

## **ATISN 17268**

### **Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children - Annex A**

This document relates to the Freedom of Information request reference ATISN 17268 requesting information from Welsh Government regarding unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

I have responded to each of the questions raised in order below. Please note that the Welsh Government does not hold all of the information requested but has provided all of the information possible including suggestions to assist with locating the additional information.

#### **1. Data relating to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children**

How many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people are living in Wales?

- i. How many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people are accommodated by local authorities in Wales?
- ii. How many unaccompanied young asylum seekers are currently care leavers under the age of 25 supported by local authorities in Wales?
- iii. How many unaccompanied children have been transferred to local authorities in Wales through the National Transfer Scheme 2022-2023?
- iv. Is there a referral pathway in place in Wales, which is used to record when unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people arrive in Wales, and used to track support provided to unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people from arrival to settlement?

#### **Welsh Government Response:**

Not all of the data requested is held at a national level by Welsh Government, some of which may be available at local level from local authorities.

Data held by the Welsh Government is available on Stats Wales via the following links:

- [Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children being looked after at the 31 March by local authority \(gov.wales\)](#) and;
- [Children receiving care and support by asylum seeker status, gender and looked after status \(gov.wales\)](#)

#### **2. The Belong Project**

How many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people living in Wales are accessing the Belong Project?

Where in Wales is support provided by the Belong Project available?

#### **Welsh Government Response:**

Welsh Government does not hold information relating to the Belong Project. This

project is run by Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru and funded through the Big Lottery. Contact details for TGP Cymru are available [here](#).

### **3. Support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children**

What support is available to help unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people living in Wales with understanding and engaging with the asylum process? By this, we mean support such as:

- i. Helping the child or young person to obtain legal advice and representation.
- ii. Keeping the child informed of legal and other proceedings.
- iii. Liaising with lawyers, social workers, healthcare professionals, police and Home Office officials on behalf of the child.
- iv. Working with young people to help them develop statements to support their asylum claims.
- v. Attending Home Office appointments with the child
- vi. Providing young people with holistic support to enable integration, continued advice and emotional support.

How many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people living in Wales accessed support for understanding and engaging with the asylum process from 2020-21 and 2021-22?

How many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people living in Wales are currently accessing support for understanding and engaging with the asylum process?

#### **Welsh Government Response**

Wales is a nation of sanctuary. Guidance for those seeking asylum is available on the Sanctuary website available [here](#) which provides information about Wales and where to find help.

The Welsh Government provides funding to the Welsh Refugee Council to support and advise Sanctuary Seekers on their rights this includes unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. TGP Cymru are currently a deliver partner of the Wales Sanctuary Service giving a specialised service to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The Welsh Refugee Council also receive funding to help sanctuary seekers who receive a positive asylum decision from the Home Office to help them move on to claim benefits and help with restarting their lives in Wales such as housing support and advice.

Also, Welsh Government have published the following guidance for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children which is available on [Gov.Wales](#):

[Unaccompanied asylum seeking children guidance](#) – how to claim asylum and stay in Wales without your family if you are under 18.

[Unaccompanied asylum seeking children: guidance for professionals | GOV.WALES](#)  
Social workers and foster carers can use these leaflets to help children seeking asylum.

<https://www.gov.wales/children-seeking-asylum-guidance-foster-carers>  
<https://www.gov.wales/unaccompanied-asylum-seeking-children-guidance>

[The law on care and support: unaccompanied asylum seeking children | GOV.WALES](#) – sets out the rights and entitlements of unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

[Unaccompanied asylum seeking children: age assessment toolkit | GOV.WALES.](#) – Guidance on how to undertake age assessment of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people.

Welsh Government does not hold data relating to the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people living in Wales who have accessed support for understanding and engaging with the asylum process currently during 2020-21 and 2021-22. You may wish to contact the local authorities in Wales who may hold this information on a regional or local basis.

#### **4. Support available for refugees**

What support is available for unaccompanied young people after they have been granted refugee status? By this we mean support for:

- a. Accessing education, employment or training
- b. Accessing financial support, such as benefits
- c. Accessing health services, both physical and mental

#### **Welsh Government Response:**

##### **Accessing education, employment or training**

If refugee status is granted, the rights and eligibility are set out on the Sanctuary website: <https://sanctuary.gov.wales>. As noted on the [Welsh Government's Sanctuary website](#), even before an individual receives refugee status, refugees and asylum seekers can access education in Wales.

The Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) aims to provide young people aged between 16 – 24 in Wales with an offer of support to gain a place in education or training, find a job or become self-employed. The following website provides further detail on the Guarantee: [Young Person's Guarantee | Working Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

Once an individual receives refugee status from the UK Government's Home Office, they will receive permission to work in the UK - in any profession and at any skill level. If they are not ready or able to look for work and have very little or no income, they can apply for benefits instead.

### **Accessing financial support, such as benefits**

Former Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, granted status in Wales, would be treated like any other Care Leaver so the entitlements to each of those services would be mirrored with care leavers. Guidance relating to Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children is available [here](#).

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children who are looked after by a local authority in Wales and meet the eligibility criteria (Category 3 care leaver turning 18 between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023) can sign up for the Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Pilot, which will provide them with £1,600 (pre-tax) a month for 24 months, starting the month after they turn 18. Further information on the pilot can be accessed through the following link: [Basic income pilot for care leavers | GOV.WALES](#).

### **Accessing health services, both physical and mental**

All unaccompanied asylum seeker children who are seeking sanctuary in Wales will be able to access mainstream health services. This includes mental health services. These services are also available once they have been granted refugee status.

Health support for asylum seekers and refugees in Wales is provided in line with [Welsh Government 2018 Guidance for Health Boards on the Health and Wellbeing of Asylum Seekers and Refugees](#). The 2018 Guidance includes information on the pathway for accessing health services for asylum seekers and refugees (set out in Annex 1).