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Application to become a Recognised City of Sanctuary

1. Introduction

Due to Cardiff's strong tradition of welcoming immigrants to the city and its rich cultural heritage the Steering Group identified that we had a strong foundation upon which to build (see Appendix A). Additionally as Cardiff became a dispersal area for asylum seekers in 2001, many organisations have developed their expertise in providing services for those seeking sanctuary. There are already a lot of social and cultural events and activities bringing local people together with those seeking sanctuary in Cardiff especially during Refugee Week. Also many of organisations identified that they provided opportunities for people seeking sanctuary to contribute to city life (e.g. through volunteering, through the arts) and their contribution is celebrated.

However, the Steering Group felt that bringing organisations together to work towards becoming a recognised City of Sanctuary was an excellent opportunity to develop closer partnership working within the refugee sector, the wider third sector and local authority. It also identified many gaps which could be filled and realised that impeding funding cuts would have an impact on many of the organisations which support people seeking sanctuary. The recognition achievement will build on the work of specialist refugee and asylum organisations and add to the already existing support for those seeking sanctuary.

Cardiff first began the process of becoming a City of Sanctuary approximately two years ago and at the time the group involved were able to achieve an 'in principle' resolution of support from the Cardiff Council. In 2012 a strong steering group of individuals and representatives from various organisations revived the process (see Appendix A for the list of organisations represented on the Steering Group).



The Steering Group in Cardiff works on behalf of an increasing number of supporting organisations. This local partnership has helped to cement still further the working relationships between organisations that support people seeking sanctuary. The Cardiff City of Sanctuary Steering Group is now confident that it has met its set objectives and is able to demonstrate that it is committed to living and spreading the core sanctuary values.

The strategic vision:

Essentially within our strategy we set out to work towards the vision first developed in Sheffield to recognise Cardiff as a city which is welcoming to all, is proud to offer sanctuary to those fleeing violence or persecution, and celebrates the contribution of asylum seekers and refugees to city life.

The strategy objectives:

The group developed its strategic objectives based on the six action points whilst considering the three core values as outlined by the National City of Sanctuary.

Core values:-

- **Learn** about what it means to be seeking sanctuary; and be actively involved in awareness raising.
- **Embed** take positive action to make welcome and inclusion part of the values of your organisation or community, to support sanctuary seekers and refugees, and to include them in your activities.
- **Share** your vision and achievements; let others know about the positive contribution refugees make to our society and the benefits of a welcoming culture to everyone.

2. OBJECTIVE 1 & 2:

- Resolutions of support from a significant and representative proportion of local groups and organisations. These should include a commitment to welcoming and including people seeking sanctuary in the activities of the group, and to making practical efforts to build relationships between those seeking sanctuary and local people.
- Encouraging supporting organisations (whether formally pledged or not) to turn their commitment into actions.

2.1 Communication work

2.1.1 Networking events

Initially Jim Stewart (Evangelical Alliance) and Reynette Roberts (Oasis Cardiff) raised the awareness and interest in Cardiff City of Sanctuary by holding networking lunch events (5 in total). At a networking event on Friday 3rd February 2012 Siân Summers-Rees (DPIA) was invited to speak about her experiences of Swansea City of Sanctuary. After the meeting in February 2012, 15 people committed themselves to building the Cardiff City of Sanctuary movement. These networking events have been instrumental in building support and interest in movement.

2.1.2 Launch of the pledge

In 2012 a strong steering group of individuals and representatives from various organisations revived the process and the Cardiff City of Sanctuary movement was officially launched the pledge in December 2012 at the inaugural Wales Migration conference. The Steering Group in Cardiff then began to work on behalf of its supporting organisations.



2.1.3 Launch of strategy and action plan

- In June 2013 Cardiff City of Sanctuary Steering Group partnered with Swansea City of Sanctuary to organise a Wales Cities of Sanctuary conference which was attended by over 100 delegates.
- Cardiff's City of Sanctuary strategic action plan was launched during the first 'Welsh City of Sanctuary conference.



2.1.4 Communication launch event

- A communication launch event was held on the 18th December 2013 to publicise and promote the efforts of the Cardiff City of Sanctuary. Outcomes include:-
 - Introduction to the Facebook and Twitter pages of Cardiff City of Sanctuary;
 - Information about the Wales Cities of Sanctuary bid and our vision for Wales as a 'Nation of Sanctuary';
 - Networking opportunities with sector individuals and organisation agreeing to support the moment;
 - With the support of two interns (supported through VCS) and a volunteer an online newsletter has been developed to capture success stories, information sharing and event advertisement of the sector;
 - Creating and launch of the new Cardiff City of Sanctuary Newsletter and an update on the Cardiff City of Sanctuary Web page.



