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# Evaluation of the Working Wales Service: Summary Paper 3

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3

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not  
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## Glossary

<b>Acronym/Key word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
CFW+	Communities for Work Plus
CV	Curriculum Vitae
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RSP	Regional Skills Partnerships
WRC	Welsh Refugee Council

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 [Working Wales](#), delivered by Careers Wales, is a Welsh Government-funded service designed to provide streamlined and efficient employability support that is responsive to an individual's needs. Introduced in 2019, the service provides an entry point for employability support. It enables individuals to talk to professional careers advisers about employment and skills, their aims and aspirations, and any challenges that they face in obtaining and maintaining work, education, training or advancing their career.
- 1.2 The crisis in Ukraine in February 2022 resulted in a rise in the number of Ukrainian forced migrants entering Wales. In response to increasing demand, Working Wales developed a refugee and migrant support offer to ensure that Ukrainian forced migrants and other refugees and migrants were provided with high quality and accurate careers advice where appropriate. It is important to highlight that this offer was additional to the Working Wales core universal offer available to residents aged 16<sup>1</sup> or above across Wales.
- 1.3 The requirement to stay at home due to COVID-19 government-mandated lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 resulted in greater demand for virtual services and led to the development of a virtual meeting offer for customers. Since COVID-19 restrictions to stay at home and/or stay local were lifted in 2021, Working Wales support has continued to be available in-person and remotely.

### **Overview of the scope and parameters of the evaluation**

- 1.4 The Welsh Government commissioned Wavehill in 2019 to explore the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of Working Wales. This summary paper is one of three produced to disseminate the evaluation findings and sets out findings related to service provision for refugees and migrants.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that this may also include some 15-year-olds who are turning 16 in the same academic year.

1.5 The key research questions informing this final stage of the evaluation are as follows:

- Are the benefits of the 'one-team approach'<sup>2</sup> being realised?
- Is the service accessible, particularly to customers in more rural areas? The term 'accessible' in this context refers to geographical access.
- Which models work well (the co-location of services with partners, community drop-ins, etc.)?
- What can the service do to be more inclusive? This will consider where there are equality gaps in relation to service access, based on demographic characteristics or geography, and be framed around groups who face the greatest gap.
- In supporting young people to meet their own individualised lifelong journeys, are Working Wales reaching those who would benefit from a Working Wales interaction? If not, what changes does the service need to consider to aid an increased reach? How are customers entering the service and what outreach/engagement activities are in place?
- What is the service offer across areas and how does it interact with partner organisations, services, demand, and labour market conditions?

### **Report structure**

1.6 This report aims to assess how the delivery model adopted by Working Wales supports refugees and migrants as they resettle in Wales, considering where it works well, where gaps in the service are apparent and, looking forward, the future potential of the service. The report is structured under the following headings:

- Context – this section details how the Working Wales refugee and migrant support offer was established and how the service aligns with existing refugee and migrant employability policy and national programmes.

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<sup>2</sup> The 'one team' approach means regardless of an individual's careers advice or employability support needs, they will be able to access the Working Wales service and be referred onto the most appropriate support.



- Methodology - this section provides detail on the approaches taken in the final stage of fieldwork and considers methodological limitations faced.
- Overview of Support Offer – this section explores staff and stakeholder perceptions of the current Working Wales delivery model and their perceptions of the challenges associated with delivery for refugee and migrant customers.
- Conclusions and recommendations – this section provides a summative set of findings and recommendations based on analysis throughout the report.

## 2. Context

### Overview

- 2.1 The following section provides detail on migration into Wales and how the Working Wales refugee and migrant support offer was established. This section also explores the Working Wales service's alignment with existing policies and programmes.
- 2.2 Overall, most asylum seekers and refugees in Wales are thought to be based in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham<sup>3</sup>. It is important to carefully distinguish between the experiences of refugees and migrants; this is explored in greater detail in Section 3. While some individuals are seeking asylum and refuge from violence, persecution or severe deprivation, others migrate for economic reasons or completely voluntarily. As a result, the refugee and migrant community is characterised by diverse levels of need for support.
- 2.3 As of 14 November 2023, a total of 7,238 Ukrainians have arrived in Wales as part of the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine)<sup>4</sup>. Note that as of November 2023 the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme made up about two-thirds of all visa applications from Ukrainians in the UK since the schemes were established at the start of the war in Ukraine (March 2022)<sup>5</sup>. Table 2.1 shows that the number of Ukrainians arriving in Wales via the scheme peaked in July 2022, with very few Ukrainians arriving through this route by the end of 2022.

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<sup>3</sup> Holtom, D; Iqbal, H (2020) [Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study](#).

<sup>4</sup> DLUHC (2023) [Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme: Visa data by country, upper and lower tier local authority](#).

<sup>5</sup> Home Office & UK Visas and Immigration (2023) [Ukraine Family Scheme, Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme \(Homes for Ukraine\) and Ukraine Extension Scheme visa data](#). Please note this data is drawn from live operational systems on a weekly basis and historical totals are not available.

**Table 2.1: Number of Ukrainians arriving in Wales via the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme per month**

<b>Date</b>	<b>N (cumulative)</b>	<b>N (arrived since previous date)</b>
06 April 2022	313	
10 May 2022	1,126	813
07 June 2022	2,199	1,073
05 July 2022	3,694	1,495
02 August 2022	4,713	1,019
06 September 2022	5,431	718
04 October 2022	5,849	418
01 November 2022	6,053	204
06 December 2022	6,182	129
03 January 2023	6,289	107
07 February 2023	6,437	148
07 March 2023	6,528	91
04 April 2023	6,616	88
02 May 2023	6,704	88
06 June 2023	6,783	79
04 July 2023	6,852	69
01 August 2023	6,928	76
05 September 2023	7,024	96
03 October 2023	7,118	94
07 November 2023	7,212	94
14 November 2023	7,238	26

Source: DLUHC (2023). A total of 7,238 Ukrainian refugees arrived in Wales between the launch of the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Data was reported on a weekly basis and the data above is taken from the first release from each month.

2.4 In response to the increased demand to support Ukrainian forced migrants, Working Wales developed a refugee and migrant support offer to ensure that all refugees and migrants entering Wales were, where appropriate, being provided with high quality and accurate careers advice. As highlighted above, it is important to highlight that this offer was supplementary to the Working Wales core universal offer available to residents aged 16 or above across Wales.

2.5 Through Working Wales, refugees and migrants are able to access the universal support offer. This includes employability support through an employability coach and information, advice and guidance from a Level 6 qualified careers adviser. The Working Wales support offer for refugees and migrants also developed over time,

ensuring that Working Wales was effectively able to respond to a wide range of refugee and migrant needs. This included:

- Establishing refugee and forced migrant/asylum seeker champions within each regional delivery team. Champions provide assistance to colleagues who may need support or advice when helping a range of refugee and migrant customer groups. Specialist champion knowledge and expertise includes, but is not limited to, legal rights to work and housing.
- Adjusting internal resourcing for Working Wales to support and refer customers to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).
- Working Wales staff training to ensure staff were confident and able to provide support to refugee and migrant customers from various backgrounds and with varying levels of English.
- Providing a '[LanguageLine](#)'<sup>6</sup> to ensure refugees and migrants with limited English could still engage with Working Wales.

2.6 On arrival in Wales, it is important to note that refugees and migrants may need access to a range of services before engaging with careers advice and employability support. As a result, Working Wales has sought to engage with a wide range of other services to ensure that the offer is available to refugees and migrants at the appropriate time. For example, on arrival in Wales, Ukrainian forced migrants were housed in Welcome Centres set up by the Welsh Government. When appropriate, Working Wales staff worked with Welcome Centre staff to ensure that Working Wales support was available as and when required.

### **How the offer aligns with existing programmes and policy**

2.7 The 2019 Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan<sup>7</sup> seeks to move Wales closer to the long-term aim of being a true Nation of Sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers. The plan focuses on the fast integration of refugees, promotes person-centred approaches that ensure individuals of all backgrounds are

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<sup>6</sup> [LanguageLine](#) is a service that provides on-demand and on-site language interpretation, translation and other services such as document translation for limited English speakers and Deaf or Hard of Hearing populations.

<sup>7</sup> Welsh Government (2019) [Nation of Sanctuary - Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan](#).

supported, and encourages private and public organisations to work collaboratively with the Welsh Government. This also aligns with the Welsh Government's 2022 Anti-Racist Action Plan for Wales<sup>8</sup> which highlights that the government's recent housing of Afghan refugees and Ukrainian forced migrants demonstrates that the country is, and should be, a nation of sanctuary.

- 2.8 The Nation of Sanctuary Plan and the Anti-Racist Action Plan align closely with several of the wellbeing goals specified in the 2015 Wellbeing of Future Generations Act<sup>9</sup>. These include the vision for a 'globally responsible', 'more equal' Wales with 'cohesive communities'. To achieve these wellbeing goals, five ways of working are championed in the Act (Long-term (thinking), Prevention, Integration, Collaboration, and Involvement). Involvement of refugees, asylum seekers and support organisations was crucial to shaping the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan.
- 2.9 Working Wales frequently works in partnership with other programmes and services, many of which align with the support offer. One key programme to realise the ambitions of the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan is the ReStart: Refugee Integration Project<sup>10</sup>. It aims to deliver a holistic integration support programme, focusing primarily on the asylum dispersal clusters Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Wrexham. Through assessments of customer needs and in-house skills training, the programme provides fast and ability-appropriate ESOL provision. It seeks to increase workplace opportunities through Regional Employer Engagement Officers. Research on this programme indicated that refugees and migrant communities most notably face barriers around English language skills, cultural competence in Welsh workplaces and a lack of employer recognition of qualifications, skills and/or experience.<sup>11</sup> Entry-level jobs were identified as providing a good stepping stone to overcome barriers to employment, but support into work needs to be complemented by in-work support to aid progression out of entry-level jobs and into more highly skilled work.

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<sup>8</sup> Welsh Government (2022) [Anti-Racist Action Plan](#).

<sup>9</sup> Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (n.d.) [Well-being for Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

<sup>10</sup> Welsh Government (n.d.) [ReStart: Refugee Integration Project - Increasing Employability Opportunities for Refugees in Wales](#).

<sup>11</sup> Welsh Government (2020) [ReStart: Refugee Integration, Employer Engagement Opportunities Research Paper Summary](#).

- 2.10 More established services, such as Jobcentre Plus (JCP), are further key components of the refugee and migrant employability support network. JCP offers a range of relevant services, such as job search advice and childcare and financial support to overcome barriers to employment. Previous research has indicated that JCP staff do, in some cases, only have limited time to spend with customers and do not typically have specific training to work with refugees and migrants<sup>12</sup>.
- 2.11 More targeted support can be provided by services, such as Communities for Work Plus (CfW+)<sup>13</sup>. CfW+ offers specialist employment advisory and intensive mentoring tailored to people who belong to groups that are under-represented in the labour market, including migrants, young, old and disabled people and people with care responsibilities. Participants are assigned a mentor who meets them within their local community, identifies individual needs and supports them during any next steps. A recent evaluation for CfW+ indicated that the programme offers activities to support, in particular, refugee medics into NHS roles<sup>14</sup>. This evaluation also indicated that English language skills are a common barrier for refugee and migrant communities.
- 2.12 An example of specialist support services in Wales is the Wales Asylum Seeking and Refugee Doctors and Dentists (WARD) group<sup>15</sup>. WARD aims to help doctors and dentists in overcoming barriers to restarting their careers in healthcare. Refugees receive support for vocational language training and revalidating their qualifications.
- 2.13 REACH+<sup>16</sup> is a Welsh Government-funded project that aims to provide a point of contact for anyone who wants to learn ESOL. REACH+ hubs assess ability levels and facilitate fast entry into suitable courses and support. Initially only running in Cardiff, the project was extended to Swansea, Newport and Wrexham as part of the ReStart project.

