



New

Beginnings

Annual Report 2013-2014



About this Report and the Welsh Refugee Council

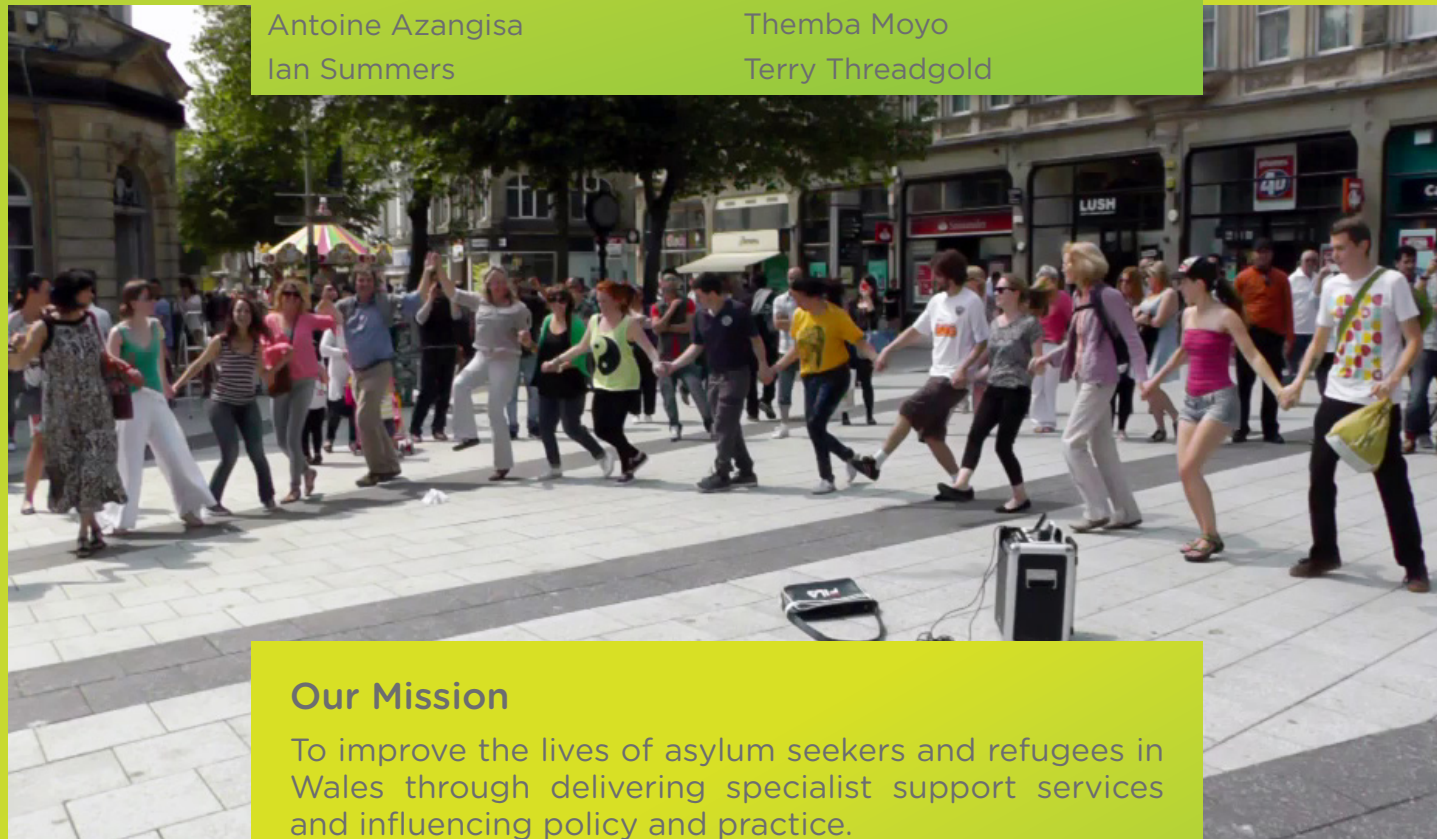
Welcome to the Welsh Refugee Council's annual report for 2013-14. This report looks back on the asylum support services that we delivered for the Home Office and looks forward to the future.

2013-14 was an important year, a year of transition and change for the organisation. This report celebrates the past and gets excited about the future.

