



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



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## **Migration in Wales: Developing Local Strategic Frameworks on Integration**

### **An International Learning Exchange Conference**

#### **Conference report**

#### **Summary**

The Migration Services in Wales team were delighted to be joined by 56 delegates representing a wide range of Welsh local authorities, Welsh Government and diverse partners from the third sector at our recent International Learning Exchange Conference 'Migration in Wales: Developing Local Strategic Frameworks on Integration'.

The aim of the event was to exchange knowledge, experience and ideas on developing strategic local approaches to integration in the context of Wales' changing patterns of migration, and of broader policy contexts including the equality duties and Well-being Acts. The conference provided an opportunity to learn from the experience of two continental European cities, **Stuttgart** and **Stavanger**, from which speakers contributed to an intense day of discussion on the full range of policies and approaches that this topic engages.

**Julie Morgan AM**, the event's sponsor, opened the conference by highlighting the importance of shifting the narrative on migration to ensure that it is firmly based on the available evidence. Julie emphasised the significant contribution that migrants have made in her constituency and the city of Cardiff, which hosts 27% of Wales' migrant population. She reflected on the pressing need to address the discrimination and segregation faced by some groups of migrants to ensure that everyone is able to feel part of the Welsh nation and are included in the vision of a sustainable and prosperous Wales. Concluding, Julie emphasised the importance of harnessing the talents of migrants, and of addressing the fears of the Welsh-born population over what migration means for their communities.

#### **Planning for the future**

**Dr Surhan Cam**, Lecturer at the University of Cardiff, delivered a detailed presentation looking at the changing patterns of migration to Wales and the implications at the local level. Recent evidence has demonstrated that migration to Wales and the UK is not simply a result of 'push factors' in the migrant's country of origin or due to economic 'pull factors' and there are a variety of motivations driving migration. Overall, migrants represent approximately 5.8% of the Welsh population, compared to 13.2% of the overall British population.

#### **Migration trends:**

The level of migration to Wales has notably increased in the last decade. The growth of migrant communities has not been uniform across Wales and there are significant variations between local authorities. Welsh cities such as Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham have each experienced a rise in the number of non-UK born people in their local area. There are also noteworthy pockets of very recent migration to areas such as Merthyr Tydfil, where new businesses have attracted EU migrant workers. The top non-UK countries of birth for migrants in Wales are Poland, Ireland, India and Germany.



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### **Demographic Profiles:**

Gender: There were an estimated 79000 female migrants living in Wales in 2015, compared to 70000 male migrants.

Age: Approximately 10.7% of the migrant population are under 15 years old, compared to 18.5% of the Welsh-born population. Only 10.3% of the migrant population in Wales are over the age of 65, compared to 20% of the UK-born population in Wales.

Education: Sometimes migrants are associated with low-skilled work, but their educational profile is similar, and in some respects higher than that of the UK-born population. For example, 29% of migrants to Wales have a degree-level education or equivalent, compared to 20.8% of the UK-born population in Wales. Additionally, 10.9% of the migrant population to Wales have no qualifications, amongst the Welsh-born population this figure is marginally higher at 12.2%.

Asylum Seekers: There were approximately 2400 asylum seekers living in Wales in August 2015. Cardiff has the highest number of asylum seekers, followed by Swansea, Newport and then Wrexham.

Full-time students: Of full time students in Wales, 11.7% of the migrant population are engaged in full-time education, compared to 5.9% of the UK born population.

Employment profile: Migrants represent 8% of the total population in employment in Wales and 16% of the UK-wide population in employment. Unemployment is higher amongst migrants in Wales (6.2% of migrants are unemployed compared to 3.8% of the UK born population in Wales) but fewer migrants (36.8%) are economically inactive compared to the UK-born population in Wales (41.3%). The data shows little difference in terms of the managerial profile but a larger concentration of migrant workers in both 'Professional Occupations' and 'Elementary Occupations'.

Housing profile: 51.9% of migrants in Wales are in rented accommodation compared to 29.6% of the UK-born population. There is noteworthy variation in the levels of migrant home-ownership across local authorities. Approximately 14.4% of migrants live in local authority housing and 12.3% in properties owned by a housing association, this compares to 28% of the UK-born population in local authority housing and 24.3% living in properties owned by housing associations.

Find out more about Wales' changing demographics with the **Migration Services in Wales** [Migration Trends Reports](#) on [Migrants in the Welsh Labour Market](#), [Migrant Households in Wales](#) and [Migration Flows and Population Trends](#). See also, the Migration Observatory's [Wales: Census Profile](#)

## Implications

The changing demographic of Wales has implications for service providers in education, employment, housing, health and social care and the third sector. Some key considerations in responding to these implications include:

Education: Are there free and accessible English language classes for all? Is the curriculum design culturally sensitive? Is there suitable educational support available?