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<sup>12</sup> Holtom, D; Iqbal, H (2020) [Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study](#).

<sup>13</sup> Working Wales (n.d.) [Communities for Work Plus](#).

<sup>14</sup> Holtom, D; Burrowes, E; Bryer, N; (2023) [Evaluation of Communities for Work and Communities for Work Plus: Stage 1](#).

<sup>15</sup> NHS Wales (2020) [Support for refugee doctors via WARD](#).

<sup>16</sup> Reach+ (2023) [What is REACH?](#).

2.14 The voluntary sector plays a large role in providing employment support to refugees and migrants. Some services and projects are government-funded, while other faith-based and grassroots groups provide support independently. One example is the Welsh Refugee Council<sup>17</sup>, who work collaboratively with Working Wales, and offer employability workshops, application support and funding for vocational training. In general, many voluntary service providers are small in scale with a limited reach focusing predominantly on Cardiff, Newport and Swansea<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> WRC (n.d.) [What we do](#).

<sup>18</sup> Holtom, D; Iqbal, H (2020) [Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study](#).

### 3. Methodology

3.1 This section details the methodological approach taken in the final stage of the Working Wales evaluation which informed this report on support for refugees and migrants. Furthermore, this section explores the additional methodological limitations faced and considerations taken.

#### Research methods and activities

3.2 Fieldwork and desk-based research undertaken to inform this summary paper include:

- A thematic desk-based literature review regarding the context of refugees and migrants arriving in Wales and the support offer. Within this desk-based research, researchers conducted extensive searches across various sources including Welsh Government policy and strategy papers, other evaluation reports, studies and other published literature. After curating relevant materials, researchers critically analysed and summarised key findings that related to Working Wales. The synthesis of this information included identifying patterns, discrepancies and gaps in existing literature. This process was undertaken to contextualise the evaluation to ensure that evaluation findings can meaningfully contribute to this body of work. A full list of the literature reviewed can be found in section 7.
- An in-depth quantitative analysis of programme-level monitoring information provided by Careers Wales. This data includes all 95,164 individual Working Wales customers between February 2019 and March 2023 as well as 120,730 customer episodes detailed within this same time period. In many cases, customers received support from Working Wales multiple times. The following terminology has been used when describing customer involvement with the Working Wales service:
  - Where this report refers to **customer engagement**, this describes the unique customers who have engaged with the service.



- Where this report refers to **customer episodes**, this is the total number of customer cases which required support. Working Wales staff often work with a customer on multiple occasions; each occasion is recorded as an 'episode'. An episode can be a single day (e.g. where only one interaction is needed) or may extend to several months (e.g. ReAct+ support to a redundant customer seeking a new career direction). The total number of customer episodes (120,730) will contain repeat customers who have received support from the service multiple times. It is important to note that customer circumstances may change between different episodes, for example a customer may have different labour market status or live in a different location. Where these variables occur, analysis has been conducted by episodes of support rather than individuals in order to fully understand the support the service has provided.
- **Customer interactions** refers to the methods through which customers engaged with the service e.g. via telephone call or in person. For a full list of interaction type variables please see Annexe Four

All quantitative data was analysed using Excel and/or StatsIQ on the Qualtrics platform.

- In-depth semi-structured interviews with 28 management and delivery staff to reflect on the current Working Wales model, its efficacy, strengths and challenges and future considerations to ensure the model achieves its all-Wales entry point vision. These interviews took place from July–September 2023.
- In-depth semi-structured interviews with 14 internal and external stakeholders to explore the efficacy of the current Working Wales model, the support offer for refugees and migrants and the future role of Working Wales. Internal stakeholders were Careers Wales staff, and external stakeholders were individuals employed outside of Careers Wales but working with the Working Wales service. These interviews took place between August and

October 2023. All qualitative data was thematically analysed using grounded theory methodologies.<sup>19</sup>

- Peer researcher-led online focus groups with refugees and migrants who accessed Working Wales support<sup>20</sup>. These were attended by nine customers in total, with a further five customers providing written feedback through an online Qualtrics survey where they were unable to attend sessions. Peer-researchers<sup>21</sup> were identified by the Working Wales project management team. When considering how peer researchers could be recruited, the Working Wales project management team reported that, as the majority of migrants who have accessed the service are from Ukraine, it seemed more appropriate to engage Ukrainian forced migrants as peer researchers.<sup>22</sup> The peer researchers had initial conversations with the Wavehill research team to ensure they understood the remit and purpose of the role and to ensure the Wavehill team were aware of their support and training needs to deliver the focus groups. Peer researchers were asked to review the research discussion guides to ensure questions were appropriate and then subsequently translate the discussion guides. Consent forms including information about the research task were sent in both English and Ukrainian to Working Wales customers via the Welsh Refugee Council and Careers Wales contacts. Customers then provided their consent and contact details to take part in the group. Peer researchers, with the support of the Wavehill team, led focus groups and translated where necessary. As compensation, participants and peer researchers received £10 high-street vouchers.<sup>23</sup> A thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected was completed to identify

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<sup>19</sup> Bryman, A., [Quantity and Quality in Social Research](#), 1998 and Charmaz, K., [Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods](#), in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* 2nd Edition, 2000.

<sup>20</sup> Please note that all but one of the customers who engaged with this aspect of fieldwork were Ukrainian forced migrants.

<sup>21</sup> Peer researchers are people who support research within their own communities and can draw on their own personal experiences within the research process.

<sup>22</sup> Please note that peer researchers were Ukrainian forced migrants who had previously accessed the Working Wales service.

<sup>23</sup> Please note that a £10 voucher was supplied per hour of an individual's engagement with the fieldwork. As a result, some individuals received multiple vouchers.

key themes and trends, which was then triangulated with staff interviews and wider policy review information.

### **Limitations and considerations**

- 3.3 It is important to acknowledge that the terms refugee, asylum seeker and migrant are all used within this report and that the understanding of these terms and their definitions differ, whilst not used interchangeably. An asylum seeker is an individual who has left their country and is seeking protection in another country but has not yet been granted legal status as a refugee.<sup>24</sup> A refugee is an individual who has left their country to seek asylum in another country and has been granted legal refugee status. A refugee's granted permission to work can vary but they are typically able to secure employment in an occupation that has been identified in a 'shortage occupation list'.<sup>25</sup> A migrant commonly refers to an individual who is not an asylum seeker or refugee, who has left their home country for a range of reasons including work and education or for a wide range of safety reasons including poverty, natural disasters or civil unrest. It is important to highlight that Ukrainians who relocated to Wales in 2022 due to conflict were officially classified as forced migrants because of safety considerations in their home country.
- 3.4 In this report, the term 'refugees and migrants' is used to encompass a wide range of individuals and situations where people have come to Wales. Programme-level monitoring information does not specify each customer's nationality. Consequently, the identified refugees and migrants include only those customers for whom their refugee, asylum seeker, or migrant status is explicitly detailed or can be reasonably inferred.<sup>26</sup> Working Wales enhanced monitoring information recording from the end of October 2022 onwards, which included the creation of a new field to capture 'country of origin' for refugee and migrant customers. Where feasible, retrospective details regarding 'country of origin' were completed for customers who had engaged with the service since April 2022. Based on programme-level monitoring information it is also difficult to calculate how many refugees and migrants have been supported

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<sup>24</sup> Amnesty International (2020) [Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants](#).

<sup>25</sup> UK Government (2023) [Permission to work and volunteering for asylum seekers](#).

<sup>26</sup> Please note that reasonable assertions include cases where customers who were not classed as a refugee or asylum seeker but were referred to Working Wales by a service that only supports refugees and/or migrants, for example, the Welsh Refugee Council and local Ukrainian Welcome Centres.

by the Working Wales service as some were not classed in either category but referred from a specific refugee, migrant or asylum seeker support service. The total number of refugees and migrants analysed includes only those who voluntarily reported their refugee or migrant status, which may also account for these referrals not being formally categorised as 'refugee', 'migrant' or 'other forced migrant'. Therefore, it is likely that the actual number of refugees and migrants who received support from Working Wales exceeds the reported totals.

- 3.5 It is important to note that, in focus groups, refugee and migrant customers expressed confusion around the distinction between Jobcentre Plus coaches, Careers Wales support and Working Wales support. This was likely owing to the navigation of multiple services upon entry to the country, whereby multiple support avenues are offered. Where possible, evaluators confirmed with customers that the feedback they provided was directly related to Working Wales.
- 3.6 The cohort of customers engaged in focus groups was small, and therefore cannot be seen as representative of all customers of this cohort. Furthermore, as highlighted earlier in this section, the majority of this engagement was focused towards forced migrants from Ukraine. Please note that the experiences depicted by the Ukrainian migrants cannot be generalised as the experiences of asylum seekers, refugees or migrants of other nationalities.

## **4. Findings: Overview of support offer**

- 4.1 This section assesses the reach of Working Wales and the processes associated with delivering the service. It is informed by the views of staff, stakeholders and migrant and refugee Working Wales customers as well as an analysis of programme level monitoring information.
- 4.2 Working Wales aims to provide an all-Wales entry point for impartial and personalised employability support, available to all individuals aged 16 and over living in Wales with a legal right to work. Specific to refugees and migrants, the programme can provide access to a language interpretation service, transferring of qualifications, specialist advisers and English language skills training. The 2019 Nation of Sanctuary Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan included actions to ensure that programmes including Working Wales were promoting their services directly to refugees<sup>27</sup>. Furthermore, the 2022 Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (ARWAP) outlines commitments to ensure that employability programmes offer a safe, positive, and inclusive environment for all staff and participants.<sup>28</sup>

### **Demand for support by customers with refugee or migrant status**

- 4.3 Between February 2019 and March 2023, 1,250 refugees and migrants engaged with Working Wales, making up one per cent of the total Working Wales cohort.
- 4.4 As highlighted in Section 3, analysis of programme-level monitoring information has calculated the likely total number of refugees and migrants. This was based on the total number of customers identified as refugees and migrants, and customers with no classification but referred via a specialist service that only supports refugees and/or migrants, for example, the Welsh Refugee Council and local Ukrainian migrant Welcome Centres. Accurately identifying the number of refugees and migrants accessing the service is important to ensure that customers are being correctly and consistently categorised.