With 25 years of experience, the Welsh Refugee Council is committed to protecting the rights of asylum seekers and refugees in Wales.

Trustees

Anna Nicholl	- Chair	James Aylward
Maureen Gower	- Vice Chair	Mick Antoniwi
Mohamed Field	- Treasurer	Phillip Cole
Ann-Marie Harkin		Rachel Hurdley
Antoine Azangisa		Themba Moyo
Ian Summers		Terry Threadgold



Our Mission

To improve the lives of asylum seekers and refugees in Wales through delivering specialist support services and influencing policy and practice.

Our Vision

A Wales where refugees are welcomed and have access to protection, safety and dignity.

Strategic Map

Vision: A Wales where refugees are welcomed and have access to protection, safety and dignity

Mission: To improve the lives of asylum seekers and refugees in Wales through delivering specialist support services and influencing policy and practice.

Change Goals

EU, UK and Welsh Government commit to protecting people who flee their country

All asylum seekers and refugees can access support services

Refugees are included within communities in Wales

Build financial sustainability

Business-like and caring relationships with internal and external stakeholders

Stakeholders

To succeed, who are our stakeholders and what will they need from us?

ONE

Evidence our effectiveness to stakeholders

TWO

Positively influence perceptions of refugees in Wales

THREE

Meet the need of asylum seekers and refugees

FOUR

Active participation of asylum seekers and refugees

Effective system and communications

Capacities

To succeed at delivering for stakeholders, what processes must we excel at?

FIVE

Build a learning, listening and responsive organisation

SIX

Ensure staff, volunteers and partners are engaged and supported

SEVEN

Ensure our governance and management systems are fit for purpose

Increased capacity from a smaller team

Learning & Growing

What kind of people and what skills, knowledge and abilities do they need?

EIGHT

Commercial skills: Ensure gaps are filled through outsourcing, recruitment and training

NINE

Data skills: Ensure all staff have a base of M&E skills

TEN

Management skills: Ensure management and governance systems and skills support a professional approach

ELEVEN

Service skills: Ensure service provision meets user and partner needs

Develop the financial base to deliver the vision

Resources

To succeed in delivering this strategy, what resources do we need to employ?

TWELVE

Maximise and diversify funding streams - Develop financial resilience

THIRTEEN

Make more effective use of existing resources

Anna Nicholl our chair

For me, this year's report demonstrates the resilience of the Welsh Refugee Council.

The year marked a period of change. In March 2014 our One Stop Shop service, which had become a core activity over many years, closed. This, along with other changes, meant saying goodbye to many valued colleagues. I would like to thank them all for their hard work and dedication throughout their time in the Welsh Refugee Council.

This has meant a new beginning for the organisation. The Welsh Refugee Council has embraced change positively. It has thought hard about how it can make the biggest contribution in the future. This has meant a new focus, new partnerships and new projects. All this has been under the leadership of a new Chief Executive, Salah Mohamed.

The diverse activities and achievements over the year demonstrate that the Welsh Refugee Council continues to make an important contribution to making Wales a place where people seeking sanctuary are welcomed and treated with respect and dignity from the day they arrive.

I'm delighted to see that the positive approach the organisation has taken is already bearing fruit. I am confident that this will place us on a strong footing to continue working alongside refugees and asylum seekers, as well as our many partners and supporters, to improve their lives in Wales.

Anna Nicholl
Chair



“A new focus, new partnerships and new projects.”

**“We are not here for pleasure,
we are here for protection”.**
Abuhakr Elgadi,
Refugee using the Move-On service.

Changes at the Welsh Refugee Council

2013-14 has seen the organisation dealing with huge changes that have been a challenge, an inspiration and important steps on the Welsh Refugee Council's journey.

Things ending:

- In April 2014 we stopped delivering the asylum support services for the Home Office. This meant that we were no longer able to deliver specialist support for asylum seekers through our caseworkers in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham.
- Fifteen members of staff transferred to the new asylum support provider Migrant Help who continue to deliver advice to asylum seekers from their offices at Lynx House in Cardiff.
- We packed up and moved offices from Newport Road in Cardiff, and an office that we had shared with Swansea Bay Race Equality Council in Swansea.

