

Nation of Sanctuary Strategic Oversight Board
Wednesday 12 February 2025 10:00 – 11:30
Virtual MS Teams

Attendees

- **Jane Hutt**, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip (Co-Chair)
- **Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby**, Leader Monmouthshire Council (Co-Chair)
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Home Office
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, REDACTED SEC 38(1) (Deputising for REDACTED SEC 40(2), REDACTED SEC 38(1))
- **Amelia John**, Director of Communities and Social Justice, WG
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, REDACTED SEC 38(1)
- **Andrew Charles**, Deputy Director, Cohesive Communities, WG
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Welsh Local Government Association
- **Becca Nugent**, Deputy Director, Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill, Home Office
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Newport City Council
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Cohesive Communities, WG
- **Cllr Angela Sandals**, Monmouthshire Council
- **Cllr. Linda Davies Evans**, Deputy Leader, Carmarthenshire Council
- **Dafydd Llywelyn**, Police and Crime Commissioner, Dyfed-Powys
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Cohesive Communities, WG
- **Erica Cassin**, Chair of Careers Wales Board
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, REDACTED SEC 38(1)
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, REDACTED SEC 38(1)
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Home Office
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Welsh Government
- **Joanne Hopkins**, Programme Director, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Criminal Justice and Violence Prevention, Public Health Wales (Deputising for Tracey Cooper, Chief Executive Public Health Wales)
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Cohesive Communities, WG
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Cohesive Communities, WG
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, REDACTED SEC 38(1)
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Cohesive Communities, WG
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, WLGA
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Home Office
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2) [Welsh Government official]**
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2) [Welsh Government official]**
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Home Office
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Police & Crime Commissioner, South Wales (Deputising for Emma Wools, Police & Crime Commissioner, South Wales)
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, REDACTED SEC 38(1)
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Home Office
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, REDACTED SEC 38(1)
- **Sarah Rhodes**, Deputy Director, Housing Policy Housing and Regeneration, WG
- **Shavanah Taj**, General Secretary, Wales Trades Union Congress (TUC Cymru)
- **Tim Rymer**, Deputy Director of Adult and Family Asylum Accommodation, Home Office.
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, REDACTED SEC 38(1)
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Cohesive Communities, WG (notetaker)

Apologies

- **Alastair Paton**, Deputy Director, Funding, Engagement, Delivery and Safeguarding Resettlement Directorate, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2) [Wales Trades Union]**

- **Andy Dunbobbin**, Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Welsh Government
- **Cllr Andrea Lewis**, Deputy Leader, Swansea Council
- **Cllr Darren Price**, Leader, Carmarthenshire Council
- **Cllr Geraint Thomas**, Merthyr Council
- **Cllr Huw Thomas**, Leader, Cardiff Council
- **Cllr Nia Wyn Jeffreys**, Deputy Leader Plaid Cymru, Gwynedd Council
- **Dame Angela Eagle**, Minister for Border Security and Asylum
- **Emma Williams**, Director of Housing and Regeneration
- **Emma Wools**, Police & Crime Commissioner, South Wales
- **Jane Mudd**, Police and Crime Commissioner, Gwent
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Home Office
- **Lord Khan**, Lords Minister for Faith, Communities and Resettlement
- **Nikki Lawrence**, Chief Executive, Careers Wales
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, REDACTED SEC 38(1)
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Pro Steel Engineering
- **REDACTED SEC 40(2)**, Home Office
- **Tracey Cooper**, Chief Executive, Public Health Wales
- **Tracy Bridgett**, Deputy Director Resettlement, Home Office

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Actions from Last Meeting

The Cabinet Secretary welcomed everyone to the third meeting of the All-Wales Strategic Oversight Board, and introduced Councillor Mary Ann Brockelsby, leader of Monmouthshire Council, as the Co-chair. The apologies from various board members were then listed and the Chair then also acknowledged the breadth of attendance. The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and confirmed as completed except one which is still ongoing:

Agenda Item 2: Update, Interministerial Group on Safety, Security and Migration

The Cabinet Secretary, shared updates from the latest Interministerial Group meeting held on January 22nd, where ministers from all four governments came together to discuss migration priorities and improve cooperation. The meeting, led by Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, focused on aligning migration policies with labour market needs. They discussed the importance of consistent migration policies, better engagement with devolved governments, and integrating labour market access, skills, and education. Concerns were raised about the decrease in international worker applications for health and social care visas and the varying international student fees affecting university recruitment and finances. The new border security immigration asylum bill was introduced, and its controversial parts were debated. The next meeting is scheduled for May to continue collaboration and legislative discussions.

Agenda Item 3: Update, Cohesion issues following last Strategic Oversight Board

REDACTED SEC 40(2) spoke about some of the issues with community cohesion since the last Strategic Oversight Board meeting. He mentioned that several organisations supporting the idea of a sanctuary nation had been targeted recently. He pointed out that Senedd Members showed unanimous support for these organisations during a recent debate. He highlighted the fear and misinformation spreading in Wales after the Southport riots and stressed that Wales was not immune to such problems.