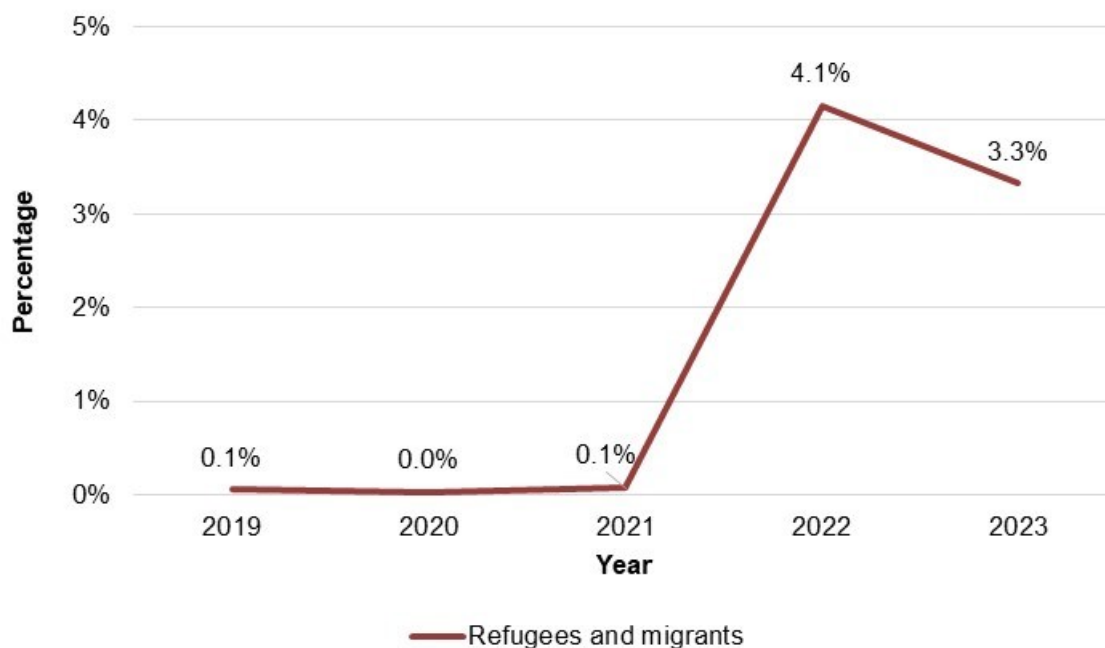
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<sup>27</sup> Welsh Government (2019) [Nation of Sanctuary Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan](#).

<sup>28</sup> Welsh Government (2022) [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#).

4.5 As illustrated by Figure 4.1, refugee and migrant demand for Working Wales support has increased over time. It is important to highlight that Working Wales refined their data capture systems to more readily identify refugees and migrants receiving support in October 2022. This means that it is likely that a slightly higher proportion of refugees and migrants engaged with the service pre-2022 than has been captured. However, the identified increase in demand is broadly in line with wider migration trends as a result of emerging and ongoing conflicts across the world e.g. crises in Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine. These conflicts have caused an increase in forced migration of skilled workers looking for employment. To effectively support the needs of refugees and migrants, Working Wales has sought to increasingly work with specialist partners, for example the Welsh Refugee Council, to ensure that Working Wales can effectively engage with a range of communities.

**Figure 4.1: Rate of refugee and migrant engagement with Working Wales**



Source: Working Wales monitoring information. Refugees and migrants identified (n= 1,250 customer engagements)

4.6 Figure 4.2 confirms that most refugees and migrants engaged with Working Wales, where data has been recorded, are from Ukraine (91.1 per cent; 1,044/1,146)<sup>29</sup>. This demonstrates that Working Wales has effectively responded to the demand to support Ukrainian forced migrants (14 per cent of all identified Ukrainian forced migrants residing in Wales; 1,044/7,238 as of 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023)<sup>30</sup>. However, it is important to highlight that 41 per cent (510/1,250) of customers identified as a refugee or migrant did not explicitly share their origin country as this information was not explicitly asked for prior to October 2022. As highlighted above, Working Wales adapted their data capture systems in October 2022, resulting in geographical information being more routinely captured. Section 9 (Employability and Skills) of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (2022) includes the commitment to review and evaluate the data collected on ethnic minority participants in employability programmes and analyse participation and outcomes for different groups to better identify which support works and where improvements are needed to increase participation and encourage better outcomes for these participants<sup>31</sup>. Working Wales should consider whether data capture on migration could be further enhanced to better capture refugee and migrant engagement e.g. through consistently recording customer country of origin within monitoring systems. To encourage provision of such data from customers, staff should explain how this data will be used to support their customer journey.

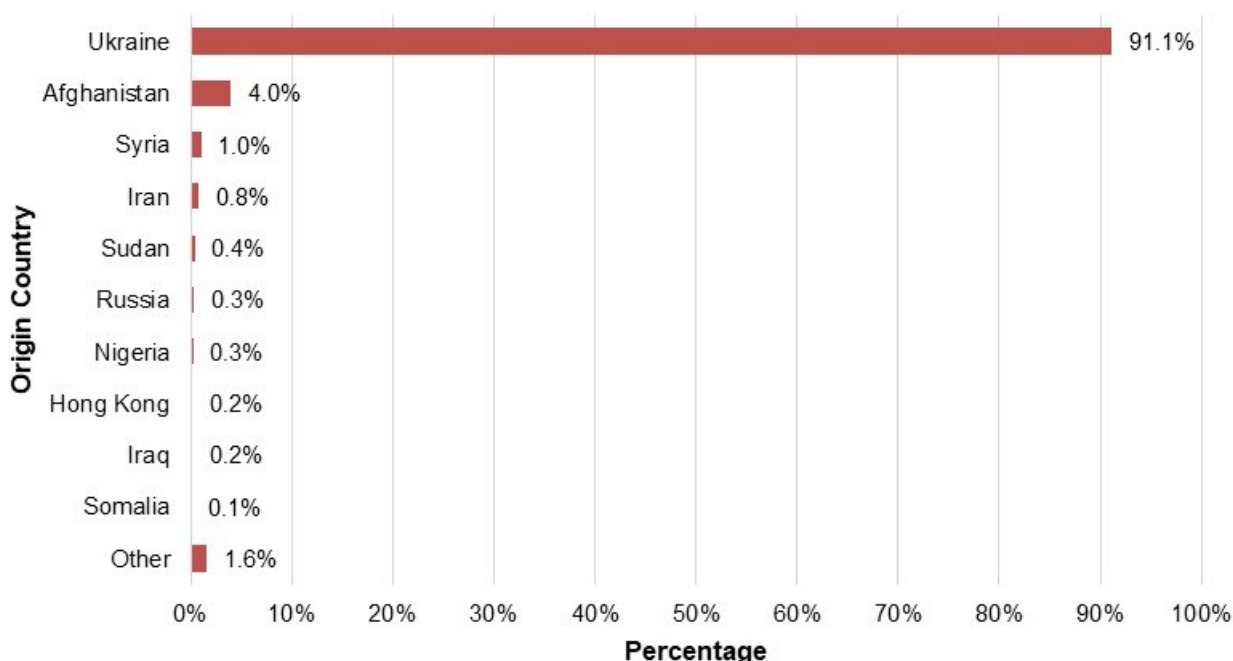
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<sup>29</sup> This includes 406 customers that did not share their origin country, but were identified as Ukrainian by their home language or because they were referred by an organisation focussing on supporting Ukrainian refugees.

<sup>30</sup> Arriving as part of the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine), DLUHC (2023).

<sup>31</sup> Welsh Government (2022) [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#).

**Figure 4.2: Origin country of refugees and migrants engaged in Working Wales**

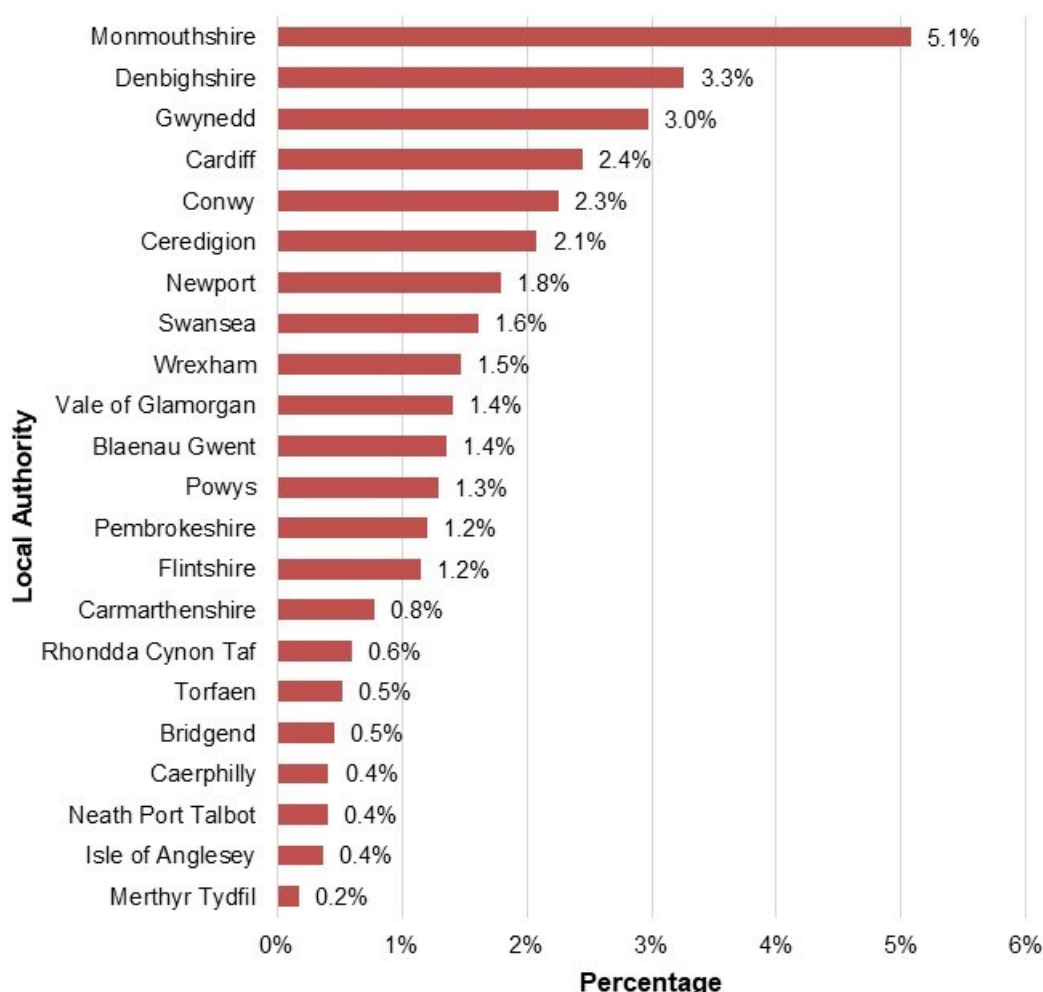


Source: Working Wales monitoring information. Refugees and migrants with identified country of origin (n= 1,146 customer engagements). This excludes customers for whom their origin country has not been recorded, with the exception of 406 customers that were identified as Ukrainian based on other available data.

4.7 At a national level, Cardiff received the highest number of refugee and migrant referrals (244/1,250; 19.5 per cent of all referrals in this cohort) which is to be expected given population density. However, when looking at the proportion of refugees and migrants from each local authority as a percentage of total Working Wales customers from each local authority (as illustrated by Figure 4.3), Monmouthshire (125/2,461; 5.1 per cent), Denbighshire (64/1,963; 3.3 per cent) and Gwynedd (92/3,090; 3.0 per cent) had the highest proportions. As will be explored further in paragraph 4.21, stakeholders suggested that whilst refugees and migrants are typically located in urban hubs in Wales, Ukrainian forced migrants have generally been located across a wider range of geographies.



**Figure 4.3: Proportion of customers engaged in Working Wales who were refugees and migrants, by local authority**



Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n= 85,965 customer engagements) Please note, this excludes customers for which the local authority was not recorded.