2.1.5 Other communication work

DPIA spoke on Radio Cardiff about Cardiff City of Sanctuary which further generated interest about the movement.

2.1.6 Number of pledged organisations and individuals

- We have obtained signed resolutions of support from 30 organisations and we are awaiting receipt of 11 other pledges. (See Appendix B for a list of pledged organisations). We have therefore reached our initial target of 50 organisations. Pledged organisations are given a certificate and a pledge sticker which they can display at their offices to show their support for the movement.
- An additional 43 individuals have also formally signed the resolution of support.

2 OBJECTIVE 3:

The support and involvement of local refugee communities, and participation by people seeking sanctuary and refugees in the local City of Sanctuary group, including representation on its steering group or committee.

- Two refugees regularly attend the steering group (a representative from DPIA's Refugee and Asylum Seeker Advocacy Forum and a representative from the Urdu Fellowship/Methodist Church in Wales).
- DPIA conducted a consultation exercise and met with WSSAG, Kurdi Cymru and Persian Welsh Mutual Association to discuss future work for Cardiff City of Sanctuary.
- One of our successes was the recruitment of eight people seeking sanctuary volunteers to support the Wales City of Sanctuary conference.
- One sanctuary seeker also attends the destitution sub group, Share Dydd (see below for details).

**3 OBJECTIVE 4:
Sustained engagement with the local authority or authorities (which may include but should go beyond a resolution of support).**

- Cardiff first began the process of becoming a City of Sanctuary approximately two years ago and at the time the group involved were able to achieve an 'in principle' resolution of support from the Cardiff Council at a Cabinet meeting.
- Since 2013 we have had the active involvement in the steering group of Laura Bryon (Community Cohesion Coordinator) who is a regular member of the group. Laura has acted as point of contact to take back council related issues from the steering group. One important achievement has been the revival of the Asylum Seeker Strategic Stakeholder Group multi-agency group. Some steering group members attend in their own organisational capacity and a steering group representative also attends on behalf of Cardiff City of Sanctuary.
- Towards the end of 2013 the steering group became concerned about the levels of engagement with the Council and as a result the group wrote a letter to Cllr Lynda Thorne (the councillor with responsibility for refugees and asylum seekers) highlighting our concern and suggested possible action by the Council. Unfortunately our suggestion of adopting the destitution motion has not yet been taken on board but the steering group plans to begin to lobby counsellors' on this issue. Notwithstanding this disappointment the council has committed to undertake two areas of activity:-
- Work placements for people seeking sanctuary
- 25 refugee awareness sessions (which have been provisionally booked to be delivered by DPIA)

**4 OBJECTIVE 5:
A strategy, agreed by the main supporting organisations, for how the city or town is to continue working towards greater inclusion of people seeking sanctuary and refugees, as well as greater public awareness and support for them, through a range of initiatives.**

4.1 Strategic plan

- The strategic action plan for Cardiff was designed to meet the entire City of Sanctuary application criteria. The Steering Group and will continue to use an action planning approach in order to further our work towards ensuring the greater inclusion of people seeking sanctuary.

The following work has been undertaken:-

- Wales Schools of sanctuary bid submitted but was unfortunately unsuccessful. The steering group will continue to look for opportunities for funding and has a funding application which can be adapted and re-submitted.

- DPIA has provided ongoing refugee awareness training which have included refugee speakers within the delivery (4 sessions for South Wales Police and a further 25 planned with the council).
- Networking lunches have continued to be a successful activity which has enabled the opportunity for organisations/services/individuals to network.

4.2 Fundraising

A fundraising sub group which consisted of representatives from the Cardiff City of Sanctuary Steering Group and Swansea City of Sanctuary Management Committee has submitted an application to the Big Lottery Fund for a Wales Cities of Sanctuary project. DPIA will be the lead partner however the delivery in Cardiff will be a partnership of DPIA, Oasis and WRC. There will also be project costs for refugee community organisations to undertake activities to raise awareness of refugee issues by bringing people seeking sanctuary together with the local community.

4.3 Initiatives

4.3.1 Initial Accommodation

DPIA is facilitating two weekly advocacy meetings for residents staying in initial accommodation in order to identify issues and concerns. DPIA has been able to support residents to make complaints and raise concerns with Clearsprings (some of which have been resolved). City of Sanctuary has also been able to ensure that the notice boards are kept regularly updated with information for residents.