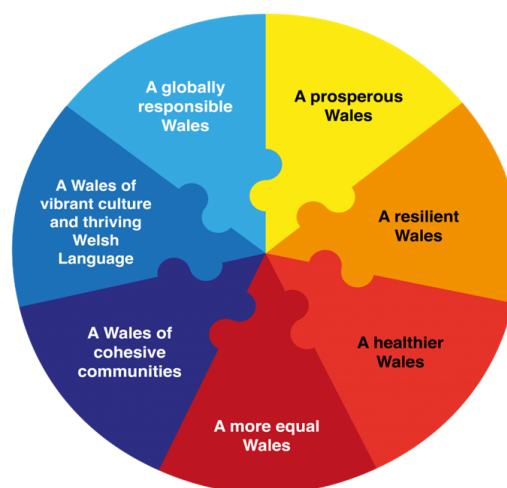
Employment: Are there mechanisms in place to support employers to recognise and transfer foreign qualifications? How to reach the economically inactive, particularly women, and overcome their barriers to employment? How to respond to the concentration of migrant workers in elementary occupations and how to effectively protect their employment rights?

Housing: Asylum seekers are offered accommodation on a 'no choice' basis, which has significant implications for their integration outcomes- what is offered locally to support this? Does local housing provision reflect migrants' own social networks, especially support from friends, family and religious organisations?

Health and social care: Are the NHS staff and Social workers adequately trained to work with diverse service user groups?

## **Legislative and Policy Context in Wales**

**Amelia John, Deputy Director of the Fairer Futures Division of the Welsh Government,** provided an overview of the existing legislative and policy context in Wales. The new [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) has introduced seven goals to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. This legislation provides a range of levers for both the Welsh Government and local authorities to create an integrated approach across different services, to measure progress towards identified goals and to adopt a long-term approach to tackling poverty and cultivating a strong Welsh economy. A critical aspect of the Well-being Act is that both the local well-being assessments and well-being plans must 'involve the diversity of the community', encouraging local authorities to ensure that migrants' needs are identified during the assessment process and that their needs and local population trends are reflected in each well-being plan.



Other important aspects of Welsh policy include: The [Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan](#), [Tackling Hate Crime and Incidents: A Framework for Action](#) and the [Refugee and Asylum Seeker Delivery Plan](#).



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### ***What are we trying to achieve?***

**Ingrid Hauge Rasmussen, Special Adviser on Diversity and Integration at the City of Stavanger, Norway**, provided an introduction to the Intercultural City model adopted by the city of Stavanger. This approach is based on the principles of having an open city, addressing fears and focusing on common values, fostering belonging and cultural reciprocity and encouraging mixing and interaction. This approach has been implemented through consistent and long-term planning achieved by a City Master Plan covering a period of 15 years, a Transparency and Diversity Mission Statement, a Strategy for Equality and Diversity and an Action Plan for Equality and Diversity. By being part of the Intercultural Cities network, Stavanger has benefited from: exchanging experience with other cities through thematic meetings, access to experts and has been supported with new ways of thinking in changing financial circumstances.

**‘Hello Neighbour’**: This initiative welcomes migrants to the city by holding a ceremony twice a year, helping to introduce new migrants to key services and people in the local community.

**Ayse Özbabacan of the Department for Integration for the City of Stuttgart, Germany**, introduced Stuttgart’s model for integration. This includes three main goals; equal opportunities for all, promoting peaceful cohabitation and capitalising on cultural diversity as a positive resource. The city’s Department for Integration is responsible for the implementation of integration as a cross-departmental issue covering 15 fields of action including language, civic engagement and public awareness. The city’s inclusive approach seeks to adapt services to the needs of all citizens through the intercultural orientation of the municipal administration including forums with different communities and the recruitment and development of staff from diverse backgrounds.

**‘Your City- Your Future’** - This apprenticeship programme sought to promote the representation of those of a migrant background within the municipal administration’s staff body. In a city where 60% of children and young people are of a migrant background, the project successfully attracted apprentices to increase migrant representation from 10-16% to 40% across services.

**Chris Sivers, Director of People at City and County of Swansea** provided an account of Swansea’s experiences to date in responding to demographic change within the city. Chris explained that much of the recent change to the population of Swansea is the result of the expansion of the university and the city’s role as an asylum dispersal cluster. Swansea’s approach has reflected the priorities of the Welsh Government, with a strong focus on tackling poverty, prevention and early intervention through Communities First and tension monitoring. Chris reflected upon the challenges for cities in supporting migrant integration, such as ESOL provision, increasing levels of unemployment and the rise of the far right. Concluding, Chris emphasised the huge potential in harnessing the enthusiasm of the general public to support refugees, and of developing strong partnerships under the umbrella of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act to address these challenges.



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### ***Developing positive narratives and positive engagement***

**Gillian Grainger, Community Diversity Manager at Wrexham County Borough Council**, explained Wrexham's approach to developing positive narratives and engagement to promote cohesion at a local level. Gillian explained that migration is increasing the ethnic and cultural diversity of cities and this has implications for community cohesion. The debate on migration happens at the international, national and local level and a coherent response is necessary for each level. By understanding migration and the geography of our communities, it is possible to be proactive rather than reactive to migration patterns and develop a tailored response to meet the needs of a particular local area or geographical region. There are many common challenges and opportunities shared by cities and rural areas and it is useful to share expertise and learn from each other's good practice to avoid duplication, especially in a climate of limited resources. Gillian concluded that failure to engage may be costly in the long term, causing emerging issues and solutions to be missed and that in consequence communities will not receive the services that they need to be sustainable and prosperous.

**Forward Maisokwado, National Communications Officer at City of Sanctuary**, spoke of the value of a local spirit of hospitality and the significant impact of local support in creating a welcoming community for new arrivals. Mobilising this support helps to build a democratic response that reflects local needs and helps to overcome some of the issues arising from limited resources available to service providers. Partnerships with the voluntary sector and with migrant communities themselves help to ensure that local responses are truly reflective of and shaped by migrant voices.

**Ann Hubbard, Director at the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership**, spoke of the local leadership that has propelled the Syrian Resettlement Programme in Wales. Many Welsh local authorities have demonstrated fresh thinking in their approaches to refugee resettlement, building partnerships and shifting local narratives to overcome negative discourses on migration and refugees. The Wales Strategic Migration Partnership's Syrian Resettlement Toolkit has provided a helpful framework for local authorities to adopt a multi-agency approach to resettlement. This approach has been particularly effective as a result of national leadership, which has supported and shaped local initiatives and promoted engagement.



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### ***What are the implications for local authorities of adopting new approaches?***

- The new Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 provides a framework to take forward a localised approach with increasingly connected services and sharing of expertise and data where appropriate. The new Public Service Boards will support the exploration of new partnerships to develop innovative and responsive approaches to promote migrant integration.
- The experiences of local authorities in formulating and adopting such an approach will vary depending on the local demography and geography of their area. Whilst sharing and replicating existing models will often be useful and will help to create an aligned approach across local authorities, each local area requires a framework that is tailored to reflect the specific challenges and opportunities in their area.
- Data is critical to the success of future migrant integration frameworks. Opportunities could be explored to address gaps in data collection and to better understand existing data to recognise emerging trends and inform future work and the allocation of resources.
- A strategy for migrant integration will respond to the needs of communities as a whole, rather than directing all resources at migrant groups. A communications strategy to provide accurate information and shift pejorative narratives is critical to improved outcomes within communities. It may be necessary to give thought to engaging with those susceptible to divisive ideologies and to address concerns resulting from perceived competition for resources.
- Partnerships with the third sector are an effective way to reach migrant communities but short-term funding can be an obstacle to sustainable long-term partnerships and planning.
- Local authorities are well-placed to develop approaches which are reflective of the needs of their local area. This leadership can be enhanced by a national vision for migrant integration from the Welsh Government to help set a long-term direction for Welsh communities.



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### ***Where next for local strategic frameworks on integration?***

**Steve Thomas, Chief Executive of the Welsh Local Government Association,** explained that 41% of people's opinions on migration have changed since 2010 and in some parts of Wales the debate on migration is based on fear and is often cited as a key concern of the general public. Top-down approaches are not the sole answer to a comprehensive integration strategy and leadership should take place at every level. Addressing core issues of poverty, unemployment, housing shortages are all critical to migrant integration. To ensure that migration is treated as a priority for Public Service Boards, there must be clear and realistic messages on how to promote migrant integration locally so that Public Service Boards can communicate a meaningful and focused agenda to government ministers.

**Amelia John, Deputy Director of the Fairer Futures Division of the Welsh Government,** reiterated the need to collect data and use existing data to understand change and inform the discourse on migration and integration and that the messages from the day would be taken back to the Welsh Government for consideration.

***The Migration Services in Wales project will be working closely with a diverse range of local authorities in the coming months to support the development of Local Strategic Frameworks on Migration for their area. For more information on this strand of work, or if you have any queries regarding the Migration Services in Wales project, please contact Siân Sanders, Migration Policy Officer at the Welsh Refugee Council – [sian@wrc.wales](mailto:sian@wrc.wales).***

For more information, please also refer to the **Migration Services in Wales Resource: [Developing a Strategic Approach to Integration in Wales](#)**- which has been prepared to assist local authorities and their partner organisations to consider how to welcome and foster the integration of new migrants in Wales.