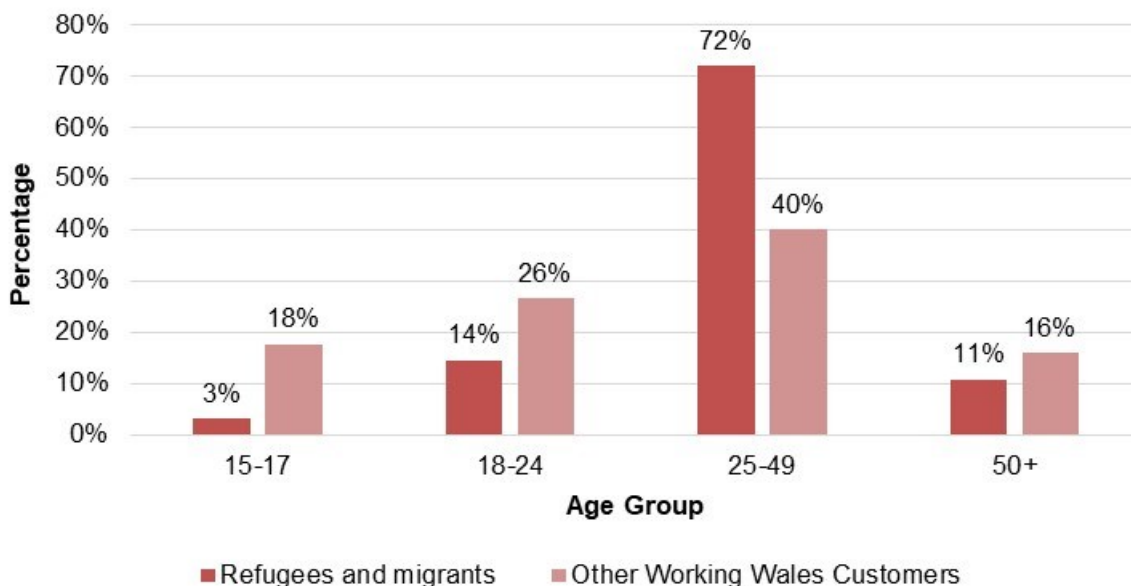
4.8 Figure 4.4 illustrates that the majority of refugees and migrants accessing Working Wales were between the age of 25-49 (72 per cent; 898/1,250).<sup>32</sup> A considerably higher proportion of the refugee and migrant Working Wales customers cohort are aged between 25 and 49 than across the remaining Working Wales customer cohort.<sup>33</sup> This broadly aligns with wider migration trends in Wales, with almost three fifths of non-UK born Welsh residents aged between 18 and 44 (59 per cent).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Please note that where refugees and migrants have engaged with Working Wales multiple times and changed age between interactions, the first age has been included in analysis.

<sup>33</sup> Please note that the 'remaining customer cohort' excludes refugee and migrant customers.

<sup>34</sup> Welsh Government (2022) [Demography and migration in Wales \(Census 2021\)](#).

**Figure 4.4: Age groups of refugee and migrant customers engaged in Working Wales**



Source: Working Wales monitoring information. Refugees and migrants identified (n= 1,250 customer engagements) and all other Working Wales customers (n= 93,893 customer engagements). Please note, this excludes customers for which data on the reported age has been recorded incorrectly, for example below 0 or over 100. For customers who moved between age groups from 2019 to 2023 (n= 2,679) their first reported age is displayed here.

4.9 Across the total cohort of Working Wales customers, there is a considerably higher proportion of male customers than females (59 per cent and 41 per cent respectively). In comparison, almost two thirds of refugee and migrant customers identify as female (64 per cent; 801/1,250). Whilst this is a higher proportion than is typical across displaced persons globally<sup>35</sup>, it is in line with the substantially higher proportion of Ukrainian migrants identifying as female across all host countries<sup>36</sup>. This is likely driven by 2022 legal martial law requirements for adult males (aged 18-60) to remain in Ukraine.

4.10 Monitoring information also details the language customers use at home. Across customers identified as a refugee or migrant that provided their home language (82 per cent; 1,020/1,250), 80 per cent (817/1,020) reported that their home language was Ukrainian and 9 per cent reported that their home language was Russian (92/1,020). This finding is unsurprising given the high proportion of Ukrainian

<sup>35</sup> Globally, female refugee proportions typically total at less than 50 per cent. The UN Refugee Agency (2021) [Global Trends Report 2021](#).

<sup>36</sup> Across all Host Countries, 70 per cent of Ukrainian migrants identify as female. OECD (2023) [What are the integration challenges of Ukrainian refugee women](#).

migrants identified as Working Wales customers. In line with the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (2022) commitments to review and evaluate data collected on ethnic minority participants in employability programmes<sup>37</sup>, prioritising the collection of relevant information for refugee and migrant customers, such as home language, will help the service to better demonstrate its reach and will support future reviews of customer engagement.

### **Staff and stakeholder perceptions of offer and its reach**

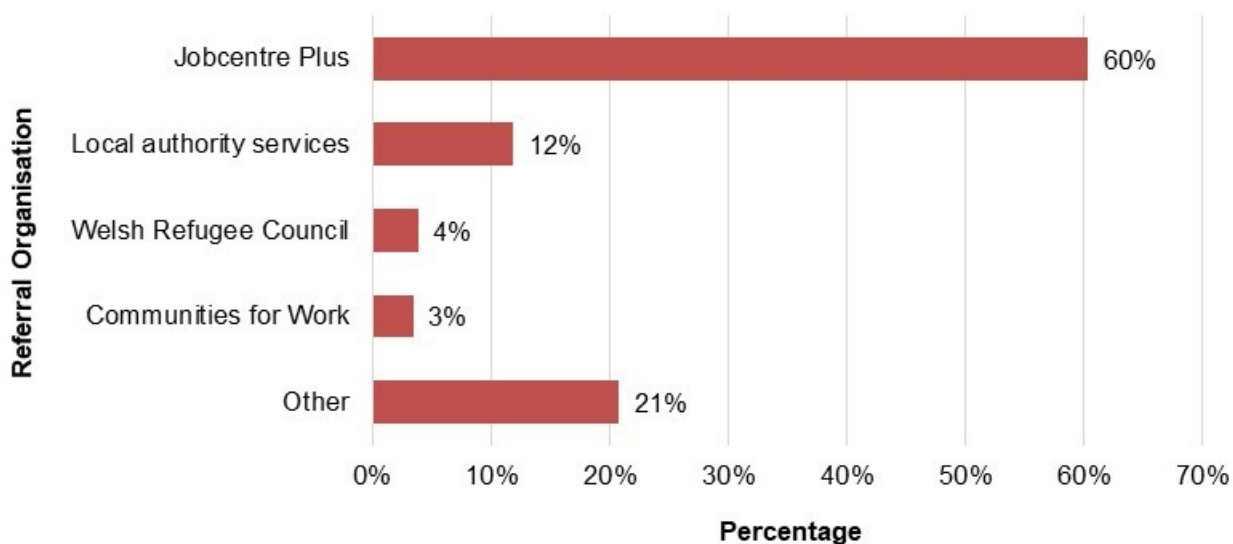
- 4.11 In evaluation interviews, staff and stakeholders were asked a series of questions regarding the Working Wales offer for refugees and migrants. This sub-section details perceptions of the wider offer and the efficacy of its reach.
- 4.12 As reported above, demand for support for migrants and refugees increased due to emerging and ongoing conflicts across the world. Please note that whilst a wide range of refugees and migrants, with different circumstances and experiences, from across the world have accessed Working Wales support, Ukrainian migrants have been particularly prominent (as highlighted in paragraph 4.6 above). As a result, staff and stakeholders frequently spoke specifically about Ukrainian migrants.
- 4.13 Overall, staff and stakeholders praised the service's ability to react quickly and pivot services to ensure that support was accessible for refugees and migrants. In many cases, staff reported that they had to and were able to respond quickly to provide a new offer. For example, staff described offering new ESOL support in collaboration with partners such as Welcome Centres and third-sector organisations. The service's ability to implement a new service offer quickly and flexibly should be commended.
- 4.14 To ensure that Working Wales effectively reaches refugees, asylum seekers and migrants entering Wales, regional teams have sought to form partnerships for co-location and outreach with a series of specialised partners. For example, Working Wales regional teams have frequently worked with the Welsh Refugee Council, local refugee and asylum support groups and refugee and migrant Welcome Centres setup to support people when first entering the country.

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<sup>37</sup> Welsh Government (2022) [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#).

- 4.15 Establishing pop-up sites through co-location at refugee and migrant Welcome Centres was perceived by staff and stakeholders as effective, as it has ensured that advice is accurate, due to the expertise of staff, and easy to access for people entering Wales. Working Wales support at Welcome Centres was also felt to offer a continuity of care that other services were unable to provide. In many cases, stakeholders and staff described refugees and migrants as working with the same support worker or referred to another Working Wales member of staff once they had been relocated. This, staff suggested, offered customers a level of reassurance that they would continue to receive support, regardless of where they were located.
- 4.16 The flexibility of pop-up sites at refugee and migrant Welcome Centres was also praised as being able to adapt based on need. Staff reported that the ability to open and close Working Wales pop-ups, based on demand, ensured that Working Wales resource was used effectively and efficiently. It is important to highlight, however, this process did appear to put additional pressure on staff, which has improved over time.
- 4.17 'We worked with lots of other agencies and provided as much support as possible. Initially we were overwhelmed by the sheer numbers but eventually the workload eased.' (**Management and delivery staff interview**)
- 4.18 Alongside refugee and migrant Welcome Centre pop-ups, stakeholders described collaborating with Working Wales on refugee and migrant focused events to directly refer customers to Working Wales. This was perceived as effective, as it informed individuals about the wider support offer available to them, and ensured that they were aware that Working Wales was the 'go to' service for qualification conversions and that the Welsh Refugee Council could offer a series of employability workshops. Whilst this data is not available for all customers, monitoring information indicates that this partnership working has worked well, with refugees and migrants most commonly being referred to Working Wales through Jobcentre Plus (60 per cent; 476/790), local authority services (12 per cent; 93/790), the Welsh Refugee Council (four per cent; 30/790) and Communities for Work Plus (three per cent; 27/790).

**Figure 4.5: First referral organisation for refugee and migrant customers engaged in Working Wales**



Source: Working Wales monitoring information (n= 790 customer engagements). Please note, this excludes customers for which the first referral organisation is unknown. For customers that engaged with Working Wales more than once, only the first referral organisation is included here.

4.19 To improve accessibility of support, Working Wales also provides translated information leaflets in 28 languages<sup>38</sup> in addition to leaflets in English and Welsh, for example in Ukrainian, Russian and Arabic, which stakeholders suggested ensured that customers' immediate language needs could be met. Staff also referenced the provision of a 'LanguageLine' to ensure that interpretation services were available to any customer that required it. Greater localised reviews of programme-level data regarding customer engagement, alongside informed consideration of live refugee and migrant numbers into local areas, would ensure that Working Wales resources are in line with customer support need. For example, for information on Ukrainian forced migrants, Department of Levelling Up and Housing data in relation to the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme or Family Scheme could have been used.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Information leaflets were available in the following languages: Ukrainian, Amharic, Arabic, Belarussian, Bengalis, Czech, Dari, Estonian, Farsi, French, German, Japanese, Kurdish Sorani, Latvian, Lithuanian, Moldovan, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya, Traditional Chinese, Turkish, Urdu.

<sup>39</sup> The Department for Levelling-Up and Housing (2022) [Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme](#).