He detailed a misinformation toolkit created to help stakeholders address false information within communities. This toolkit was meant to facilitate and support conversations and reduce the spread of misinformation. It had been assessed by a few organisations, who

gave positive feedback. He emphasised the importance of providing access to the toolkit via community support organisations and not placing it directly on the Welsh Government website which may lead to inaccurate suggestions that it is propaganda.

He stated that the REDACTED SEC 38(1) and the REDACTED SEC 38(1) had been collaborating closely with Welsh Government colleagues. He encouraged reporting any targeted organisations and offered potential support, including possible funding, to make a real difference in community safety. He mentioned the cohesion programme's role in monitoring community tensions and fostering connections between different organisations.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) also talked about the "Hate Hurts Wales" anti-hate crime campaign, with the current phase ending in March. There were plans to re-procure and increase funding for the campaign to better support hate crime victims. He highlighted the need to include examples of online hate crime and its prosecution to raise awareness and provide support to victims within Welsh communities.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) thanked everyone for their support and talked about the importance of their anti-racist Wales Action Plan. She highlighted the great work done by REDACTED SEC 38(1) in improving community cohesion, despite not receiving government funding, and suggested that this funding situation should be reconsidered.

Joanne Hopkins mentioned that different government plans need to be more consistent and work together better. She offered her support to improve collaboration, especially with the police, to ensure everyone is on the same page.

Shavanah Taj praised the Welsh Government's principled stance and acknowledged the challenges of dealing with government policies with differing views. She mentioned growing concerns from trade unions about misinformation affecting children and suggested involving Welsh Government representatives in future meetings to discuss these issues.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) emphasised the need for more visibility on the Welsh Government's actions supporting communities, especially international students in universities. She highlighted negative media narratives and the necessity for positive communication about the contributions of diverse communities. She proposed that the government issue a statement to all stakeholders, reiterating its stance and actions against hate crime.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) questioned the strategy of public messaging regarding the nation of sanctuary and the conflict between UK government policy and the vision of a sanctuary nation. He emphasised the need for clear public messaging to manage these conflicting policies effectively.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) addressed the challenges of public messaging in the current social media landscape. He suggested leveraging partnerships and enhancing visibility through collaborative efforts. He also praised the excellent work of many organisations which do not receive Welsh Government funding and discussed funding challenges and procurement processes which need to be followed to ensure fair allocation of public money.

The Cabinet Secretary highlighted the importance of teamwork in promoting positive actions and communication. She suggested a comprehensive communications program is explored highlighting the contributions of schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions. She also mentioned the need for more diverse political representation in upcoming elections and emphasised the importance of continued support for the nation of sanctuary initiative.

Co-chair Mary Ann Brocklesby reflected on the process of becoming a county of sanctuary, emphasising the need for systemic change and embedding equality into council actions. She highlighted the importance of understanding different governmental positions and fostering productive dialogue to ensure the protection of human rights.

Action 1 – Owner: REDACTED SEC 40(2). Inform all key stakeholders, including local authorities, of the Welsh Government's stance on misinformation and actions to support diverse communities. Distribute the toolkit to relevant organisations and stakeholders for feedback.

Action 2 - Owner: REDACTED SEC 40(2). Discuss strategies for public messaging on the nation of sanctuary vision at the Nation of Sanctuary Working Group meeting on March 3rd.

Action 3 - Owner: REDACTED SEC 40(2). Coordinate with Shavanah to explore attendance at the upcoming General Council meeting in March to discuss the misinformation toolkit and gather feedback from trade unions.

Agenda Item 4: Discussion, Overview of the Border Security, Asylum, and Immigration Bill, as introduced to Parliament on 30 January

Rebecca Nugent, Deputy Director from the Border Security, Asylum, and Immigration Bill department within the Home Office, provided an overview of the Border Security, Asylum, and Immigration Bill, introduced to Parliament on 30 January. This Bill is part of the government's plan to ensure a functional and effective immigration system that works according to the law and benefits both individuals and society.

The Bill focuses strongly on border security, particularly tackling organised immigration, and crime. It includes several measures, some of which were discussed during the meeting. The measures can be grouped into four primary areas.

First, the Border Security Command, led by Martin Hewitt, is given legal responsibilities to collaborate with partners across the UK's border security system, including police in Wales. Although small boats are a major focus, the responsibilities extend beyond that.

Secondly, the Bill creates two new data-sharing gateways: one for HMRC's customs data and the other for trailer registration details from the DVLA. This will help the Home Office and law enforcement partners share information more effectively to support immigration and law enforcement activities.

Thirdly, the Bill includes new powers to tackle organised immigration crime, similar to counter-terrorism measures. This aims to stop criminal activity at an early stage. One measure, the "endangerment offence," focuses on acts that put people at risk during sea crossings. It targets dangerous behaviour rather than criminalising everyone on the boats.

Finally, the Bill addresses immigration and asylum measures, including repealing parts of the Rwanda Act and the Illegal Migration Act. It also revokes provisions that would have allowed the detention of children, ensuring that children are not held in detention for up to 28 days. Regarding the route to citizenship, the Bill does not include a permanent ban on citizenship. Instead, the UK Government has updated the guidance to consider dangerous journeys as a factor when assessing citizenship applications. Positive factors will also be considered.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) raised concerns about how the Bill might affect public services and citizenship routes. She worried that new rules might make it harder for migrants to access services and gain citizenship.