Things continuing:

- The 'Move On' services continues to be delivered to new refugees to support people to find accommodation within the first 28 days of receiving a positive decision on their asylum claim.
- Children's play sessions continued to offer support to families in Cardiff and Newport.
- Refugee Week Wales continues to be a key time in the calendar for events that celebrate the contribution of refugees in Wales.
- Our Cardiff office continues to provide space for the Red Cross to distribute the hardship fund to destitute asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers.

Things beginning:

- Our new offices on Broadway in Cardiff and in Walter Road in Swansea opened their doors.
- In December 2013, the Welsh Refugee Council was awarded 3 year funding by the Welsh Government, through the Equalities and Inclusion Grant. The purpose of the grant is to support the delivery of the Welsh Government's strategic equality plan and it provides funding for the policy and communications team.
- The University of South Wales worked with us to refresh and restart the delivery of ESOL sessions for asylum seekers and refugees. Four classes are now being delivered a week and students from the University are running sessions.
- A new women's worker started offering legal advice and support to survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls to strengthen their claim for asylum.
- Cardiff Library started running conversation classes for asylum seekers and refugees to improve their English skills.



What We Do Now



Supporting Refugees to Move-on

We deliver individual casework in Cardiff, Newport and Swansea to people who have been granted refugee status or other forms of leave to remain within the asylum system. We are planning to start the service in Wrexham soon.



Promoting positive perceptions of migration

Refugee Week Wales is an annual event to celebrate the positive contributions of refugees to Wales. We organise a series of events with refugee community organisations and arts institutions.



Supporting Women seeking asylum

The womens worker provides legal advice and assistance to women seeking asylum.



Education and Active participation

Weekly ESOL lessons (English for Speakers of Other Languages) to asylum seekers and refugees, helping people to build their skills and confidence in readiness for further education, employment or training.



Supporting Families through play

We run a play support programme for families with young children that help children deal with the trauma of fleeing from persecution.



Partnerships

All our work is done in partnership with organisations across Wales, the UK and Europe to deliver the best outcomes for asylum seekers and refugees in Wales.



Influencing policy and practice

We speak out to ensure policy and practice meets the needs of asylum seekers and refugees, promote refugee rights and challenge discrimination.

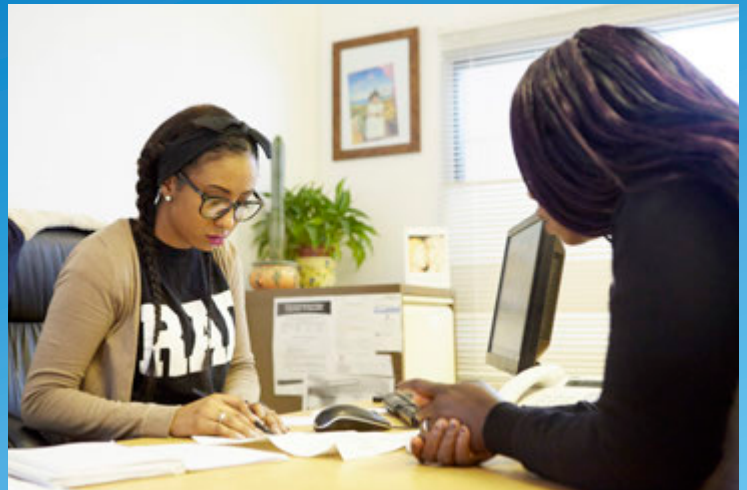
Other Services

Our other support services include, hardship support, partnership drop in services, conversation groups, photography projects, a food bank, and destitution work.

Supporting refugees to move on

From September 2004, the Welsh Government, through its Housing Directorate, has funded the Welsh Refugee Council to provide a 'Move-On' service. We have worked with over 18,250 refugees since 2004.

In 2013-14 we supported refugees in Wales through the move on service. The Move-On service provides advice and advocacy to those people who gain status (whether this be refugee status, indefinite leave to remain, humanitarian protection, discretionary leave to remain, etc.) in the UK. This service has been provided in the four asylum dispersal areas in Wales; Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham. The work is delivered by a skilled advice caseworker and volunteers in each area.



Housing people in Wales:

From 1st October 2013 – 31st March 2014 we analysed the number of new clients accessing the project and reported on their housing outcome. During this period there were 189 new refugees accessing the project. This number increases to 349 when including dependants and included people who had been in the UK for less than 6 weeks when they received their status.