- 4.20 Support for refugees and migrants is commonly led by specialist teams within Working Wales. Refugee and forced migrant/asylum seeker champions have been established within each regional delivery team, and additional staff training has been given around supporting customers from varied backgrounds and for whom English or Welsh may not be their first language. The champions also provide assistance to colleagues who may need support or advice when helping these customer groups. These staff members were described as having expertise on a wide range of issues specific to refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, for example, legal rights to work and housing. Support from said champions was praised by staff, suggesting that this was a beneficial aspect of the new support offer.
- 4.21 Stakeholders, however, suggested that specialist teams frequently reside in urban hubs because refugees and migrants are typically located in these areas. As a result, support has varied across some local authorities. The limited availability of specialist champions has meant some migrant customers initially received support from a careers adviser that didn't hold the specialist skill set. Stakeholders reported that this resulted in some migrant customers initially receiving 'general' advice rather than specialist advice relating to their specific set of circumstances. It is important, however, to acknowledge that where possible advisers have adapted their skillsets and tried to support a wide range of customer needs. This suggests that champion support and knowledge is widely appreciated and required to support complex refugee and migrant customer needs. Whilst all Working Wales staff have sought to support refugee and migrant customers, in more rural areas, it is suggested that greater resource and information sharing is needed internally, within Working Wales. This will ensure that a consistent and knowledgeable approach is taken with refugees and migrants accessing the service across the country.
- 4.22 Working Wales staff and stakeholders described a wide range of new partnerships developed to ensure that refugee and migrant customer support needs are met. Staff reported that co-location facilitated joint working with liaison officers and other partners, which made it easier to provide wrap-around support to customers.

- 4.23 'We can see the forced migrants in their communities and coordinate support with partners where they've been allocated key workers and communities for work. It's been really important that we've been part of that package of support around the customers there.' (**Management and delivery staff interview**)
- 4.24 Partnership working has enabled customers to access a range of third sector organisations for a wide range of needs, including, but not limited to; housing, childcare and mental health. Whilst working with a wide range of partners has ensured that Working Wales can refer customers to a wide range of support offers, it is important to highlight it can be challenging for staff to keep up to date with a wide range of support offers, beyond traditional employability support.
- 4.25 '[The challenge is] making sure that we're aware of everything, because there's quite a few, sometimes new organisations, new charities [and] voluntary organisations. We work with the voluntary leads in the authority to make sure that if there are any new organisations popping up offering support, they work with us, so that's an ongoing piece of work for me really to keep up to date with everything that's been made available.' (Management and delivery staff interview)
- 4.26 Overall, whilst the flexibility and adaptability of Working Wales is widely praised, it also risks putting additional pressures on staff. As highlighted in the final report, to ensure the remit of 'a local approach' that is clear, targeted and supported, formalised strategic sessions should be scheduled between regional and national Working Wales teams, RSPs and Welsh Government representatives. This will ensure that outreach and co-location decision making is informed by demand, local need and the wider support offer.
- 4.27 In many cases, staff and stakeholders emphasised that the core Working Wales careers advice offer is universal and, as a result, the support offered to refugees and migrants is consistent with the support offered to other customers. However, support for refugees and migrants was also understood as having a greater focus on ESOL support and qualification conversion. This will be explored in more detail in the following sub-section.

### **Perceptions of tailored support offer**

- 4.28 As previously highlighted, staff and stakeholders praised the ability of Working Wales to quickly and flexibly adapt the service to ensure it could support refugees and migrants from various backgrounds and with a range of support needs. This sub-section details the range of additional support provided to refugees and migrants through Working Wales.
- 4.29 Staff, stakeholders and refugee and migrant customers consistently reported that ESOL provision was the key support need for refugees and migrants accessing Working Wales. Staff and stakeholders commonly reported that migrants from Ukraine, in particular, were commonly highly skilled and requested support as they were unable to secure roles that matched their skillset. This was due to their inability to confidently converse in English, as well as a need to convert their professional qualifications to the UK equivalent. These findings are in line with the aforementioned Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study<sup>40</sup>, in which migrants were often found to have to seek alternative employment outside of their aspirations.
- 4.30 ‘The language barrier has been immense. It's adapting to a new culture. It's the conversion of their qualifications and then making sure that their language is at a functional level for them to enter employment.’  
**(Management and delivery staff interview)**
- 4.31 Staff described referring refugee and migrant customers to a range of colleges and community learning centres for ESOL provision, however, it was also acknowledged that a wide range of support programmes, e.g. ReACT+ and Communities for Work, also offer ESOL provision and qualification translation (via European Network of Information Centres scheme). In these cases, it is suggested that Working Wales staff referred customers directly to the most appropriate service but continued working with them if additional careers advice was required.

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<sup>40</sup> Holtom, D; Iqbal, H (2020) [Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study](#).



- 4.32 To ensure that Working Wales support for refugees and migrants is effectively tailored to suit the needs of a range of individuals, stakeholders stressed the importance of staff having a detailed understanding of different legal statuses, visa requirements and rights to work. Staff reflected that understanding the nuances and complexities around different refugee and migrant legal statuses could be challenging, in particular, where staff had not previously commonly worked with refugees and migrants. Confusion between the different terminology appears evident in interview feedback and monitoring information as the terms refugee, migrant and asylum seeker are inconsistently applied. As highlighted previously, greater resource and information sharing is needed internally within Working Wales to ensure that a consistent and knowledgeable approach is taken with refugees and migrants accessing the service across the country.
- 4.33 An important aspect of the support offer denoted by staff was providing information around working and workplace culture in Wales, in comparison to the home country of refugee and migrant customers. This includes ensuring customers understand their rights as workers e.g. minimum wage and entitlement to an employment contract, as well as sectoral differences and employee expectation. Staff commonly reported that light-touch employability support was frequently required to ensure customers' CVs aligned with the style of UK applicants and to prepare them for the general processes undertaken within interviews and workplace culture e.g. what's expected of them and their workers' rights. This was seen to prepare customers for informal discussions with their prospective employers and ensure they could meet general workplace expectations.
- 4.34 There was recognition from delivery staff and stakeholders that many skilled refugees and migrants are not able to easily re-enter the role they were employed in, in their home countries. Reasons why refugees and migrants cannot re-enter their previous roles varied, for example, limited English language ability, lack of available roles, location and/or complex qualification translation options. Re-entering previous roles was perceived to be particularly challenging for customers who were previously employed in a type of medical role e.g. nurses, doctors and dentists. Whilst it is important to highlight that the availability of roles is outside of the control of Working Wales, staff and stakeholders frequently emphasised the

importance of expectation setting with refugee and migrant customers. In some cases, expectation setting included staff supporting customers to access the additional qualifications, work experience and/or support required to ensure their skills could be effectively utilised in Wales. For example, providing access to hygiene courses for hospitality or health and safety certificates. In other cases, expectation setting involved staff having to inform customers that they would not easily be able to re-enter their chosen profession due to circumstances beyond staff and customer control e.g. differing qualification requirements. It is to be expected that different approaches to expectation setting will be required for different customers in different circumstances.

- 4.35 In some cases, it will not be possible for refugees and migrants to easily secure employment in their chosen profession due to limited availability of said employment in their location. A minority of stakeholders reported that approaches to expectation setting from Working Wales staff appears to vary from staff member to staff member. It was suggested by stakeholders that, where approaches vary, this was commonly due to staff having had limited previous experience working with refugees and migrants (commonly in rural areas). Future Working Wales provision should ensure that staff approaches to expectation setting are consistent and aligned with wider insight around sector skills gaps and specific qualification requirements. It is anticipated that this could be supported through improved information sharing around working with customers from refugee and migrant communities. This will allow Working Wales staff to better support customers with required skills into the appropriate training, support or role, whilst acknowledging that some barriers faced are beyond the control of Working Wales staff.

#### **Customer reflections on support offer and its impact**

- 4.36 This section explores the perceptions of customers engaged in the evaluation focus groups. It is important to highlight that whilst this sub-section details the experience of the 14 refugee and migrant customers who engaged in evaluation fieldwork, this may not be reflective of others' experience of Working Wales.

- 4.37 When asked why they engaged with Working Wales, customers reported that they were looking for support on how to secure employment and communicate effectively with employers. This frequently included support with job searches and submitting applications. Along with searching for paid roles, customers often expressed interest in understanding the scope of volunteer roles or work placements in line with their previous career path, to better understand how they could re-enter their chosen sector in the UK. For example, some customers suggested that they engaged with Working Wales because they had wanted to secure work experience, at an accountancy firm or within a healthcare setting, to increase their knowledge of protocols and language specific to the role. In these cases, it is important to note that customers frequently expressed a preference of voluntary roles, relevant to their chosen profession, rather than low paid roles which did not align with their skillset.
- 4.38 Most commonly, customers reported that they engaged with Working Wales through a number of booked in-person appointments, supported by a number of ad hoc online engagements to manage updates. This is supported by monitoring information, which indicates that over half of all identified refugee and migrant customers accessed Working Wales support both remotely and in-person (57 per cent; 679/1,189<sup>41</sup>), a third accessed only in-person support (33 per cent; 391/1,189) and 10 per cent only accessed support remotely (119/1,189).
- 4.39 A key strength of face-to-face support, identified by refugee and migrant customers, was that it allowed customers to practice their conversational English, noted as a key competency to progress their employability journey. Staff also felt language barriers were easier to navigate in-person. Face-to-face support was also perceived by staff to be more accessible for some refugee and migrant customers with low technical ability or lack of equipment, e.g. phone or laptop with access to the internet. Overall, a number of customers commended the time taken to discuss skills and knowledge strengths or gaps face-to-face. It was suggested that this ensured that customers then received targeted support relevant to their needs.

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<sup>41</sup> Of the 1,250 refugees and migrants who accessed support, interaction data was available for 1,189.

- 4.40 For some interviewed participants, there were challenges associated with face-to-face support. For example, customers also reported that the busy environment of Working Wales physical sites, compounded with regional accents, could at times make it hard for them to feel they were fully able to communicate with Working Wales staff. It is possible that this difficulty is also experienced by wider Working Wales customers, for example those with communication needs such as hearing loss. A minority of customers also reported that it could take a long time to travel to Working Wales sites and was difficult to obtain childcare in order to attend Working Wales appointments. Whilst the time taken to engage with individuals was commended by interviewed customers, it was also suggested that, where multiple appointments were required, it could be challenging for the customer to attend all appointments. Whilst it is acknowledged that multiple appointments are likely to be necessary to cover a range of support needs, customers felt that fewer appointments would help to mitigate time and financial pressures. Future provision should ensure that face-to-face support continues to be offered to refugee and migrant customers but, if preferred, the number of appointments should be minimised where possible to alleviate associated challenges.
- 4.41 Customers reflected how Working Wales has supported their understanding of employability support available to them and the steps required to begin their journey to employment. Refugee and migrant customers found it useful to engage with specific individuals to obtain support directed to refugees and migrants, rather than more generic support such as receiving job adverts with no interaction.
- 4.42 '[Working Wales] provided me with anything I needed, more than I expected.'  
**(Forced migrant customer)**
- 4.43 Reflecting on the support they received, customers praised Working Wales staff, and suggested that they provided tailored advice in an informal manner and effectively considered the customer's individual needs. Customers also noted the value of online job listings being separated into topic areas, making listings easier to navigate.