Shavanah Taj was concerned about the government's use of videos showing immigration enforcement, which could create negative feelings in communities. She stressed the need for balanced communication that highlights the bill's positive aspects.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) agreed, saying the media often portrays migrants negatively. She called for clear and positive communication to combat misinformation about the Bill.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) questioned the balance between spending on enforcement and support for migrants. He pointed out poor accommodation for asylum seekers and feared that data sharing might deter migrants from seeking help.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) explained that the misinformation toolkit is for any false information situations, not just migration. He suggested further discussion in a working group and noted improved engagement between the Welsh Government and the Home Office about the Bill, compared to previous UK Immigration Bills.

The Cabinet Secretary thanked the Home Office for engaging with the Welsh Government and highlighted the need for continued dialogue. She mentioned the importance of local government involvement and celebrating Wales as a nation of sanctuary.

Co-chair Mary Ann Brocklesby agreed and suggested including local government officials in discussions about migration issues.

Tim Rymer acknowledged the feedback on the government's communication strategy and enforcement videos. He assured that communications are carefully reviewed, and that feedback would be considered for future strategies.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) asked about the Home Office's approach to legal advice on guidance changes and the promotion of enforcement videos. He warned that these videos could increase divisive rhetoric and suggested a more thoughtful approach to communication.

Action 4 – Owner: Becca Nugent. Border, Security, Asylum, and Immigration Bill: Provide contact details to the Board for organisations to contact her to discuss the Bill further, as required.

Action 5 – Owner: WLGA / WG officials. Extend invitations to local government leaders and cabinet members working on equalities and migration issues for future meetings.

Agenda Item 5: Discussion, Nation of Sanctuary policy and delivery for 2025-2026

The Cabinet Secretary provided updates about the Nation of Sanctuary policy and its delivery in Wales for 2025-2026. She emphasised that the oversight board is about us taking responsibility and embracing our powers. She hoped that everyone had read or heard her [Oral statement on the Nation of Sanctuary](#) on 11 February, reaffirming their commitment to the Nation of Sanctuary vision. The actions in the [new chapter of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#) aim to focus on the most important issues for the rest of this Senate term. The priority will be to support the most vulnerable and to collaborate with the

UK Government to improve asylum and resettlement schemes in Wales. She highlighted the 10 principles guiding their Nation of Sanctuary approach, which aim for better communication and improved service delivery. The draft budget for 2025-2026 includes funding for the Wales Sanctuary Service, which provides advocacy and advice services to sanctuary seekers, including legal services and services for young people. This funding has been extended for two more years until March 2027.

The Cabinet Secretary mentioned their continued support for the Seeking Sanctuary grant, which helps those refused asylum to access shelter, stability, and legal advice. Additionally, the REDACTED SEC 38(1), delivered by REDACTED SEC 38(1), will receive increased funding for two more years until March 2027 to help reunite families. The Cabinet Secretary expressed a desire to hear from members about how their organisations could show a similar commitment to this shared goal.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) of REDACTED SEC 38(1), expressed gratitude to all supporters. She highlighted the importance of the REDACTED SEC 38(1) recent meeting to discuss the anti-racist World Action Plan, including the nation of sanctuary plan. She acknowledged the great community cohesion work of the charity, REDACTED SEC 38(1), which operates without government funding and suggested this funding status be reviewed.

Agenda Item: AOB / Matters Arising

There were no AOB items or matters arising.

Future Meetings

The Chair confirmed the next meeting is scheduled for June.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

Action 6 – Owner: Secretariat. To arrange the next meeting far enough in advance to enable Lord Khan and Dame Angela Eagle to attend

Actions

No.	Action	Lead(s)	Update
1	Misinformation Toolkit: Inform all stakeholders, including local authorities, of the Welsh Government's stance on misinformation and actions to support diverse communities. Distribute the toolkit to relevant organisations and stakeholders for feedback.	REDACTED SEC 40(2)	
2	Public Messaging Strategy: Discuss and develop a strategy for public messaging on the nation of sanctuary at the Nation of Sanctuary Working Group meeting on March 3rd.	REDACTED SEC 40(2)	
3	Trade Union Meeting: Liaise with Shavanah around attending the upcoming General Council meeting in March to discuss the misinformation toolkit and gather feedback from trade unions.	REDACTED SEC 40(2)	
4	Border, Security, Asylum, and Immigration Bill: Provide contact details to the board for organisations to contact her to discuss the bill further as required.	Becca Nugent	REDACTED SEC 40(2) Completed
5	Local Government Involvement: Extend invitations to local government leaders and cabinet members working on equalities and migration issues for future meetings.	WLGA / WG officials/ Secretariat	
6	Next Meeting: Arrange the next meeting to enable Lord Khan and Dame Angela Eagle to attend	Secretariat	In progress Private office liaising with home office colleagues.