The table below shows where all the people were housed:

BAWSO Refuge	1
Living with Family/Friends	14
Living with Family/Friends	2
Hostel	1
Housing Association	6
Local Authority Housing	59
Moved Away out of Wales	27
Private Rented Housing	48
Home Office Accommodation	16
Young Single Homeless Hostel	2
Ty Seren (Womens Hostel)	1
No further contact	12
TOTAL	189

189
New refugees
from October
to March

59
Local Authority
housing

48
in private
rentals

16
Home Office
accommodation

14
with friends
and family

Case studies



Hayat came from Eritrea to the UK to seek asylum in 2011 because of political reasons. She has been accessing the Move-On service for just over one month and thinks this about our service:

"I live with my sister in temporary housing and we do not have anything. The Move-on service is very good and the people here help me to understand what I need to do to continue my life in the UK. They also give me some food and money when things are really bad. I feel comfortable at the WRC, if the services were not available I would feel lost and not know what to do. Everyone is very helpful especially the move-on case worker. She showed me how to start my new life here."

Habom is a man from Eritrea who received his refugee status in March 2011. He now lives in Newport with his wife and child and is now in full-time employment. He accessed the Move-On Service in Newport. He says this about the services:

"The Welsh Refugee Council staff are always helpful and smiling. They helped me understand how to apply to attend college and apply for jobs. The services are vital to help me and my family move on from being an asylum seeker. I left Eritrea because of political and religious persecution. What I am really grateful for is the freedom of speech and removal of fear in my life, In Eritrea you cannot do nothing and your brain is closed."

“

"I come here because I can speak to someone who can explain and give advice in my native language".

"The Welsh Refugee Council is the professional and trustable organization to help all the Refugees in Swansea. Without the Welsh Refugee Council, we would all be suffering being homeless and no money, no job, no life".

"The Welsh Refugee Council is always our first choice whenever we have a question or problem. When we were granted refugee status a couple of weeks ago, it was the Welsh Refugee Council who prevented us being homeless, the caseworkers tried all their best to support me and my family to overcome the crucial period. The Welsh Refugee Council is the only place we trust".

”

Supporting Women Asylum Seekers to be safe

We provided legal advice and support for asylum seeking women with issues of rape, domestic violence torture, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and human trafficking. In 2013-14 we gave 121 advice sessions with 93 women.

We have made a significant impact in the lives of the women that we work with. We have appealed against decisions to ensure that women are able to access legal aid, protecting their right to access justice. We have listened to women, creating a safe and supportive space where women are able to talk about their own experiences of violence and understand how this will strengthen their claim to asylum.

Case Study

Gilda is a LGBT lady from an African country who was tortured and publicly raped because of her sexuality. She showed signs of this with physical and psychological trauma. We provided her with support and advice providing longer than usual individual sessions to help her feel more comfortable and retain information to better understand her rights. After many sessions she open-up to discuss her situation. Eventually she was referred to the doctors and BAWSO. The doctors confirmed her health issues and BAWSO conducted the necessary counselling support. She is now making eye contact and feeling confident and knowledgeable about her situation and her case. We believe she has a strong claim for asylum as she waits for her decision”.

121
Advice sessions

93
women



Testimonials from women seeking asylum who have accessed the service:

“This project helped me so much for the first time I felt that I was being listened to and someone was doing something real for me. After spending hours with two previous solicitors making statements and eventually them withdrawing representation, I felt very very low and I was very ill. The caseworker helped me realise what I could argue in my case, I had suffered years of domestic violence and felt trapped from the society I lived in back home in Kenya. No other solicitor had asked me about this. Eventually legal aid was allowed and through a good solicitor who understood my case I won my case”.

“The caseworker was so friendly and supportive, I didn't know how to present my situation and my solicitor hadn't asked me about those things (FGM) so the caseworker helped me get an examination and told the solicitor to present this in my case, I still don't have a decision on my case, I am here and waiting”.