- 4.44 'As a migrant we don't know how it works here and so we can get a lot of help from them - application, finding the jobs, how we get our footsteps on the right path. (**Forced migrant customer**)
- 4.45 'They're showing us the right way, otherwise we just don't know what we can do and which way to go.' (**Forced migrant customer**)
- 4.46 Where Working Wales staff were not best placed to provide support, customers explained that they were signposted to other provision, such as adult learning college courses or funding to ensure customers were able to purchase appropriate interview attire. Staff viewed the latter as an important aspect of support as, they suggested, many forced migrants arrive in Wales without the required attire or equipment to secure employment and without the funds to source them independently. As highlighted by staff and stakeholders, partnerships with a wide range of organisations has enabled Working Wales to be part of the wrap-around support offered to refugees and migrants on entering Wales. Customer feedback suggests this offer is effective.
- 4.47 'It's giving a good service to people to find a job, help them keep going otherwise people can't find things they need.' (**Forced migrant customer**)
- 4.48 Whilst tailored support was available through Working Wales, it was felt by some customers that those requiring generic employability support were in a better position to receive support through the service. This included those with greater flexibility around their desired role type and availability. As also identified by staff, customers often reflected on their struggle to find skilled work relevant to their experience, commonly due to their minimal English, or availability of said roles in the area they are located in. Whilst entry level roles provide an opportunity to earn, they were not perceived to help build the lives of refugees and migrants within the UK, or offer progression opportunities relevant to their skillset, which was identified as a key aim for most interviewed customers. However, customers reflected that they were more likely to accept roles below their skill level if, as a result of this experience, there was greater chance of securing work in their chosen profession afterwards. Whilst, as mentioned, provision of relevant roles is outside of the control

of Working Wales, this reiterates the need for Working Wales staff to effectively manage customer expectations around the options available to them.

4.49 'It's easier to support those who are looking for generic support. Whilst I'm grateful for the job I do have, I would love support to specifically find the role I used to have. Many of us are well educated and want to keep that up when we come here.' (**Forced migrant customer**)

4.50 Given the identified demand for language support, access to ESOL was frequently discussed in customer feedback, with differing views dependent on availability and need. With many forced migrants arriving in the summer months, the provision of ESOL was minimal in the immediate term owing to colleges being closed. Similarly, courses were often delivered in the evenings. Evening classes were identified as, at times, challenging to attend due to customer difficulties accessing appropriate travel and obtaining childcare. These barriers were particularly challenging for those who had been able to obtain work and, as a result, were time restricted. Delivery staff shared this sentiment, noting the importance of ensuring ESOL was readily available to forced migrants to support their transition to life in the UK. Whilst this aspect of support is provided externally, it evidences priority support requirements from wider partners working with Working Wales and the refugee/migrant cohort.

4.51 'We have got many success stories already from forced migrants, but I think that as a nation, we need to increase the ESOL resource available to them so that they can quickly move into employment and they can quickly understand the Welsh culture.' (**Management and delivery staff interview**)

4.52 Whilst beneficial for language development, customers suggested that ESOL classes would benefit from being split based on ability of attendees to support efficient skill development. Similarly, customers reported that they would benefit from ESOL support being more role-focused, rather than generic English language support. For example, formal language to support employer engagement, or language specific to sectors/roles. Within this, refugees and migrants mentioned the benefit of engaging with conversational English groups, as a less formal method to improve their language skills. Whilst not a formal course, these groups served as a bridge to support learning. It is recognised that this is a broader need, outside the

remit of Working Wales provision, however it is important as it highlights the barriers and support needs of Working Wales customers.

### **Customer reflections on perceived gaps in support and additional support needs**

- 4.53 Whilst valuing the Working Wales offer and the recognition of focused cohort support, refugee and migrant customers were mixed about the extent to which the support met their specific needs. The most apparent gap in support, identified by customers, was misalignment of the roles available and customer skillset, exacerbated by language requirements. However, as highlighted above, challenges associated with the availability of roles was commonly outside of Working Wales staff's remit. This indicates that future provision should review if and how staff can better approach and manage customer expectations. This would ensure that the remit of the service is effectively communicated to customers.
- 4.54 For customers with dependent children, there was some identification around additional support needs that would support their journey. Customers commonly identified the challenge of navigating childcare when attending appointments and training, and this extended to finding suitable employment. Given the magnitude of navigating a new life in a new country, customers identified their lack of understanding around accessing childcare, as well as the education system for dependents of school age. This was seen to be a substantial barrier to finding work, especially given the anticipated expense of private childcare. As a result, customers requested that childcare needs be considered alongside their employability needs when navigating support from Working Wales. It would be anticipated that this could include referrals to partners that could provide childcare and/or education advice.
- 4.55 Reflecting on the experience overall, customers suggested that whilst Working Wales staff were helpful, the service would benefit if staff were more representative of the groups they were looking to support. In these cases, customers said that they have had positive experiences of the service, but because staff commonly were not refugees or migrants, they felt that staff did not always empathise with the issues customers face or their needs. This sentiment was in part evidenced in broader staff feedback, whereby staff recognised that the team were predominantly white non-

migrants or born in the UK. It was therefore anticipated that customers may be less likely to engage with someone who is not seen to represent them. To mitigate this barrier moving forward, there would be merit in looking at methods in which the delivery team could represent the diverse customer base. For example, enabling migrants and refugees, that have engaged with the support, to act as champions or advocates within the support offer or improving staff awareness of cultural representation through including culturally pertinent topics in training<sup>42</sup>.

4.56 ‘These wars are violent, and we need to understand the impact they have on the customers in terms of trauma and otherwise.’ (**Management and delivery staff interview**)

4.57 A further support consideration, that customers felt could be strengthened, was an effort to encourage employers to better understand the benefits of employing refugees and migrants. This was borne out of customers of this cohort applying to many roles they are qualified for, but feeding back that their lack of English meant they were not considered for the role. Whilst recognising the customer responsibility to improve their language skills independently, encouraging employers to better understand refugees and migrants potential positive contribution in the workplace would further support learning of language specific to the customers desired career path. Signposting to services which offer in-work provision of ESOL support would also mitigate availability barriers, as customers could attend courses within work time.

4.58 Staff identified a similar need, reporting that whilst employers are engaged within the support offer, there is scope to further this engagement. Examples to do this included the creation of a directory of roles, which do not require high levels of English, or of larger companies offering remote roles or roles transferable between sites. Importantly, this would identify pan-Wales employers or roles, which may encourage customer engagement regardless of resettlement concerns.

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<sup>42</sup> It is understood that Working Wales staff have undertaken Cultural Awareness training in line with actions within the Careers Wales 2022-2023 Strategic Equality Plan.



4.59 Another suggestion to bridge the gap between employers and refugee/migrant customers, similar to customer requests of voluntary roles, was encouraging employers to consider offering work experience placements. This could involve an employability course, utilising existing partner provision such as Welsh Refugee Council workshops. It is acknowledged that RSPs, in particular, engage more extensively with employers than Working Wales. It is therefore suggested that discussions around employer engagement are included within Careers Wales, regional teams and RSP insight meetings as previously recommended.

### **Strategic reflections on support offers key strengths and challenges**

4.60 A widely recognised strength of Working Wales support, reported by both customers and staff, is its ability to provide focused support to refugees and migrants, over and above general employability support across Wales. This includes funded access to the European Network of Information Centres (ENIC) scheme, which is an important element of support for a wide range of qualified customers. Between April 2022 and December 2023, Working Wales had supported 786 applications to the scheme.<sup>43</sup> This support, combined with access to ESOL provision and other language support offers, provides the required 'stepping stones' for refugees and migrants to continue their career upon arrival in the UK.

4.61 As highlighted for the service more generally, a key identified strength of the offer is the availability of pan-Wales support. This was seen by staff to be especially impactful with forced migrant and refugee customers owing to their transient nature of employment due to resettlement requirements. Support available across Wales has enabled customers to access continued support through effective partner connection. Staff also noted the importance of having the ability to pass detailed information between teams, in order to provide relevant support without customers having to restart their employability journey upon moving.

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<sup>43</sup> Please note that this detail was provided to researchers by the Working Wales Management team.

- 4.62 Staff and stakeholders articulated wider challenges around accommodating identified language needs. For example, given the increased numbers of refugees and migrants requiring support, there was a recognised need to increase accessibility to immediate translation. Whilst a 'LanguageLine' is available, staff explained that in-person translation availability would encourage full engagement at appointments for those who are presently unable to communicate confidently in English. In turn, this could instil confidence in the efficacy of the support offer, through consideration of customer communication needs. Staff also identified challenges providing translated job specifications and application forms, consequently limiting the level of choice for those looking for immediate work who presently have limited English language skills.
- 4.63 Staff also reported that whilst not delivered by Working Wales staff, ESOL provision does not always meet the needs of the customer, owing to its slow pace rather than intensive delivery. It is important to highlight, however, that Working Wales and STEP Ukraine have a hosting contract whereby STEP Ukraine employability advisers work closely with Working Wales staff to ensure both support offers complement one another. Ukrainian forced migrants accessing support through Working Wales can also access intensive ESOL support through STEP Ukraine (a 10-week course which included 2.5 hours of ESOL support per day)<sup>44</sup>. Whilst ESOL support was perceived as out of Working Wales' control, limited ESOL provision was seen, by staff and stakeholders, to be a broader challenge across Wales due to the frequently complex needs of customers and over-subscribed services being under resourced due to funding constraints. Where possible, future provision should consider if, and how, a tailored and intensive ESOL support offer could be offered by Working Wales or other linked services.

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<sup>44</sup> More information on the STEP Ukraine programme can be found at: UK Government (2023) [Learn to Speak, Read and Write English: Homes for Ukraine](#).

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.0 Between February 2019 and March 2023, 1,250 refugees and migrants<sup>45</sup> engaged with Working Wales, making up one per cent of the total Working Wales cohort. This section summarises key findings explored within the report and addresses key research questions outlined in Section 1.
- 5.1 As a result of the February 2022 crisis in Ukraine, there was a rise in the number of Ukrainian forced migrants entering Wales. In response to increasing demand, Working Wales developed a refugee and migrant support offer to ensure that Ukrainian forced migrants and other refugees and migrants were provided with high quality and accurate careers advice when appropriate.
- 5.2 It is important to highlight that the Working Wales service offer for refugees and migrants was supplementary to the Working Wales core universal offer available to residents aged 16 or above across Wales.<sup>46</sup> Across interviews, staff and stakeholders praised the service's ability to react quickly and adapt services to ensure that support was accessible for refugees and migrants. Staff described responding quickly to provide a new offer because of the emerging needs of refugees and migrants entering Wales. This included new elements of support being offered, e.g. ESOL, and new partnerships to effectively support customers. The service's ability to implement a new service offer quickly and flexibly should be praised and commended.
- 5.3 Total numbers of refugees and migrants were calculated using programme-level monitoring information. It is based on the total number of customers identified as refugees and migrants and customers with no classification but referred via a specialist service that only supports refugees and/or migrants. Whilst this provides an estimate for the number of refugees and migrants reached, additional detail at an individual level would support efforts to assess how effectively Working Wales reaches and supports refugees and migrants. Whilst considerable effort was made to back-date information where available, given the changes and additions

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<sup>45</sup> Owing to missing data, it is likely that the total number of refugees and migrants who received support is higher.

<sup>46</sup> As previously highlighted, this includes customers aged 15 who will turn 16 in the same academic year.

implemented after October 2022, it is likely these figures are underestimating the total number of refugees and migrants supported between April and September 2022. Efforts have been made by the Working Wales team to ensure more detailed data around this cohort can be collected in order to effectively support individual need.