4.3.2 Drop In's and projects

a. Oasis Cardiff

Oasis Cardiff continues to work along the principles of involve, engage and integrate. They work with asylum seekers to support them to integrate into their new community of Cardiff. This includes ESOL classes, employability support, IT classes, drama, art, story telling and other community projects. They also continue to have other organisations in to speak about different issues and sign post to other projects.

Refugee Week Wales has also been used as an opportunity to highlight asylum seekers and refugees in a positive way to those who would not normally hear about refugees. Oasis Cardiff has had a cultural event, worked with National Museum Wales on a gallery exhibit in 2012 called "The Refugee House" where more people attended this gallery exhibit than any other in the history of the gallery, had cultural events in different museums every Refugee Week including National Museum Wales in Cardiff this year. Oasis Cardiff also worked in partnership to hold a flash mob in the centre of Cardiff and ran different workshops in partnership.

Oasis Cardiff is also hosting The Parade Arts festival in April which will bring the community together and encourage dialogue. They will be running cookery workshops at Roath food festival and have had a stall at St Fagan's food festival.

b. DPIA Children and Young People's project

The aim of the project is to make changes to the lives of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people (under the age of 18 years) by improving their quality of life, increasing their level of social integration, improving levels of self confidence and giving opportunities to access mainstream activities, services and provisions. The main element of the project is the 'Family Integration Scheme' which provides weekly social, educational and recreational activities for children and families (including a weekly family play group).

c. Space 4 U, Trinity Methodist Church

Space 4 U is a drop-in for refugees and asylum seekers on Mondays and Thursdays (10:00-17:00), with women and children only from 12:30 on Thursdays. The drop-in provides help with learning English as well as being a space for interaction, learning and fun for families.

d. Cardiff Refugee & Asylum Seeker Welcome, Trinity Methodist Church

Weekly evening drop-in on Wednesdays (17:00-19:30) which provides opportunities to learn English and create social contacts, with refreshments and social activities provided (pool, table tennis)

4.3.3 Destitution work

a. Sub group – Share Dydd

A sub group has been established which is working on destitution issues. The group consists of members from an existing groups such as Home4U (see below) and Cardiff Migrant Solidarity as well as other committed individuals. In particular Cardiff Migrant Solidarity has been instrumental in setting up this group and has taken the lead in developing its work. Share Dydd has recently began to develop a volunteering hosting scheme.

b. Home4U

Home4U, working with Depaul UK, is providing shelter and food for asylum seekers who are destitute in Cardiff. The project is currently able to provide accommodation for four people, giving them the dignity and safety of a home for a short period of time. It may be a small step, but it makes a huge difference to the lives of those individuals.

4.3.4 Streams of Sanctuary

a. Faith stream

'Welcoming the Convert in Wales' was a City of Sanctuary event held during Interfaith Week on Thursday 21 November 2013 and which involved Christian, Muslim and Baha'i groups. In the globalised world in which we live, we are going to see increasing numbers of people convert from one faith to another, including or to or from a non-faith background. Such individuals can be quite isolated and vulnerable and so we need to be able to look at ways in which we can provide more support. This can often be a taboo subject but this event, attended by 16 people, facilitated very helpful and genuine dialogue. It was also possibly one of the first times in the UK that the topic was discussed in an interfaith forum.

A number of group members have expressed an interest in developing a faiths stream for Cardiff. Jim Stewart has sent out an initial email to the group outlining some thoughts as to how this might develop; this includes

- (i) initiatives that involve members of different faiths working together on projects;
- (ii) developing City of Sanctuary within the individual faiths and seeing churches, mosques, synagogues and temples of sanctuary.

4.3.5 Sanctuary Awards

University of Sanctuary

There are plans to meet with Cardiff University to discuss the possibility of a University of Sanctuary Award. Cardiff University support Asylum Justice (an organisation who provides free legal advice) including providing free interpretation services and encouraging law students to volunteer. The university also has an active STAR group who provide fantastic support to asylum seekers and refugees (e.g. at drop-ins).

4.3.6 Refugee Awareness sessions

DPIA delivered 3 refugee awareness training sessions for South Wales Police Students with the support of a refugee speaker.

Oxfam Cymru and DPIA delivered a refugee awareness training session for employers in Cardiff at City Hall with the support of a refugee speaker. The Oxfam Sanctuary in Wales Project continues to engage with employers and service providers regarding the rights and needs of refugees and asylum seeker women in particular.

