





Refugee and Asylum Support and Housing


Tai Pawb's Refugee Housing and Support Feasibility Study 2019 highlighted that newly granted Refugees in Wales were being evicted into homelessness. An ongoing pandemic and two refugee crises later we want to highlight some of the good practice and the ongoing need to act in this space.





A WARM WELSH WELCOME


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[As a Nation of Sanctuary](#), Wales has responded positively to the need to welcome and support refugees fleeing conflict and persecution from many regions of the world. The hostile environment they face in the UK from Central Government is certainly not reflected in the response from Welsh Government, Local Authorities and Third Sector organisations seeking to meet the need of those they encounter.
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In addition to NASS (National Asylum Support service) accommodation for those seeking asylum, various schemes have opened up to respond to particular situations like the crises in Afghanistan and the Ukraine.
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Welcome Centres for those fleeing Ukraine have been opened. These centres accommodate and support people to understand the integration provision on offer in Wales. Whilst people stay at Welcome Centres, staff help them find settled accommodation. Partnership working is at the heart of what is happening in these Welcome Centres with representatives and staff from various organisations pulling together. In Cardiff, Taff Housing, Oasis, Welsh Refugee Council are working alongside the local authority to provide services to refugees who find themselves in this very new and overwhelming environment, alien to the lives they have experienced before. Many are living with trauma, caused by both the reasons they felt the need to leave their home and the difficult journey they experienced in reaching this new country of safety.
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These challenges and the understanding of trauma are acknowledged by and underpin the response from these organisations in how they shape the services they offer.
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In addition to those in the Welcome Centres, there are many asylum seekers who are not eligible for this route but who have faced similar experiences of trauma and fear and who are also in need of a supportive, warm Welsh welcome. Once they are granted refugee status, there is a 28 day period of uncertainty for the next step of housing as they face eviction from NASS accommodation and a new set of challenges to overcome.
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There is also a need to highlight the Welsh response to those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) and in this briefing we show some of the partnerships between housing and Refugee organisations to help address the housing needs of both refugees and those with NRPF.



TARGETED SUPPORT AND ACCESS TO INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES

The power of lived experience:

Taff Housing Association were approached by the Cardiff Local Authority in September 2021 to provide support within the Welcome Centres for Afghan refugees for an initial period of six months. This came from success within a shared housing project that had been offered for use for those who were newly granted refugees.



After reviewing the learning from their shared housing services, Taff recruited staff directly from the communities represented by those seeking asylum to staff this project. The common language, understanding of culture as well as showing people a reflection of themselves, has enabled some positive interaction and great support outcomes.



“They look like me, they speak my language. They understand my culture. I feel safe and supported in a new world.”

Taff Housing tenant

A support worker describes their experience:

“I remember the husband was nervous and snappy while I was trying to set up his utility bills for his family. After I finished the call, I asked him if he is ok, and then that it is ok to feel these things. I went on to explain that a member of our team will go with him to the new property and ensure that they settle in well. I told him that I will be visiting him and his family to ensure that they are happy and content in their new home, he smiled and had tears in his eyes and thanked us for the service we provide. It’s not only the language that brings us together it’s the humanity and kindness”



A VARIETY OF SERVICES WORK TOGETHER TO MEET A VARIETY OF NEEDS

Support is targeted to address all of the same housing related needs others might present with in similar services, but integration opportunities are also presented and the power of a trip to the seaside for the first time cannot be underestimated – this is where the multi-agency approach is working well. Oasis and Taff are not duplicating services within the Welcome Centres but are combining efforts to address a range of issues – ESOL and activities are provided by Oasis and the invitation extends to the drop in service they run too. Relationships are forged with a variety of providers and this increases the development of trust.

Volunteers are vital to the support provision too.

Community members translate, offer solidarity and provide reassurance



Oasis offers a physical drop in space that is open Monday to Friday where a hot meal and time to build community is the focus but integration opportunities are offered in the shape of advice and referrals to appropriate support providers.

ESOL classes, workshops and various activities alongside access to clothing and essential goods are all the basis for providing an important trust relationship.

Reynette Roberts, CEO says: **“Integration services are vital, none of us can work in isolation as the range of need presented by the sanctuary seeking community can be vast and is diverse – there’s no one size fits all service that will work”**

Taff Housing and Oasis are working in the same Welcome Centres offering complimentary services.



INNOVATION IN HOUSING SOLUTIONS



Home4U are a charity providing accommodation and support alongside a small amount of money to their residents to enable destitute asylum

seekers the opportunity to explore their claim for immigration in safe surroundings. They are working in partnership with a number of housing associations.

A response to NRPf:

In the past Cadwyn Housing Association in Cardiff have worked with Cardiff Council and provided accommodation for Asylum Seekers. More recently Cadwyn have worked closely with Home4U, a Refugee support organisation in Cardiff, to increase the number of bedspaces available for destitute asylum seekers. Cadwyn have released property in their portfolio to be used by Home4U.

Cadwyn's organisational values align well with the mission of Home 4 U. Cadwyn value working with those facing homelessness and those facing the most barriers to be housed. Home 4 U's mission is to provide accommodation and support for Asylum Seekers facing destitution.

In the original agreement Cadwyn leased a property to Home 4 U who were able to pay the rent from grant funding. Upon review of this arrangement by the senior management team at Cadwyn it was agreed that Cadwyn would be able to provide a property rent free.

When considering suitable accommodation Cadwyn took advice from Home4U, who are experts in accommodating asylum seekers. It was agreed that the unit should be:



-- Central Cardiff to reduce the tenants' dependency on transport



-- Near to services for Asylum Seekers and Refugees



-- Near to settled Refugee communities

Cadwyn were able to provide a self contained unit located near to other Cadwyn properties and meeting the above criteria prescribed by Home4U.

Since the partnership began Cadwyn have reviewed the house rules which were shared by Home 4 U and monitor the partnership through annual review as completed with all support providers.

Good Practice

- Staff recruited with relevant community languages and a common understanding
- A gentle approach that is trauma informed and sensitive to cultural needs
- A joined up approach with a variety of agencies all complimenting services rather than duplicating.
- Signposting to specialist legal advice to navigate the complicated immigration system.
- Provision of units to specialist charity for NRPf support with attention given to location and required services.



INNOVATION IN HOUSING SOLUTIONS



The Sanctuary project managed by the Gap team in Newport have transformed a previously difficult to let property into a home that people are now proud of by supporting refugees to thrive - not only has it transformed their lives, but the local street too!

Strategic Partnership in action:

The Pobl Group agreed that the vision the Gap had to see refugees they were working with in stable, supported and well managed accommodation was something that sat within their aims and objectives. Namely, regenerating areas for diverse communities that enables people to love where they live. The first property provided by the Pobl Group has enabled the Gap to develop good practices around supporting individuals seeking sanctuary with housing related support and the result is incredible.

The Gap saw the initiative as a holistic one - they would try to transform the area as well as the flat so that those living there were proud of their home and community. The Gap staff and volunteers got stuck into gardening and clearing rubbish, they tended the outside areas and they turned up frequently to meet the needs of the tenants. They provided a variety of support that met the individual needs of the refugees understanding the unique challenges this presents for people. The insight the Gap has from working with refugees in their drop in centre has been invaluable to the support of those seeking to integrate and settle here in Wales.

The impact has been far wider than expected with people requesting accommodation in the same street due to the transformation. The tangible changes are a direct result of good collaboration between the Pobl group and the Gap.



FIGG TREES THAT THRIVE WHEN THEIR ROOTS ARE CONSTRAINED: ONE EXAMPLE OF REDEVELOPMENT WITH HEART

[An innovative solution to Refugee homelessness in Newport](#)

Great Outcomes

- 9 refugees supported in the first year have moved onto their choice of accommodation and are settled and thriving
- Potential Pobl tenants now request to live in the street with a previously hard to let reputation
- Regeneration and support input into one home has resulted in better living conditions for other tenants in the street as the 'feel' changes to the surrounding area and safety increases.
- A further offer of property has been made by the Pobl group because of the positive outcomes and an expansion of the service the Gap can provide is underway.
- Pobl have shared expert knowledge with the Gap and enabled this local charity to develop and sustain an income ensuring future longevity.
- Refugees feel part of the community and are valued - they have choice in their futures and enrich the diversity of Wales.



DEEDS NOT WORDS



promoting equality in housing
hybu cydraddoldeb ym maes tai

Housing sector pledging to address these unique challenges together

To date, 30 organisations have signed the Deeds not Words pledge that Tai Pawb initiated in 2020. This pledge includes various commitments which we feel are important to enable systems to change and real impact to be seen in people's lives.

We said we would:

- continue working on our aim of developing temporary housing and support provision for homeless refugees leaving Home Office accommodation.
- Create a panel of members to challenge the sector and monitor progress

We asked for members to:

- Build links with and support Black, Asian and Ethnically Minoritised community groups in the area and beyond, invest in building their capacity to support local communities and bring in community knowledge and challenge to the organisation
- In asylum dispersal areas, commit to donating or leasing housing to refugee housing initiatives (where these exist). At the point of developing the pledges, there were only two such initiatives that we were aware of:



1) The GAP in Newport – working on providing housing for refugees leaving Home Office Accommodation. The GAP has partnered with POBL group and jointly they have been offering accommodation and support for refugees in Newport

2) Home4U in Cardiff - providing shared housing options for destitute asylum seekers in Cardiff. Home4U leases some properties from RSL's in Cardiff but is looking to expand.

BUILDING THE NATION OF SANCTUARY



Since 2021 Tai Pawb, Oasis, The Wallich, The Welsh Refugee Council & Housing Justice Cymru have established the Building the Nation of Sanctuary Project with funding from Comic Relief to improve housing and hosting options, Refugees and Asylum Seekers and people with no recourse to public funds in Wales.

So far the project has delivered a hosting scheme, and increased partnership work in the sector. With regards to housing the project is:

- supporting refugee organisations to develop their housing support capacity
- successful in supporting the establishment of accommodation for refugees in Penarth with property provided through a church and a partnership with the Welsh Centre International Affairs - a donation from the rent is being fed back to a charity supporting those who are NRPF
- working on a partnership with a Cardiff based RSL to provide accommodation & support for LGBTQ+ refugees
- actively looking for opportunities for refugee organisations to partner with social housing providers to develop more housing options

IF YOU REQUIRE THIS LEAFLET IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE OR FORMAT PLEASE CONTACT INFO@TAIPAWB.ORG OR TELEPHONE 02921 057 957

IF YOU WORK FOR A CARDIFF BASED ORGANISATION WHICH MADE A COMMITMENT THROUGH THE DEEDS NOT WORDS PLEDGE AND WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE HOW YOU CAN DELIVER ON THIS COMMITMENT – PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH CLARE: CLARE@TAIPAWB.ORG