- 5.4 The Working Wales 'one team' approach, centred on flexibility, is well placed to offer careers advice and guidance and employability support, including job searches and application support, to refugees and migrants entering Wales. The service is well placed because of its ability to adapt based on need, and its commitment to engage specialist partners. Over time, Working Wales was also able to develop its support offer for refugees and migrants, including access to ESOL provision, specialist advice from a Working Wales refugee and migrant champion, and ENIC provision. The commitment to a universal Working Wales offer also seeks to ensure that refugees and migrants are offered a continuity of support regardless of where they reside across Wales.
- 5.5 The use of pop-up sites through co-location at refugee and Welcome Centres was perceived by staff as effectively supporting the provision of accurate and accessible support. Effective collaboration with partners is evidenced through the fact that common referral routes include partners such as Jobcentre Plus. Stakeholders and staff also recognised the effectiveness of collaboration across sites in providing wrap-around support for customers which adds value to the support, over and above a typical employability support offer. Whilst this provided access to a range of organisations for customers, it is important to highlight that this also created resourcing pressures for Working Wales.
- 5.6 Acknowledging that careers advice and guidance is not necessarily the first element required by refugees and migrants when they enter Wales, stakeholders praised Working Wales' collaboration with other services. In particular, stakeholders referenced Working Wales' collaboration with other services on refugee and migrant focused events. This was perceived as effective, as it informed individuals about the wider support offer available to them and ensured that they were aware that

Working Wales was the 'go to' service for qualification conversions and careers advice.

- 5.7 Reflecting on the accessibility of the service for refugees and migrants, Working Wales staff were able to provide a range of examples which illustrated the efforts made to ensure the service is inclusive. For example, Working Wales provides translated information leaflets in 28 languages and a 'LanguageLine' to ensure that interpretation services are available to any customer that requires it. This ensures that customers immediate language needs can be met.
- 5.8 Support for refugees and migrants is commonly led by specialist 'champions' within the Working Wales team to accommodate a specific need that may differ from the universal offer. Where support was underpinned by specialist knowledge, refugees and migrants were able to benefit from staff's detailed understanding of different legal statuses, visa requirements and rights to work. Staff were also able to provide information around working and workplace culture in Wales, including information to ensure that customers understand their rights as workers e.g. minimum wage and entitlement to an employment contract, as well as sectoral differences and employee expectation.
- 5.9 Whilst there are a range of specialist refugee and migrant teams across Working Wales, it is commonly suggested that these teams typically reside in urban hubs. In cases where refugees and migrants are based in more rural locations, stakeholders suggested that staff could be less well-versed in the required information needed by customers. This has led to perceptions that some refugee and migrant customers are initially provided with more 'general' advice rather than specialist advice. However, it is important to acknowledge that, where possible, advisers have adapted their skillsets and tried to support a wide range of customer needs.
- 5.10 Overall, customers were positive about their experience of Working Wales. In particular, they suggested that this service has supported their understanding of the employability support available to them and the steps required to begin their journey to employment. Refugee and migrant customers also found it useful to engage with specific individuals to obtain support directed to refugees and migrants, rather than more generic support such as receiving job adverts with no interaction.

- 5.11 Customers provided positive feedback on the face-to-face element of Working Wales support. Frequently this support was identified by refugee and migrant customers as allowing them to practice their conversational English. A number of customers also commended the time taken to discuss skills and knowledge strengths or gaps face-to-face. This, customers reported, ensured that they then received targeted support relevant to their needs. Staff also noted that language barriers were easier to navigate in-person. Face-to-face support was also perceived by staff to be more accessible for some refugee and migrant customers with low technical ability or lack of equipment with access to the internet.
- 5.12 Refugee and migrant customers did also, however, highlight a number of barriers they have faced accessing and sustaining employment in Wales. Whilst Working Wales is effectively providing access to language support and qualification translations, customers highlighted difficulties accessing this support due to work-commitments and childcare responsibilities. Whilst out of the control of Working Wales, concerns around ESOL provision being difficult to access also commonly arose due to oversubscription to courses and many courses being suspended during summer months, due to the closure of colleges.
- 5.13 It is acknowledged that some roles, particularly those in medical settings, are more difficult to secure for refugees and migrants entering the country. Moreover, in some cases, it is not possible for refugees and migrants to easily secure employment in their chosen profession. Reasons for this include limited English language ability, lack of available roles, location and/or complex qualification translation options. Whilst many reasons why refugee and migrant customers cannot secure a particular role are outside of Working Wales staff's control, staff and stakeholders frequently emphasised the importance of expectation setting with refugee and migrant customers. As would be anticipated, expectation setting is and should be varied depending on the circumstance of an individual customer. However, in some cases, approaches to expectation setting appear to vary from staff member to staff member. Further to this, interviewed customers' feedback indicates that that some customers felt that they had not been able to secure work that reflected their skillset through Working Wales. This suggests that the approach to expectation setting should be reviewed to ensure that staff approaches are consistent and clear to

customers. This will ensure that the remit of the service is effectively communicated and understood.

## 6. Recommendations

- 6.1 As a result of the evaluation, the following recommendations have been identified to aid and improve future delivery of Working Wales in relation to refugee and migrant support:
- 6.2 **Recommendation 1:** It should be reviewed whether Working Wales' data capture on migration could be further enhanced to capture refugee and migrant engagement with the service. Considerable efforts have been made to enhance data capture on migration since October 2022. However, whilst ethnicity and home country are currently recorded, nationality is not. It is understood that this aspect of data collection is sensitive, however, a home country may not be the country an individual is a citizen of and ethnicity does not indicate nationality. This review of data collection should also explore how nationality is defined to ensure that data capture on migration is accurate and reflective of wider good practice<sup>47</sup>.
- 6.3 **Recommendation 2:** As identified in the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (2022), strong data capture is vital to understand experiences and outcomes for groups. To ensure that Working Wales can effectively and accurately identify the number of refugees and migrants accessing the service and therefore build a stronger picture of their experiences, staff should reiterate the importance of customers sharing details of their demographics upon registration, in particular, country of origin and home language. This would ensure that customers are being correctly and consistently categorised in programme-level data.
- 6.4 **Recommendation 3:** Refugee and migrant customers make up a small proportion of the total Working Wales customer cohort, as a result, it is to be expected that staff knowledge on complex refugee and migrant community support needs will vary. However, where possible, dialogue and information sharing between refugee champions and other Working Wales staff should be improved to ensure that approaches taken are consistent across the service and gaps in knowledge are identified.

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<sup>47</sup> It is suggested that this definition could align with [Office for National Statistics methods of measuring international migration](#).



- 6.5 **Recommendation 4:** The creation of refugee and migrant champion staff to share support and knowledge is widely appreciated and required to support complex refugee and migrant customer needs. This delivery model should be retained going forward. As highlighted in paragraph 6.4 above, future provision should consider if and how champions could better disseminate information. Where this is not feasible, additional champions should be identified so that there are ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ champions in each regional team.
- 6.6 **Recommendation 5:** Face-to-face support was praised for its in-depth nature and the opportunity it provided to customers to practice conversational English. However, face-to-face support also resulted in additional time and financial pressures for customers. Whilst it is necessary for some customers to engage in multiple face-to-face meetings with Working Wales staff, staff should review whether the number of face-to-face sessions could be minimised to alleviate associated challenges.
- 6.7 **Recommendation 6:** Future Working Wales provision should ensure that staff approaches to expectation setting are consistent, regularly reviewed and clear, for example, to explain the limitations of role availability, language skills and location.
- 6.8 **Recommendation 7:** There would be merit in looking at methods in which the delivery team could represent the diverse customer base. For example, enabling migrants and refugees, that have engaged with the support, to act as champions or advocates within the support offer or further improving staff awareness of cultural representation through including culturally pertinent topics in training.
- 6.9 **Recommendation 8:** Encouraging employers to look beyond work-related language barriers to realise the benefits of employing refugees and migrants in the workplace. Whilst the development of English language skills should remain a priority, greater opportunities for work and work-placements would widen the opportunities for refugee and migrant customers to develop their language skills and allow employers to better understand refugees’ and migrants’ potential positive contribution. Within this, Working Wales, or other services such as Business Wales, could identify pan-Wales employers or roles, for example through a directory, which

do not require high levels of English, or that offer roles transferable between sites, to mitigate resettlement concerns.

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## **Annexe One: Research Tools**

### **Refugee and migrant customer focus group topic guide**

1. Where did you find out about the support from Working Wales?
2. When you first accessed the service, what help did you hope you would receive?
3. How did you first access the service? For example did you go online, drop-in to a service, or book an appointment?
4. Has the service been able to provide the employability support you wanted, or put you in touch with other organisations who can provide that support?
5. Where you have received support, from either Working Wales, or been referred to other services, did this support meet your expectations?
  - Which services did you access, and what support did they provide?
6. Where you have received English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support, what was your experience of this?
  - Was this support easy to access?
  - Could this support be improved in any way?
7. Are there any improvements that could be made to Working Wales to better support you in your employability journey?
8. Have you engaged with remote services for Working Wales? This includes self-help pages on the website, online chat facility, email and phone support.
9. If so, which services did you use and what did you think of these services?
  - Could they be improved in any way?

## Refugee and migrant customer online survey

Are you happy to continue with the survey?

- Yes
- No

Q3 Where did you find out about the support from Working Wales?

Q4 When you first accessed the service, what help did you hope you would receive?

Q5 How did you first access the service? For example did you go online, drop-in to a service, or book an appointment?

Q6 Has the service been able to provide the employability support you wanted, or put you in touch with other organisations who can provide that support?

- Yes
- No

Q7 Where you have received support, from either Working Wales, or been referred to other services, did this support meet your expectations?

Q8 Which services did you access, and what support did they provide?

Q9 Have you received English as a second language support?

- Yes
- No

Q10 Please describe your experience of accessing English as a second language (ESOL) support? e.g. was it easy to access, could it be improved in any way?

Q11 Could Working Wales be improved in any way?

- Yes
- No

Q12 How could Working Wales be improved to better support you in your employability journey?

Q13 Which Working Wales services have you used?

Q14 What do you think about the Working Wales services you have used?

Q15 Can these Working Wales services be improved in any way?

Q16 Is there anything else you would like to say about Working Wales?

Q17 Please enter your email address here if you wish to receive the £10 Amazon voucher.

## **Management & delivery staff interviews**

### **Introduction**

1. Could you tell me a little bit about your role?

### **Delivery model**

2. Could you tell me a little bit about how Working Wales is delivered in your area?
3. What are the key factors that influence selection of outreach locations in your area?
4. What level of engagement do you tend to see within outreach locations, and how does this differ across locations?
5. How, if at all, has your approach to outreach changed since before the COVID-19 pandemic?
6. Have levels of engagement with outreach locations changed since before the COVID-19 pandemic?
7. How effective are current outreach locations for delivering the Working Wales service?
8. To what extent do you agree that the current locations in your region are easy for customers to reach? Please explain your answer.
9. To what extent do you agree that the environment(s) are welcoming? Is there anything that could be done to make the venues more inviting or welcoming?

