugee Week each year; - Support the development of Community Sponsorship, and other community-led empowerment initiatives, to welcome, support and integrate refugees; - Work with Arts Council Wales to promote projects which foster good relations between refugees and asylum seekers and wider society. 	<p>Programme partners</p> <p>Arts Council Wales</p>	
<p>Ensure the provision of high quality, accessible advice, information and advocacy services to enable refugees and asylum seekers to exercise their rights and make informed choices.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to fund the Asylum Rights Programme, via Welsh Government Equality and Inclusion programme funding, to provide advocacy and advice for refugees and asylum seekers. This includes general advice and advocacy, legal advice, support for survivors of violence or trafficking, and specialist support for children; - Promote awareness of rights for refugees and asylum seekers, including knowledge of Human Rights, Children's Rights and this delivery plan. Knowledge of rights will be communicated to refugees and asylum seekers via the 7 partner organisations of the Asylum Rights Programme between 2017 and 2020; - Review and update the 'Welcome to Wales' through a new online service to ensure it addresses the needs of all refugees and asylum seekers. We will also work with the UK Government to ensure the information is provided to people seeking sanctuary as soon as possible; - Ensure information provided to refugees and asylum seekers explains rights to make complaints and reassures individuals that complaints will not impact negatively on asylum claims or immigration status; - Seek to identify gaps in advice and advocacy support (including legal advice) across Wales and work with partners to identify solutions to these gaps. 	<p>Welsh Government – Equality & Prosperity Division</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 5; 10</p> <p>SEP Obj. 1; 2; 6</p>
<p>Support volunteering and mentoring initiatives, particularly for asylum seekers</p>		<p>PFA Obj. 1; 8; 10</p>

<p>without the right to work.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, County Voluntary Councils and other partners to identify and promote opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to access volunteering opportunities to combat isolation, support more effective integration and informal language acquisition; - Support opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to share their language and culture with their local communities; - Encourage the greater use of refugee mentors as the experts by experience to improve the integration of asylum seekers and new refugees. 		<p>SEP Obj. 1</p>
<p>Provide coordination and leadership in relation to the resettlement and integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Wales.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue the Taskforce and Operations Board with an expanded remit to consider the needs of all refugees and asylum seekers, as well as seeking to recruit community representation at these groups; - Liaise closely with the UK Government relating to reserved policy matters, such as asylum accommodation and dispersal or changes to immigration policy, to ensure the needs of Wales-based people seeking sanctuary and Welsh public authorities are properly understood; - Work towards the aim of Wales becoming a 'Nation of Sanctuary' in collaboration with the Welsh Refugee Coalition; - Work with the UK Government and other partners to identify means of improving data capture and analysis relating to the needs and outcomes of refugees and asylum seekers in Wales; - Continue to engage widely with all the key stakeholders involved in the resettlement and integration of refugees and asylum seekers, including commitment to consult people seeking sanctuary through 'Advocacy Forums', 'National Participation Group' and through bespoke consultations; 		<p>PFA Obj. 12</p> <p>SEP Obj. 1; 6</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to promote Welsh values of welcoming those fleeing violence, persecution or war; - Establish an evidence group with key stakeholders to develop better datasets to understand the outcomes experienced by refugees and asylum seekers and assess ongoing efforts to reduce inequalities. 		
<p>Promote understanding of Welsh culture and heritage to refugees and asylum seekers</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain free access to the National Museum / Amgueddfa Cymru and promote this to refugees and asylum seekers; - Explore opportunities with Cadw to promote Welsh heritage to refugees and asylum seekers; - Promote the involvement of refugees and asylum seekers in the Welsh Government's Fusion: Creating Opportunities through Culture programme until 2020: - Ensure refugees and asylum seekers are included in opportunities to learn Welsh language; - Include section on Welsh culture in updated 'Welcome to Wales' information pack. - Ensure that Arts Council Wales 'Arts Portfolio Wales' clients Include specific reference to refugees and asylum seekers in their equalities plans and then monitor the impact of this. 	<p>Welsh Government MALD</p> <p>Arts Council Wales</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 10; 12</p> <p>SEP Obj. 2</p>
<p>Endeavour to provide equal access to the internet for refugees and asylum seekers in Wales.</p> <p>Welsh Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with the UK Government to request internet services are available in Initial Accommodation and Dispersed Accommodation, where possible; - Ensure refugees and asylum seekers are made aware of the availability of internet 	<p>Welsh Government MALD /LAs</p> <p>Welsh Government Equality & Prosperity</p>	<p>PFA Obj. 11</p> <p>SEP Obj. 2</p>

services in public buildings, such as libraries; - Ensure new 'Welcome to Wales' service provides embedded translation to increase accessibility.	Division	
--	----------	--

**Consultation
Response Form**

Your name:

Organisation (if applicable):

email / telephone number:

Your address:

Q1	Do you agree with the actions within the Welsh Government's 'Nation of Sanctuary: Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan'? Please explain the reasons for your answer in the further comments box provided.	X
	Agree	
	Mostly agree	
	Disagree	
Further comments		

Q2	Do you agree with the priority actions identified in the Ministerial foreword? Please explain the reasons for your answer in the further comments box provided.	X
	Agree	
	Mostly agree	
	Disagree	
Further comments		

--

Q3	We want to ensure that other organisations and communities across Wales take action to support the concept of Wales as a 'Nation of Sanctuary'. How can we best work with others to achieve this? Please explain the reasons for your answer in the further comments box provided.	X
Seek actions from others for inclusion in this plan		
Encourage others to have their own 'Nation of Sanctuary' plan		
Disagree with this approach		
Further comments		

Q4	Our aim is that everyone will have the opportunity to reach their full potential and lead a healthy, prosperous and fulfilling life, enabling them to participate fully in their communities and contribute to the future economic success of Wales. How can we better achieve this for refugees and asylum seekers?

Q5	We want everyone to live in a home that meets their needs and supports a healthy, successful and prosperous life. How can we better achieve this for refugees and asylum seekers?

Q6	We want the Welsh social care sector to support people to lead independent lives. How can we better achieve this for refugees and asylum seekers?

Q7	We want to ensure that mental health problems are not a barrier to achieving potential in all areas of life. How can we better achieve this for refugees and asylum seekers?

Q8	Every person should be equipped with the skills they need to get a job and the opportunity to develop new skills through their working life. How can we better achieve this for refugees and asylum seekers? <i>(Note: Asylum seekers are usually prohibited from accessing employment as result of UK Government restrictions)</i>
-----------	--

Q9	<p>Can you identify any additional effects of this document (positive or adverse) on the Welsh Language, Equality or Children’s Rights? To assist with this you will need to refer to the Welsh Language, Equality and Child Rights impact assessments which accompany this questionnaire.</p> <p>Please explain your view and any suggestions for how the document could be revised so that positive effects could be increased and negative effects mitigated?</p>
Further comments	

Q10	<p>We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them</p>
Further comments	

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: