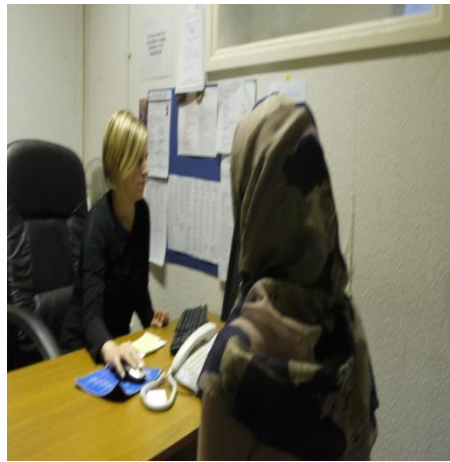


# Welsh Refugee Council Supporters' Pack



*"Helping Refugees and Asylum Seekers to rebuild their lives in Wales"*

# Thank you

*Dear Prospective Supporter,*

*Thank you for your interest in the work of the Welsh Refugee Council.*

*Over the past 20 years we have worked tirelessly fighting for the rights to asylum and support by asylum seekers and refugees and we will continue to do so, if people remain vulnerable, destitute and in need of refuge.*



*The sector has been through many challenges over the past years and we continue to see more challenges in obtaining support for vulnerable people as the right to asylum can sometimes be a less important issue to some.*

*We urge you to help us in such a worthy cause. We have put together all the relevant information you would need to assist you to better understand the work that we do and how you can get involved and partner with us.*

*We are very eager to help you get started, so please feel to talk to us about your ideas. As a small charity, our work depends greatly on the support of funders, partners, community groups, refugee community organizations and individuals like you.*

*You are welcomed to share this pack with your group or contacts.*

*Once again thank you for your support and we look forward to working with you.*

*Mike Lewis.*

**Chief Executive**

## Welsh Refugee Council

The Welsh Refugee Council is an independent charity and the lead agency working for refugees in Wales. We work to help refugees to rebuild their lives in Wales through the provision of confidential and independent, specialist advice and support services. We have offices in Cardiff, Wrexham, Swansea and Newport and we are the coordinator of Refugee Week Wales.

### Contact us:

Head Office  
Cardiff  
Phoenix House  
389 Newport Road  
Cardiff CF24 1TP

Tel: 029 2048 9800  
Fax: 029 2043 2980

[info@welshrefugeecouncil.org](mailto:info@welshrefugeecouncil.org)  
[www.welshrefugeecouncil.org](http://www.welshrefugeecouncil.org)

[www.facebook.com/welshrefcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/welshrefcouncil)  
[www.twitter.com/welshrefcouncil](https://www.twitter.com/welshrefcouncil)



Initial Accommodation	Newport	Swansea	Wrexham
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Tel: 029 20480150 Fax: 029 20471592 <a href="mailto:info@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk">info@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk</a>	Tel: 01633 266420 Fax: 01633 266421 <a href="mailto:newport@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk">newport@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk</a>	Tel: 01792 630180 Fax: 01792 630181 <a href="mailto:swansea@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk">swansea@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk</a>	Tel: 01978 367890 Fax: 01978 367891 <a href="mailto:wrexham@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk">wrexham@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk</a>

## 1990-1991

On 11<sup>th</sup> February 1990, the Welsh Refugee Council was officially launched as a National Charity the same day that Nelson Mandela was released after 27 year imprisonment for political activities.

## 1992–2000

We received our first grant from the Home Office to provide advice and support services to Asylum Seekers and Refugees.

The Immigration and Asylum Act (1999) separated asylum seekers from mainstream housing and welfare benefits, giving birth to widespread destitution. We responded by setting up emergency provisions with our partners.

We uncovered evidence that refugees in Wales were not accessing services despite recognition of their vulnerability by the UK Government.

We established an All Wales Media Group with partners to provide positive media messages about asylum seekers and refugees.

## 2001–2010

We began providing language workshops with partner organisations.

We established the Refugee Good Health Project to tackle barriers to primary healthcare.

Following changes in UK policy in 2002 which forced asylum seekers into destitution, we established the Hardship Fund to make small emergency payments to homeless asylum seekers and refugees.

We established the Refugee Well Housing Project with funding from the Welsh Government

The Equal Project was set up to support refugees in employment. We provided an office base for the umbrella group, Refugee Voice Wales.

The Refugee Inclusion Strategy for Wales was launched by the then Minister for Social Justice, Dr. Brian Gibbons, setting out a positive agenda to support refugees in rebuilding their lives in Wales.

We set up a Children's Unit to meet the needs of refugee and asylum seeking children.

We became the brand ambassador and coordinator for Refugee Week Wales.

## 2011

We underwent internal structural changes, creating new and innovative ways of working and engaging with partners and stakeholders.

We launched “Young Lives in Limbo” – the protection of age disputed young people in Wales, the first report in Wales to reveal the situation faced by children, who are age disputed by the United Kingdom Border Agency or Social Services.





The Welsh Refugee Council provides frontline specialist advice and advocacy service and support to asylum seekers and refugees throughout the asylum process.

We strongly believe that it is our humanitarian duty to actively participate in saving the lives of people who, by force, have to flee their homeland in search of their basic human rights. We provide a respectful and empathic environment to frightened, destitute and vulnerable people arriving in the Wales.

We are guided by the core principle that the right to seek asylum is a fundamental human right. 2011 marks the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1951 UN Convention relating to the status of refugees, an international standard that has provided the essential protection to save hundreds of thousands of lives since it was established.

Refugees bring a rich cultural diversity and skills complementary to the Welsh culture which Wales can benefit from.

Rebuilding their life after persecution and torture should be everyone's business as global citizens.

### Our Principles:

- Age assessment be carried out within a child-centred framework that places the safety and best interests of the child first and foremost
- The protection and support of asylum seeking women through the recognition of gender-related persecution and gender specific forms of violence, sexual abuse and exploitation as espoused in UNHCR guidelines
- 'Non-refoulement' to prevent the expulsion of asylum seekers to areas where a person might be subject to persecution
- A simple, coherent and accessible system of financial support for all asylum seekers, and an end to the policy of destitution that leaves failed asylum seekers without support, puts further stress on deprived communities and undermines community cohesion

### We provide:

- An average of 400 advice and support sessions per week to newly arrived asylum seekers, those who are awaiting a decision for their applications, failed asylum seekers, unaccompanied children and refugees who have been granted permission to stay in the UK.
- Work with the Welsh Government and the UKBA to develop fair and impartial policies for refugees and asylum seekers.
- The coordination and implementation of innovative and artistic events alongside refugee and asylum seeker communities.
- An informed perspective based on experience and commitment to work in partnership with other sector organisations, individuals and Refugee Community Organisations to achieve our core business objectives through promoting the inclusion of refugees in local communities throughout Wales.

Our advice services take us to the heart of the issues that asylum seekers and refugees experience when fleeing their country. In many cases, we are the first point of contact for people suffering from the after effects of torture, rape and other issues. Our work saves lives on a daily basis.

### We advocate for:

- The right to asylum under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention so that fair and just consideration is given to each claim.
- Access to high quality legal advice so that the correct information is used to make a claim.
- Basic support to be given to asylum seekers as and when needed.
- Age assessment to be carried out within a child centric framework that places a child's interests first and foremost to ensure their protection.
- Women in need of support due to violence or persecution are fully considered in the development of policies and programmes.
- All necessary assessments are considered for asylum seekers who are asked to "return to their country", and that no one is unnecessarily pressured to return to an unsafe country.
- The withdrawal of destitution – no one should be left destitute as result of their refused claims when it is unsafe for them to return because their lives are in danger or because their country refuses to accept them.
- The protection of women in the asylum process recognition of gender-based persecution and full implementation of the women's Asylum charter
- Adherence to the principles of non-refoulement in order that where a person is in danger that falls outside of the UN Refugee Convention, that they can be granted humanitarian protection or other status.

## How it works

Asylum seekers either claim asylum at their port of entry into the UK, or at the Asylum Screening Unit (ASU) of the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA) in Croydon, if they are already in the UK.

This applies to all individuals and families arriving in Wales with the exception of separated children who can be screened regionally by the UKBA. .

Once a person has claimed asylum, they have temporary admission to the United Kingdom until a decision is made about their case. They will be allocated a named UKBA case-owner who will decide their claim. Whilst the Welsh Refugee Council provides wraparound support and advice on the asylum process and welfare advocacy where needed.

Asylum seekers must tell UKBA where they are living and in will be required to report regularly to a local police station or a UKBA immigration office. At the asylum interview, individual will be expected to explain in detail, why they believe they should be granted asylum. If they are deemed to be in need of protection they will be granted refugee status, or in exceptional cases humanitarian protection.

**Tip:**  
**Asylum Seekers should always ask in writing that the interview is recorded.**

The asylum decision is given in writing. Asylum seekers have the right to appeal against refusal

Those who have lost their appeal may, in certain cases, pursue further appeals, but due to the complex nature of further appeals, they will need legal advice at this point.

If no further appeals are submitted the applicant becomes 'Appeals Rights Exhausted' (ARE) and the person is liable to be removed from the UK at any time. Many asylum seekers remain in the UK and some may submit further evidence or make further representations about their case as the situation in their country of origin change or new evidence becomes available.

In some cases their application is accepted in light of this new information and the person is granted refugee status.

If the person is still not viewed as needing protection the ARE process is put in place again.

### **UKBA Cardiff Office:**

**Cardiff Public Enquiry Office  
General Buildings  
Ground Floor  
31-33 Newport Road  
Cardiff  
Wales  
CF24 0AB  
0870 606 7766**

In most cases, asylum seekers who are either waiting for a decision or waiting for the outcome of an appeal, have a legal right to accommodation and support (cash payments) from UKBA.

Refused asylum seekers who have exhausted their right of appeal and have children will normally be allowed to continue receiving asylum support. For adults without children, there is very limited support available. Under certain criteria they can receive 'Section 4' support which is a cash-free system. Food and other essentials can be purchased at certain shops using an Azure Card.

Refused asylum seekers with physical or learning difficulties, hearing or visual impairments, mental health problems or chronic ill-health can receive help from local authority Social Services departments, following a community care needs assessment. However, it can be difficult for asylum seekers to be accepted and help may be needed from a specialist advocate or welfare solicitor.

## Destitution

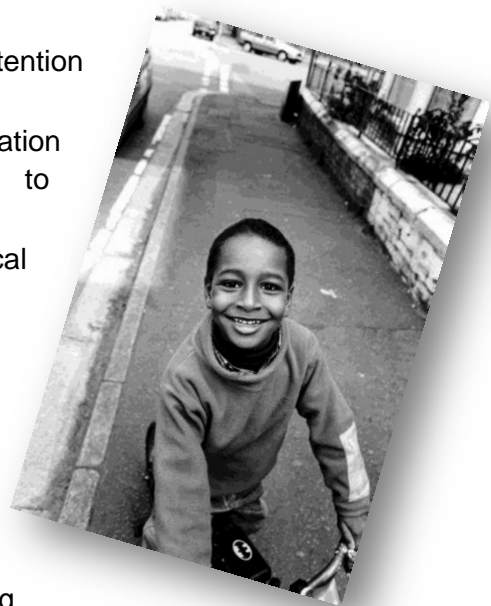
Many refused asylum seekers are afraid to return to their country of origin and so remain in the UK. Without any state support or the right to work, the majority of them become destitute. They are allowed to check whether they meet the criteria for Section 4 support, however, the only help available is from local charitable projects. This help is partial and temporary and the only real solutions are either for them to be granted refugee status or to return to their country of origin.

## Detention and Removal

Asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers can be detained at any point but are usually detained soon after claiming asylum or prior to their removal from the UK. If you are concerned about an individual who has been detained you can contact:

- Their lawyer if known.
- The duty lawyer and support staff in the detention centre.
- Specialist organisations such as Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID) or Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees (AVID).
- Freedom from torture for people with medical conditions.

Refused asylum seekers who do not return voluntarily and have exhausted all opportunities to pursue their asylum claim may be removed by immigration officers. Usually they are taken to a detention centre prior to removal. There is no scheme to monitor the safety of people once they have been removed to their country of origin. National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns works to publicise the cases of those facing deportation. [www.ncadc.org.uk](http://www.ncadc.org.uk)



## Leaving the UK Voluntarily

At any stage of the process asylum seekers and refugees have the right to return to their country of origin and the UK Border Agency expects refused asylum seekers to return. Support is available for those wishing to return - this includes advice and in some cases payments to help with reintegration. These services "Choices" are provided by Refugee Action. [www.refugee-action.org.uk](http://www.refugee-action.org.uk)

## Family Reunion

Many refugees have been separated from close family members and want to arrange for them to travel to the UK. The Red Cross provides information on helping to trace family members that are missing and family reunion. For more information go to [www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk) or ask for a WRC caseworker to make a referral on your behalf.

## Healthcare

In Wales, asylum seekers, refugees, and failed asylum seekers, are entitled to NHS healthcare without restrictions. However, it can be difficult for asylum seekers and refugees to receive the appropriate service. This is specific to those with mental health needs because health professionals in Wales may not always have the knowledge and experience to provide specialist support for individuals suffering from the effects of torture, conflicts and the horrors of war.

Freedom from Torture and the Helen Bamber Foundation is the UK's experts on the mental health needs of survivors of torture; however these organisations do not have offices in Wales. [www.freedomfromtorture.org](http://www.freedomfromtorture.org)

## Legal Advice

Asylum seekers will undoubtedly need legal advice from a qualified immigration lawyer or advisor. There is no legal requirement to provide asylum seekers with a lawyer. If there is local provision, finding an immigration lawyer may not be difficult, however, it is difficult to find lawyers who are prepared to take up cases that has been refused or lost an appeal because appeal cases are subject to a merits assessment; only cases deemed to have a good chance of success will qualify for legal aid funding. Legal advice can be provided free of charge through Legal Aid if applicable. The Welsh Refugee Council works closely with Asylum Justice to provide the necessary support to our clients.



## Refugees - Rights of those with Status

Asylum applicants who are allowed to remain in the UK may be granted 'Refugee Status', 'Humanitarian Leave to Remain' or 'Discretionary Leave to Remain'. Some individuals are now being given 'Indefinite Leave to Remain'.

Once granted status, people are entitled to work and have 21 days to move out of UKBA's accommodation and transfer from asylum support payments to mainstream benefits. They should approach their local Job Centre Plus, Local Authority housing departments, and Welsh Refugee Council's Refugee Well Housing Project – "Move On" for advice services. However, there are sometimes delays with accessing benefits and receiving National Insurance numbers which can temporarily cause hardship or even destitution.

Advice on getting work in Wales is available from Displaced People In Action (DPIA) and housing advice is available from Taff Housing and Shelter Cymru. [www.displacedpeopleinaction.org](http://www.displacedpeopleinaction.org)



## Services for Women

Refugee and asylum seeking women may have additional needs for support compared to men. The type of persecution they have experienced, or looking after children may make it more difficult for them to engage with their local community. We offer a Women's support group at our Cardiff office every Wednesday from 12:30pm – 2:30pm. This is both a social group as well as a place to gain useful information on a range of relevant issues. There is also Women Seeking Sanctuary Advocacy Group Wales, a self led organisation.

## Services for Children

All asylum seeking and refugee children are entitled to go to school up to age 16 and should receive support to learn English. Our women only parent/carer and toddler group is also held at our Cardiff office on Thursdays from 12:30pm – 2:30pm. There are different activities including dance workshops, play sessions for children and English lessons. Second-hand clothes are available for those in need. For more information contact us on 02920 489800

Unaccompanied children who claim asylum are supported by local authority Social Services departments. This means providing them with foster parents, a named social worker and help with their education. Even if they are not granted asylum, children will be granted 'Discretionary Leave to Remain' and they cannot be removed from the UK until after they are 18.

Separated children can contact the Welsh Refugee Council where our Children Advice and Support Worker can provide help and support.

## Definitions

This information sheet is intended to provide basic information on some of the definitions within the asylum process. However, information on the asylum process changes frequently and is correct up to the time of printing.

**An Asylum Seeker** is a person who is fleeing persecution in their homeland, has made themselves known to the authorities by exercising their legal right to apply for asylum and whose application has not yet been concluded.

**A Refugee by the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention definition** 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 or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country. In the UK, a person is officially a refugee when they have been granted refugee status by the UK Government under the UN Refugee Convention due to a well founded fear of persecution, torture or death in their homeland because of their race, religion, nationality, sexuality or membership of a particular social group or political beliefs.

**A Refused Asylum Seeker** is a person whose asylum application has been unsuccessful and who has no other claim for protection awaiting a decision. Some refused asylum seekers voluntarily return home, others are forcibly returned and for some it is not safe or practical for them to return until conditions in their country change.

**An 'Illegal' Immigrant** is someone whose entry into or presence in a country contravenes immigration laws. They are also known as an 'undocumented person'.

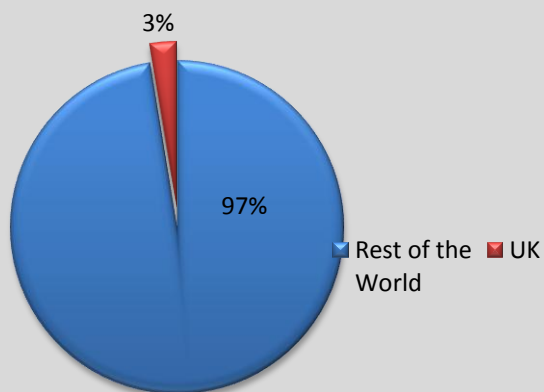
An **Economic Migrant** is someone who has moved to another country to work legally or illegally based on how they entered the country. **Refugees are not economic migrants.**

A **Separated Child** is a child under 18 who has arrived in the UK on their own, or with someone who may be an adult or family member but who is unable to take on parental responsibilities to care for them. Separated children may arrive with an adult as a result of being smuggled or trafficked into the UK.

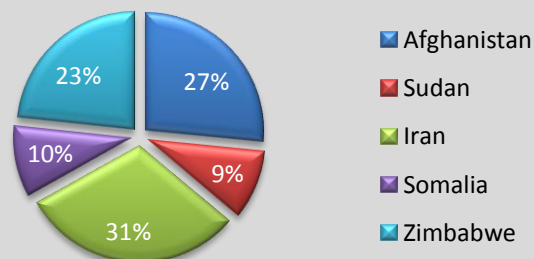


There are many myths surrounding the impact of the number of asylum application being made to the UK. Below is a snap shot on how the statistical data matches up to all the “tales” on asylum applications.

### Applications Worldwide 2009

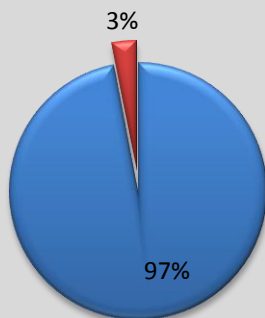


### Top Five Nationalities Seeking Asylum in the UK - 2010

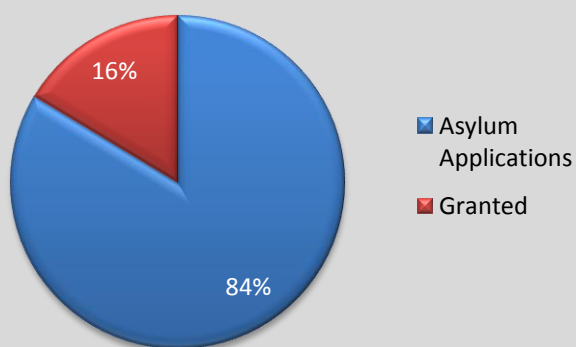


### Immigration 2010

- Long Term Immigration -UK
- Asylum Applications - UK



### Applications in the UK - 2010



Source: United Kingdom Border Agency - 2011

## How you can Help?

As it becomes more challenging to secure mainstream funding we need your support more than ever to continue providing our life saving services to our clients. Contact us to find out how you can support destitute asylum seekers and refugees.

### Groups and Individual Fundraising

If you would like to fundraise for the Welsh Refugee Council's Hardship fund here are just a few ways you can do it.

1. Do an **Auction at** your work place
2. Go **Carol Singing** for charity.
3. Organise a **Barn Dance** within your community
4. Organise an Indoor Games Evening at your local community hall
5. Put on an **International Night** of music and art in aid of Refugees who are destitute.
6. Perform a **Raffle** or hold a **Cake Sale**.
7. Participate in a **Refugee Week Wales** Activities
8. Host a **Quiz Night** with your church community or friends.
9. Ask your school to host a **Non – Uniform Day**. Each person brings in £1 to support refugees or hold a **Poster Competition** in your school.
10. Take part in **Cardiff Half Marathon** on behalf of people in need

Fundraising can be seen as daunting however we will help you get your activity on the way. We will provide you with all the necessary support material, advice and in some cases the support staff to help make your event a success. If one of these events is of interest to you, or if you have a support idea, please come and have a chat with us and we will help get you started.

### Corporate Support

The Welsh Refugee Council works with a small number of organisations which are interested in the humanitarian aspect of our work. We currently need the support of more organisations who would like to support our work in the following ways:

- Charity of the year Sponsorships
- Sponsored Partnerships
- Corporate Memberships

In return for your support, here are few ways we can support your business:

1. Linkage with partner organisations in the sector.
2. Your brand linkage with a local and well know charity, interaction with new corporate supporters through the charities hospitality.
3. Your logo on our new and upcoming website
4. Your brand incorporated in our marketing materials
5. The feel good factor and added value to your clients/customers

## Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to share your skills and learn new ones. We pride ourselves on the invaluable contributions of our volunteers to our work. They are encouraged to get involved from researching within the policy remit to organising events during Refugee Week Wales. We have opportunities at all our offices across Wales and many of our volunteers have moved onto permanent full time employment, while many of our staff members were themselves, volunteers. In return for your effort we will provide you with:

- Recognisable work experience in a very challenging sector
- Full support from our Volunteering and Partnership Officer
- Induction and support to fully prepare you for your new role
- Access to employment opportunity within the sector
- Assistance with travel cost, and
- The “feel good factor” of helping and supporting vulnerable people.

Here are some of the many roles you could be working in, at the Welsh Refugee Council.

### **Volunteer Casework Support**

This role could attract students and other individuals who are interested in social science work, and any other area of work involving vulnerable people. This work could take you into areas such as health, housing, legal, asylum support, education, and community development in a cultural setting. You will work directly with the OISC accredited caseworker team, assisting with the provision of advice and support to our clients, on Human Rights and the United Nations Refugee Convention of 1951.

### **Volunteers Support – Influencing**

You will work within the Influencing Team to provide support to the team on events, online marketing, media management and all other administrative work. You can also work in research and policy support work to assist in undertaking research on WRC’s policy priority areas and in developing policy positions.

These roles are ideal for young graduates looking to gain and improve on their skills and qualifications. This role will provide you with real world skills and experiences to help progress you to the next level.



## More Ways You Can Help

### Work Placement Experience

We work with other partner agencies to provide related placement in various departments for students and young people looking to start work and need work experience to support their CVs.

### Our Other roles

- Volunteer Security Officer  
To assist in providing security function to the Welsh Refugee Council staff, visitors and clients in their designated office.
- IT Support Worker  
Provide day to day IT support to the IT support team
- ESOL Teachers  
The Volunteer ESOL tutor will be a member of the Welsh Refugee Council team and provide bilingual support to our clients
- Administrative Support worker  
The Volunteer Office Administrator will be responsible for assisting with all administrative tasks allocated by the Service Manager

Contact us to discuss which role is best suited to your interests. We are very happy to match you with the right role for you.

## Partnerships

Our community work takes us into the heart of many communities and forming partnerships with community related organisations. This work allows us to engage and collect information necessary for the creation of policies on asylum and refugee issues as well as understand issues affecting our clients.

A key area of our business is to work in partnership with stakeholders who compliment and support our work. Some of our partners include: Wales Council for Voluntary Action, Victim Support, Welsh Government, United Kingdom Border Agency, Voluntary Action Cardiff, Displaced People in Action, Supporting Others through Voluntary Action, Discovery Swansea, Cardiff Story, National Museum of Wales and many others. On a daily bases, we refer clients to partners who provide support services and we work with them to develop further partnership initiatives and policies.

If you want to know more about our partnership work or if you are interested in developing a partnership with us contact us on [info@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk) or on 02920 489800. If you cannot hold an event or volunteer at the Welsh Refugee Council, here are a few other ways you can support our work.



- We frequently need food, clothing, toys, toiletries and sanitary wear for our clients who are facing destitution. If you can help in this way, we would be glad to hear from you.
- Become a member of the Welsh Refugee Council and you will receive updates on what is happening in the sector and the WRC. You will also receive our monthly newsletter and be the first to receive our publications on asylum and refugee issues.
- Join our social media groups
  - Facebook : [www.facebook.com/Welshrefcouncil](http://www.facebook.com/Welshrefcouncil)
  - Twitter : [www.twitter.com/Welshrefcouncil](http://www.twitter.com/Welshrefcouncil)
- Sign up to our mailing list: [www.welshrefugeecouncil.org/get-involved](http://www.welshrefugeecouncil.org/get-involved) then click on the link to mailing list to receive updates about upcoming events, job vacancies, campaigns and ways you can help.
- Browse our website [www.welshrefugeecouncil.org](http://www.welshrefugeecouncil.org) to find out more about asylum issues in Wales and for the latest news.



For many people, whether they are asylum seekers or refugees, adjusting to life in the UK can be difficult and they may feel isolated within local communities. Many will have survived very traumatic experiences and the effect of this can make it difficult to 'get back on your feet'. They need time, they need understanding. **THEY NEED YOU!**

## Welsh Refugee Council

Cardiff, Phoenix House, 389 Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 1TP  
 Te I: 029 2048 9800  
 Fax: 029 2043 2980  
[info@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk)  
[www.welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk)

<p><b>Initial Accommodation</b>                  385 Newport Road                  Cardiff                  CF24 1RN</p> <p>Tel: 029 20480150                  Fax: 029 20471592  <a href="mailto:info@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk">info@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Newport</b>                  High Street Chambers                  51 High Street                  Newport                  N20 1GB</p> <p>Tel: 01633 266420                  Fax: 01633 266421  <a href="mailto:newport@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk">newport@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Swansea</b>                  Third Floor, Grove House                  Grove Place                  Swansea                  SA1 5DF</p> <p>Tel: 01792 630180                  Fax: 01792 630181  <a href="mailto:swansea@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk">swansea@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Wrexham</b>                  Trinity House                  Trinity Street                  Wrexham                  LL11 1NL</p> <p>Tel: 01978 367890                  Fax: 01978 367891  <a href="mailto:wrexham@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk">wrexham@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk</a></p>
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# THANK YOU