Supporting children and families through play

We provided specialist play development opportunities for families with children within the asylum system in partnership with DPiA, Children in Need and GAVO. This was done through delivering three play sessions a week in Newport and Cardiff. We also host a soft play sessions, play days and rhyme time sessions, day trips, swimming sessions and community events

Asylum seeking Children

183
children
supported

105
children with
significant
progress

78
children show
some progress



Case study

“Aksinya, a three year old girl arrived with her mother from Russia with an assessment level of low to moderate, exhibiting uneasiness, little eye contact and opting to observe play rather than participate. She cried often even when her mother tried to encourage her. With support, it was revealed that she loved sand and water play and had a particular interest in ballet. This was introduced to the sessions and she investigated the sand box without encouragement. The result of this was a child who was now confident and smiling; engaging with the other children and participating in all the activities”

Influencing policy & practice

Our policy work listened to the experiences of the people that attended our services and took a ground level view of the impact of UK and Welsh Governments legislation, policy and practice. Here are our top ten highlights from 2013-14:

1. Working with partner organisations, like the Refugee Council and Amnesty, to secure a commitment from the UK Government to resettle vulnerable Syrian refugees in the UK.
2. Securing the Welsh Government's commitment to refresh the Refugee Inclusion Action Plan.
3. Representing asylum seekers and refugees on the Third Sector Partnership Council.
4. Feeding into the Welsh Governments Hate Crime Framework for Action and presenting at the launch event.
5. Informing Stephen Doughty MP, on Labour's debate in Parliament raising issues of lost documents of asylum seekers and refugees by the Home Office.
6. Giving evidence at the Welsh government's review of the role of a Wales Anti Human Trafficking Coordinator.
7. Responding to the transforming legal aid proposal for the Welsh Government.
8. Meeting with assembly members to discuss the impact of the Social Services and Well-being Bill on the lives of asylum seekers and refugees.
9. Working with the University of Strathclyde to research into integration and the onward migration of refugees in the UK.
10. Launching research with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on poverty and ethnicity in Wales.

"We have a long and proud tradition in this country of provided refuge to people in times of crisis.

This conflict is worsening by the day and that's why we need to do more and that's why I'm pleased to announce that we will now be working with the United Nations to identify the most vulnerable Syrian refugees. Particularly women, girls, those who have been subject to sexual violence in this conflict."

Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister, committing to resettle Syrian refugees in the UK on the 29th January 2014

Promoting positive perceptions of migration

Wythnos Ffoaduriaid
Cymru



Refugee
Week

Refugee Week Wales 2013

We organised and implemented Refugee Week Wales from June 17th - 23rd, 2014. The theme for the year was "Our History and Heritage". It engaged an estimated 150,000 people across Wales either through attendance at events, downloads, visits to social media and website; and other printed publications. There were 19 events across Wales ranging from arts, cultural and sports event; and the showing of a film "I am Nasrine" – a BAFTA nominated film about the experience of a young girl fleeing Iran. There were also education events with workshops about cultural exchange and a Lord Mayor's tea party.

The event was promoted through 5 mediums to include website, posters, leaflet, social media, t-shirt and badges as well as a programmed listing of events produced by the Welsh Refugee Council. Radio Cardiff and Radio Wales provided radio coverage of the events.

Our Media Work

We continue to develop our relationship with the media and to ensure that asylum seeker and refugee issues forms part of the debate on immigration. This year we did the following

- We campaigned for the emergency evacuation and resettlement of Syrian Refugees and went live on ITV Wales and BBC Radio Wales.
- We continued to use social media to campaign, inform, and share information about asylum in Wales.
- We conducted live interviews on Radio Cardiff and Newport radio to promote Refugee Week Wales 2014.

Training stakeholders

We provided 7 talks and presentation to schools, faith groups, churches and justice and peace group. We also gave presentations to local landlord forums and the Tai Pawb Equality in Housing network in Wales. This activity included information about the work of the Welsh Refugee Council, the asylum process and the entitlements of people. In many cases we used case studies and involved the active participation of people with first-hand experience of destitution and the asylum process.

Opportunities for active participation and education

ESOL

We offered ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Language) classes to asylum seekers and refugees. Our volunteers delivered the ESOL sessions. This year we have held 36 ESOL class sessions with over 92 people attending.

In 2014 we re-launched the ESOL classes working in partnership with the University of South Wales. Now we offer four ESOL sessions a week.

Volunteering

Our volunteers play a pivotal role in the development of the organisation and have a great impact on our service delivery. Our volunteers work across the organisation and support us in tasks ranging from office support to policy work, communications, administration and casework. This year we had 20 volunteers who made up 60% of our human resource complement.

We take this opportunity to say thank you to their invaluable support.

Participating

We created opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees to raise their voice to policy makers about hate crime and issues impacting on the lives of children and young people. We are committed to strengthening the participation of asylum seekers and refugees so that it is active and meaningful.

Asylum seekers and refugees actively participated to create a Hate Crime film for the Welsh Government's launch of the Hate crime Framework. This was delivered in partnership with DPiA's refugee advocacy group.



Case Study:

"My name is Kazadi Salang and I am from the Democratic Republic of Congo. I have been volunteering at the Welsh Refugee Council for over 5 years as a Reception Administrator. I enjoy volunteering at the Welsh Refugee Council, mainly because the staff are very helpful and friendly and I have learnt a great deal from the people who use the services. When I started, I was given the necessary support and guidance to do the job and have since done many training courses to help me in the role. My future aspirations is to start my own business and I think my time at the Welsh Refugee Council has given me the confidence and insight to help get me started".

Partnership Working

Our partnership work is extensive and we would not be able to provide the wide range of support to our services users without our partners.

We are proud to be active partners in the Cardiff and Swansea City of Sanctuary movement. Cardiff was awarded City of Sanctuary status in May 2014 and we worked with the group to welcome three members of the UK City of Sanctuary Appraisal Team when they came to Cardiff to make the assessment by visiting different projects and meeting various people. They were unanimous in recognising Cardiff as a City of Sanctuary.

The national appraisal team from the city of sanctuary were wowed by the welcoming and inclusive activities that they saw and experienced. Jonathan Ellis, one of the National team, said “One of the real strengths was the synergy between the core organisations working together to bring about a culture of welcome and inclusion”.

Thank you to all our partners in 2013-14, particularly:

City of Sanctuary Cardiff and Swansea, Tros Gynnal, BAWSO, Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Wrexham City Councils, Bethel Community Church, Oasis Cardiff, Trinity Church, Red Cross, Destitution network, Victim Support, Terrance Higgins Trust, Migrant Help, Refugee Council, Scottish Refugee Council, Refugee Action, Wales Migration Partnership, Share Dydd, Oxfam Cymru, Barnardos, Children in Wales and Displaced People in Action (DPiA).



The closure of our asylum support services

At the end of March 2014 we stopped delivering the asylum support services for the Home Office. Staff members were transferred to deliver the new service with the new provider Migrant Help and now offer advice to people from their offices in the Initial Accommodation centre in Cardiff.

This service offered asylum seekers advice and guidance from the day of arrival in Wales. People are first temporarily housed in Lynx House an initial accommodation centre in Cardiff and then moved to accommodation in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham. We offered support for people staying in Initial Accommodation and then delivered a one-stop-service for people living in asylum support housing in Newport, Cardiff, Swansea and Wrexham.

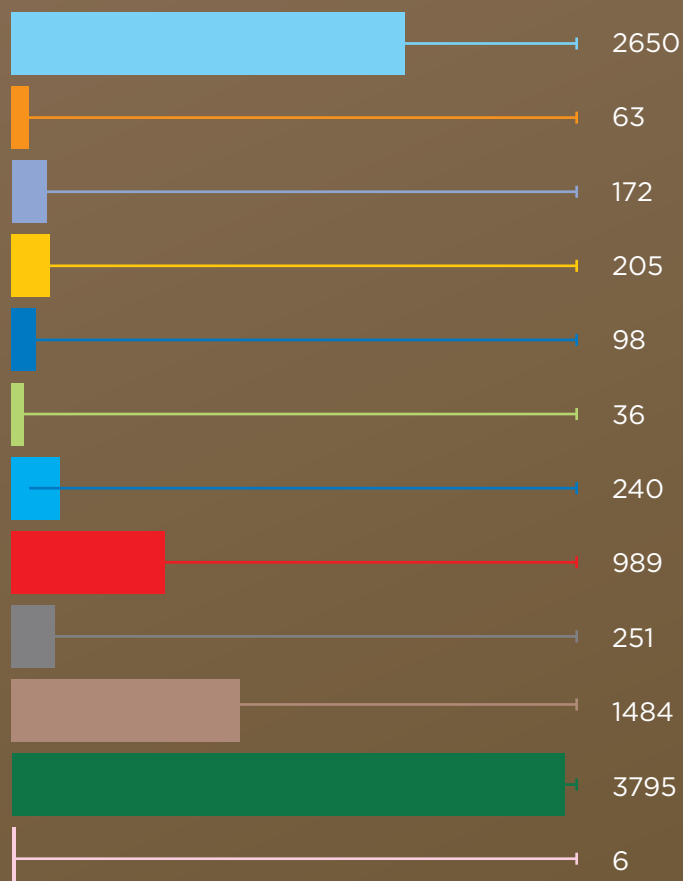
1,140
at our Initial
Accommodation Support

