

# New Refugee and Asylum Seeker plan for Wales launched

The 'Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan' is the latest step towards the government's ambition of making Wales a nation of sanctuary for all who choose to make it their home.

It renews the Welsh Government's commitment of working with the UK Government, local authorities, the Welsh Refugee Coalition and people seeking sanctuary themselves to achieve equality of opportunities, including access to resources and mainstream services. It also recognises the valuable skills and experiences which refugees and asylum seekers can bring with them to enhance Welsh communities.

Welsh communities have already welcomed close to 1,000 Syrian refugees as part of the UK Government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, and the Community Support scheme, along with many more asylum seekers from across the world. The plan highlights a range of targeted and culturally-appropriate support, recognising the importance of designing and delivering services tailored for often unique needs. These include:

- Mental health services which address the difficult past experiences of those seeking sanctuary
- Interventions to mitigate the risk of refugees and asylum seekers becoming destitute
- Actions to prevent vulnerable individuals from being exploited
- Safeguarding, particularly for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

One key programme is the 'ReStart: Refugee Integration' project which aims to improve access to language tuition, employability support and local cultural knowledge to aid integration. Over 500 refugees will have their needs assessed and given targeted support to help them integrate into society.

A website will be launched to provide accessible, relevant information for refugees and asylum seekers. It will ensure those seeking sanctuary can develop their own knowledge of life in Wales and find advice around health, education and employment, as well as language and general information on the culture and history of Wales.

The Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt, launched the plan today in the Senedd.

She said:

"Refugees and asylum seekers often arrive in Wales following traumatic experiences in their home countries and on their journeys to the UK. Wales has a long, proud history of welcoming refugees and this Nation of Sanctuary plan will ensure this happens.

“We want to support refugees and asylum seekers to rebuild their lives and make a full contribution to Welsh society – to support the taking-up of opportunities and adding to the diversity of our communities.

“Over the next few years, we intend to build upon this Plan to ensure Wales is truly a nation of sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers, for the improvement of everybody in society. We want to move beyond just welcoming them; we want to harness their skills and enrich our country by doing so.”

The plan has been endorsed by the United Nation’s High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN’s Refugee Agency dedicated to protecting the rights of people seeking sanctuary.