Oasis Cardiff has given Police training in Bridgend over the last 2 years on the asylum process and issues facing asylum seekers and refugees. Training has also been given on the same issues at St. Fagan's National Museum Wales over the last year.

4.3.7 Employment and Education projects

a. Sanctuary in Wales

A partnership of organisations, coordinated by Oxfam Cymru, and including Oasis Cardiff, African Community Centre (Swansea), DPIA, The Sanctuary, Bethel Church and Business in the Community, are working together with the aim of supporting women refugees and asylum seekers in Wales into education, employment, volunteering and training. In Cardiff, Oasis is the delivery partner and provides drop-in sessions and English classes to help women to integrate and increase their confidence, thus aiming to reduce isolation and poverty.

b. St. Davids Uniting Church Education Fund (administered by DPIA in partnership with Oasis)

St. David's Uniting Church in Pontypridd provides regular donations towards its education fund which has been administered by DPIA since 2008. Asylum seekers can apply to this fund for up to £100 to cover costs such as NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centre) and course fees. Applicants need to demonstrate a prior commitment in order to qualify for the fund. More recently due to cuts in funding DPIA is now working with Oasis whose volunteers are able to support applicants to complete the application.

5.3.7 Other work

a. DPIA's Advocacy Forum

The Refugee and Asylum Seekers Advocacy Forum is part of the Co-creating Healthy Change Project which aims to ensure people have a stronger voice in shaping health and wellbeing services in their communities. The project will facilitate a Refugee and Asylum Seeker Advocacy Forum in Cardiff and more recently has facilitated a separate meeting for residents in Initial Accommodation. The forum aims to increase the voice and influence of refugees and asylum seekers to overcome the barriers they may face in accessing health, social care and wellbeing services.

b. DPIA's Health Professionals Project

The project provides IELTS and PLAB training and support for refugee and asylum seeking health professionals.

c. Fair & Square Advocacy Project

Fair and Square Advocacy Project is run by Tros Gynnal Plant and aims to empower Children and Young People to get their voices heard and bring about change. The Project is for Children and Young People Seeking Asylum and Refugees aged 11-25 years living in Newport and Cardiff and the immediate surrounding areas. The Project provides Independent Issue Based Advocacy and Participation work, as well as Information on Rights and Entitlements and Tailored Signposting. The Project can provide Advocacy on any issue, including Education, Emotional Health, Discrimination, Age Disputes, Housing, Health, or the Asylum Process. Children and Young People can access the Project themselves or through a referral from Education, Social Services, Third Sector etc.

5 OBJECTIVE 6

A commitment to self-evaluation through a regular review process which seeks as far as possible the views and suggestions of people seeking sanctuary and refugees.

During the last year we have re-visited the action plan at our monthly steering group meetings which therefore demonstrates our commitment to self-evaluation. It has enabled us to identify when progress has become slow e.g. see objective 4 above, and then undertake action to get back on track.

The steering group will continue to take an action planning approach to our work and will commit to monitor our actions at least on a quarterly basis.

DPIA coordinated a consultation exercise for Cardiff City of Sanctuary whilst taking the lead on the application to the Big Lottery Fund for the Wales Cities of Sanctuary bid. We have demonstrated our commitment to consulting and engaging with people seeking sanctuary and further commit to undertake further consultation and engagement on an ongoing basis.

APPENDIX A

Background information

History of Migration to Cardiff

- Tracing Cardiff's economic history, it is clear that migrants have made an invaluable contribution to economic and cultural life in our city. This has continued to the present day.
- At the start of the 19th century Cardiff was a small town of around 5,000 inhabitants. However, Cardiff experienced a dramatic rise in population during the nineteenth century – between 1801 and 1901 Cardiff's population rose by over 2,500% to 172,692.
- Over the course of the 19th century Cardiff grew as an internationally crucial hub for the coal industry, at its peak in the early 1900s, culminating in the city's port exporting more than 10 million tonnes of coal in 1913. This rapid growth of the Cardiff economy necessitated a substantial rise in the demand for labour.
- In the early 1900s many engineers, labourers and service sector workers arrived from Ireland, Spain and Italy to support the industries of south Wales.
- The port of Cardiff itself was developed using Dutch technology, and served the Somali, Yemeni, Norwegian, Maltese, Arabian and other sailors who used the port.
- Following the end of World War II many Polish people settled in Cardiff whilst residents from places such as the Caribbean, India and Pakistan were invited to settle and help rebuild Britain.

The city's development over the past 200 years has been supported by the work and knowledge of migrants from around the world.

Migration in Cardiff Today

- The 2011 Census revealed that around 45,000 of Cardiff's residents were born outside the United Kingdom, or around 13% of Cardiff's population.
- Further detail regarding Cardiff's international populations can be found by looking at its student population. The city has over 6,000 international students registered at its universities.
- The number of overseas visitors to Cardiff is a strong measure of the city's openness. In 2011 the city attracted around 300,000 international visitors.

Cardiff as a Dispersal Area

In 2001 the UK Government designated specific areas throughout the country as dispersal areas for asylum seekers arriving in the UK. These areas were established to help relieve housing and social pressure in London and the south east of England. In Wales, **Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham** were chosen.

Whilst Wales has seen a rise in its population of asylum seekers and refugees in recent years, due in part to the creation of the dispersal areas, the overall numbers still remain low when compared to the country's total population, some 0.3%:

- At the end of May 2009, a total of 2,322 asylum seekers were living in Wales
- 56.9% of refugees in Wales are living in Cardiff, 24.2% in Swansea, 15.7% in Newport and 3.2% in Wrexham

- Nearly three-quarters come from nine countries: Afghanistan, China, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe

The situation in Wales in some respects is more supportive of those seeking sanctuary than in England. WG has published a relatively progressive Refugee Inclusion Strategy. Primary and secondary Health Care and ESOL classes are both more generally accessible to asylum seekers than in England. WG has also legislated to ensure that secondary Health Care is available for asylum seekers who are appeal rights exhausted.

Since 2001, accommodation and other basic services for asylum seekers and refugees in Cardiff have been provided by Clearsprings (Management) Ltd – a private, national provider of accommodation to asylum seekers on contract to the Home Office (formally UKBA).

Some of the organisations involved in Cardiff City of Sanctuary include: -

A number of other organisations, including (in alphabetical order): Cardiff Council, Cardiff Migrant Solidarity, C3SC (Cardiff Third Sector Council), Cytun, Displaced People in Action (DPIA), Evangelical Alliance Wales, FAN (Friends and Neighbours), Home4U, International Friends of Wales, Kurdi Cymru, Methodist Church Wales, Oasis Cardiff, Oxfam Cymru, Race Equality First, Refugee Action, South Wales Churches' Refugee Network, Sova, STAR (Student Action for Refugees), Taff Housing, Tros Gynnal, Wales Migration Partnership, Welsh Centre for International Affairs, Welsh Refugee Council (WRC), VCS.



APPENDIX –B PLEDGED ORGANISATIONS

1. Asylum Justice
2. Bere's Cleaning Ltd
3. Black Entertainment Wales
4. Cardiff & Vale CAB
5. Cardiff City Council
6. Catalydd Caerdydd
7. Children in Wales
8. Council for Education in World Citizenship (CEWC)
9. Cytun
10. Diocese of Llandaff, Church in Wales
11. Displaced People in Action
12. Diverse Cymru
13. Evangelical Alliance Wales
14. Fairtrade Wales
15. Fresh Ties
16. Gapfillers Ltd
17. HDA
18. Home4U
19. Media Academy Cardiff
20. Methodist Church, Wales
21. Muslim Council of Wales
22. National Assembly for Wales
23. NLS Solicitors
24. Oasis Cardiff
25. Oxfam Cymru
26. Potter's Temple Church
27. Race Equality First
28. Red Sea Café
29. Refugee Action
30. Religious Society of Friends
31. SHARE Tawe
32. SOVA (Wales)
33. Taff Housing
34. Terrence Higgins Trust
35. The Gap Church
36. UBE Experience
37. UNA Exchange
38. Urdu Christian Fellowship
39. VCS Cardiff
40. Wales Migration Partnership
41. Welsh Centre for International Affairs
42. Welsh Refugee Council
43. Zolibeau

PENDING PLEDGES

- 1. National Museum of Wales**
- 2. Liberty**
- 3. Church in Wales**
- 4. Cyncoed Methodist Church**
- 5. Cardiff and Caerphilly Methodist Circuit**
- 6. Muslim Council of Wales**
- 7. Glenwood Church**
- 8. The Gate**
- 9. City Temple**
- 10. Cardiff Christian Healing Ministries**
- 11. Cardiff third Sector Council Wales**
- 12. Kurdi Cymru**
- 13. Wales Millennium Centre**

April 15th, 2014