At this stage asylum seekers are looked after through the provision of briefings on the asylum process, their rights and responsibilities and about life in Wales.

12,937
at our One-stop-service

We provided casework support to people and families who are dispersed to Wales after they have made a claim for asylum. This is much needed support, guiding people through the complex asylum process

One Stop - Advice Sessions



- Support with Asylum Applications
- Assistance with UKBA Correspondence
- Completion of Asylum Support Forms
- Registering with School/Education
- Complaints to Acc. Providers
- Other Support and Advice
- Advice to other Agencies
- Change of Circumstances/Address
- Finding Solicitors
- Registering with Doctor/Health Authority
- Other lower level of Financial Support
- Signposting

Fundraising

We rely on the support of individuals and community members to help support our other services such as our hardship fund, and destitution initiatives. This year we raised £12,119 towards our Hardship fund and distributed £11,797 to people who are destitute through individual small monetary emergency payments.

We also received £3,844 in individual donations from other organisations, individuals and supporters of the work of the Welsh Refugee Council.

As community fundraising continues to be even more challenging, we remain ever grateful to all our supporters who helped us raise much needed funding support to ensure that we can continue to protect the rights of asylum seekers and refugees in Wales.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us in 2013-14. Your hard work and dedication to support people is always appreciated and we hope you will continue the good work.



Left: Alan and Marilyn Big Walk for Destitution.

Below: International Christmas Party at Shaftesbury Methodist Church.



Get involved to help support Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Wales

At the Welsh Refugee Council, there are many ways you can get involved, here are some ideas:

- Donate money to the organisation.
- Donate food items, clothing, toys, toiletries or sanitary wear for people facing destitution.
- Volunteer with us and help us to deliver our work.
- Join our campaigns and call for changes to policy and practice in Wales.
- Let us know about your experiences. We are always particularly keen to hear from asylum seekers and refugees.
- Become a member of the Welsh Refugee Council to receive updates on organisation and on asylum and refugee issues.
- Join our facebook or follow us on twitter
- Browse our website to find out more about asylum issues in Wales and for the latest news.

To contact us Tel: 02920 489800 or email us on info@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Financial Statement

INCOME	2013/2014
RESTRICTED GRANT INCOME	
UKBA Home Office Grants	£515,247
Welsh Government	£496,649
BBC Children In Need	£17,717
Comic Relief	£31,400
Lloyds Bank	£7,000
Hardship Fund Donations	£12,119
UNRESTRICTED GRANT INCOME	
Grant WCVA	£3,646
UNRESTRICTED FUND (OTHER)	
Subscriptions & Donations	£4,094
Interest Received	£971
Management Fees	£46,650
Sundry Income	£3,383
TOTAL INCOME	£1,138,876
ANALYSIS OF CHARITABLE EXPENDITURE	
Pre Status Expenditure	£612,195
Refugee Status Expenditure	£234,967
Influencing Policy & Campaign	£249,621
Governance	£3,876
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£1,100,659
Net Movement In Funds	£38,219
Funds Brought Forward	£211,723
Funds Carried Forward	£249,942

Thanks to our Funders and Donors

Home Office

Comic Relief

Welsh Government

BBC Children in Need

Lloyds Banking Group - Community Fund

WCVA

All our Donors throughout the year.

Contact us

Cardiff

120 - 122 Broadway
Cardiff CF24 1NJ

Tel: 029 2048 9800
Fax: 029 2043 2999

Newport

High Street Chambers
51 High Street
Newport NP20 1GB

Tel: 01633 266420
Fax: 01633 266421

Swansea

49 Walter Road
Swansea SA1 5PW

Tel: 01792 630180
Fax: 01792 630181

info@welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk
www.welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk

 @Welshrefcouncil

 Welshrefcouncil