### **Co-location & Partnership Working**

10. Which, if any, partners do you work with in your area to co-locate services?
11. What influenced the decisions to co-locate with these partners?
12. Are there any partners where you think co-location has been particularly valuable for customers or the Working Wales service, either in terms of level of engagement or the cohort of customers you have been able to reach? If so, how has this been beneficial?
13. Are there any partners where you think co-location has been less beneficial for customers or the Working Wales service, or has had unintended consequences? If so, how has this been less beneficial?
14. From your perspective, what works well regarding the overall delivery model in your area?

15. Is there anything that doesn't work or that has been challenging?

### **Service Reach & Engagement**

16. What activities do you deliver to engage customers and raise awareness of Working Wales?

17. How effective are these activities at raising awareness and reaching customers?

*Does this differ for different groups accessing Working Wales e.g. young people?*

18. As far as you are aware, are there any communities that have been harder to reach or who do not engage with the provision?

*This might include geographical communities or demographic groups.*

19. Do you currently undertake any targeted activities to facilitate engagement from these groups or localities? If so, please describe.

20. What else do you think could be done to better support engagement of these communities or localities?

### **Referrals and access to services**

21. Have there been any changes to the services or partners that you typically signpost to within the last two years? If yes, what client needs do these support?

22. Are there any gaps in the employability support available locally to meet the needs of Working Wales customers?

23. Can these needs be met by other local agencies or partners?

### **Changing economic & social context**

24. In the last 12 months, has the profile of individuals approaching Working Wales for support changed, or have the support needs individuals present with changes as a result of the changing economic circumstances?

25. Are there further adaptations you feel the service needs to make to respond to new or emerging customer needs?

26. Could any of these needs be met by other existing provision?

### **Support for refugees and migrants**

27. What are the main support needs refugees and migrants present to the service with?

28. What support is available in your local area to respond to these needs (both within Working Wales and through partner organisations, and other agencies)?



29. As far as you are aware, are there any gaps in the employability provision or support available to refugees and forced migrants within your area, that are not currently met by Working Wales or appropriate local partners/services?

### **The Whole Wales approach**

30. Working Wales was designed to provide an all-Wales entry point into employability support, as part of a "one team" approach. To what extent do you feel this vision has been realised?

31. What do you feel are the main strengths of this approach?

32. How important are the other roles that Working Wales plays (beyond providing an entry point into employability support) in your area?

33. Could more be done to achieve the ambition of being the entry point for everyone in Wales?

34. Is there any employability provision in your local area that is not accessed through Working Wales? If so, what is the impact of this on the service and customers?

35. Is there anything else that has impacted the whole Wales approach to employability provision?

## **Stakeholder interviews**

### **Introduction**

1. Could you tell me a little bit about your role and how you have interacted with Working Wales?

### **The Whole Wales approach**

Working Wales was designed to provide an all-Wales entry point into employability support, as part of a "one team" approach.

2. What do you feel are the main strengths of the Working Wales approach?
3. How important are the other roles that Working Wales plays (beyond providing an entry point into employability support) in your area?
4. Which elements of the service are most important and why?
5. Could more be done to achieve the ambition of being the entry point for everyone in Wales?
6. Going forward what opportunities are there for the service to support the whole Wales approach to employability?
7. In the last 12 months, has the profile of individuals who might benefit from a Working Wales interaction changed as a result of changing social and economic circumstances, or have the support needs of individuals changed?
8. How might Working Wales need to adapt to respond to these changes?
9. Are there any threats to the effectiveness of Working Wales that have emerged since the design of the service?

### **Delivery model – locations & partnerships**

10. Working Wales is currently delivered remotely and face-to-face across a range of locations, with some sites/pop-ups co-located alongside other provision or services. Do you have any views on the current locations/pop-up sites used in your area?
11. Are there any partners where you think co-location has been particularly valuable for customers or the Working Wales service? If so, how has this been beneficial?
12. Are there any partners where you think co-location has been less beneficial for customers or the Working Wales service? If so, how has this been less beneficial?
13. What are your perspectives on the current remote offer for Working Wales?

### **Delivery model – Engagement, Inclusion & Accessibility of support**

14. From your perspective, is Working Wales reaching those that would benefit from a Working Wales interaction?
15. If no, which communities or groups are not currently being reached? This could include geographical communities or demographic groups.
16. Are there any factors that may be impacting engagement with these communities? What could Working Wales do to better reach these communities?
17. Is there anything you think the service could do to improve engagement and accessibility of support with individuals from black and minority ethnic backgrounds?
18. Is there anything you think the service could do to improve engagement and accessibility of support with disabled people?

### **Support for refugees and migrants**

19. With regards to employability, what are the main support needs for refugees and migrants?
20. What support is available to respond to these needs (both within Working Wales and through partner organisations, and other agencies)?
21. How effectively are these needs currently being met?
22. As far as you are aware, are there any gaps in the employability provision or employability support available to refugees and migrants?

### **Closing Comments**

23. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding Working Wales

## **Annexe Two: Privacy Notices**

### **Evaluation of the Working Wales programme – focus groups with refugee & migrant customers (Easy Read)**

#### *What is a privacy notice?*

A privacy notice tells you how we use your personal information.

#### *What is Personal Information?*

Personal information can be lots of different things like your

- Name
- Telephone Number
- Email address
- Address
- Date of birth

#### *What is a focus group?*

A focus group brings people together to share their experiences.

Your views and experiences are important.

It could help inform the decisions Welsh Government make in the future.

#### *Overview*

Working Wales is a programme to help people to find work in Wales.

Wavehill have been asked by the Welsh Government to find out if the Working Wales programme is working well, and if there is anything it could do better.

Wavehill are independent from the Welsh Government and will make a report of their findings.

As part of this, Wavehill wants to speak to refugees and migrants who have used the Working Wales service.

Wavehill are asking people to take part in a focus group to share their experiences.

#### *How did you get my details?*

Careers Wales told you about this research and either you have:

- Agreed for your contact details (name, email address and telephone number) to be shared with Wavehill to take part in this research.

- Filled in an online form with your name, email address and phone number so that we can contact you to take part in this research.

It is the Welsh Government's job to make sure your data is safe.

#### *How will my information be used?*

Wavehill we collect your information and will:

- Share findings with the Welsh Government but your personal information will not be shared.
- Delete any personal information for a maximum of 3 months after the project is finished.

#### *Do I have to take part?*

Taking part in this research is your choice and you can change your mind at any time.

#### *Use of Recordings*

We may use video or audio recordings of the focus group discussions. This helps us note everything that is discussed.

We only do this if everyone in the group agrees. You do not have to agree.

If you do agree to us recording the focus group discussions, we will

- Make a recording of your image that is not possible to identify you by, if you join an online focus group.
- Not collect any further personal data from you during the focus group session.
- Delete the recordings once we have finished taking our notes.

If you do not agree to us recording the focus groups we will still make sure it is not possible to identify you in the report.

#### *How can I find out more?*

To find out more information about how we use your data click on the link below or type the link into your internet web browser.

#### *Who can I contact?*

About the research:

Endaf Griffiths, Wavehill

Email : [Endaf.Griffiths@wavehill.com](mailto:Endaf.Griffiths@wavehill.com)

About data usage:

Sean Homer, Welsh Government

Email: [KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales](mailto:KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales)

About data protection:

Write to: Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3N

Email: [dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales](mailto:dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales)

Information Commissioner's Office:

Write to: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Phone: 0303 123 1113

Website: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

## **Evaluation of the Working Wales programme – focus groups with refugee & migrant customers**

The Welsh Government has commissioned Wavehill to undertake an evaluation of the Working Wales programme. The aim of this evaluation is to assess how effectively Working Wales is being delivered, to provide lessons to inform future delivery and to evaluate the impact that Working Wales has had on participants.

As part of this evaluation, Wavehill will be gathering information through focus groups with refugees and migrants who have accessed Working Wales provision.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Wavehill will delete any personal data provided through the focus groups, and anonymise the raw data, before it is shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website and possibly in other publications by Wavehill and Welsh Government.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Wavehill is Endaf Griffiths

E-mail address: [endaf.griffiths@wavehill.com](mailto:endaf.griffiths@wavehill.com)

## **What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?**

Personal data is defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as 'any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier'.

The Welsh Government do not hold your contact details. Wavehill have obtained your contact details (name, email address and telephone number) through one of the following routes:

- Careers Wales have provided your details to Wavehill, as you have agreed for your contact details to be shared with Wavehill to take part in the research; or
- Careers Wales have provided you with a link to an online form where you can provide your details to Wavehill if you are willing to take part in the research.

Wavehill will only use email addresses and telephone numbers for the purposes of this evaluation.

Participants will be invited via email to take part in a focus group. If no response is received, Wavehill may send out another reminder email or contact participants via telephone. Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders then please reply to the invitation email, or let us know using the telephone number provided, and your details will be removed.

This research does not require the collection of additional personal data from you, except for your image if you agree to an online focus group being video recorded.

We may need to record focus groups for operational reasons (audio only for face-to-face and video for online focus groups). If this is the case, we will make this clear to you before the focus group begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. A focus group will only be recorded if all members of the group are happy for this to happen. If focus groups are recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon as this process is completed. If discussions are not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared during or following the focus group.



If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

### **What is the lawful basis for using your data?**

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task; that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence about its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to:

- Understand the theory behind the Working Wales programme.
- Assess the performance and impact of the service.
- Develop recommendations to improve delivery of Working Wales and other employability programmes.

### **How secure is your personal data?**

Personal information provided to Wavehill is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Wavehill will only use this data for research purposes. Wavehill has cyber essentials certification.

Wavehill has procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Wavehill will report this to the Welsh Government who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Wavehill will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

### **How long do we keep your personal data?**

Wavehill will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed will be deleted by Wavehill within three months of the end of the contract. This includes your contact details.

## **Individual rights**

Under UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information you provide as part of this evaluation, specifically you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in that data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 0303 123 1113. Website: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

## **Further Information**

If you have any further questions about how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Sean Homer

E-mail address: [KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales](mailto:KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales)

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email:

[DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales](mailto:DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales).

## **Evaluation of the Working Wales programme – interviews with Working Wales management and advisers**

The Welsh Government has commissioned Wavehill to undertake an evaluation of the Working Wales programme. The aim of this evaluation is to assess how effectively Working Wales is being delivered to the target audiences, to provide lessons to inform future delivery and to evaluate the impact that Working Wales has had on participants in terms of employment, skills acquisition and development, and well-being.

As part of this evaluation, Wavehill will be gathering information through interviews with Working Wales management and advisers.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Wavehill will delete any personal data provided through the interviews, workshops and surveys, and anonymise the raw data, before it is shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website and possibly in other publications by Wavehill and Welsh Government.

Your Participation in this research is completely voluntary. However your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Wavehill is Endaf Griffiths.

E-mail address: [endaf.griffiths@wavehill.com](mailto:endaf.griffiths@wavehill.com)

## **PRIVACY NOTICE**

### **What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?**

Personal data is defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as ‘any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier’.

Wavehill have received your contact details (name, email address and where available telephone number) either from:

- Welsh Government in the case of Working Wales management staff; or
- Careers Wales in the case of Working Wales advisers.

Welsh Government and Careers Wales hold your information because of your involvement with delivery of the Working Wales service. Wavehill will only use email addresses and telephone numbers for the purposes of this evaluation.

Participants will be invited via email to take part in a MS Teams interview. If no response is received, Wavehill may send out another reminder email or, where information is available, contact participants via telephone. You can choose to take part in an interview over the phone and provide your telephone number to do so if Wavehill have not already received it from Welsh Government or Careers Wales.

In all instances, your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders then please reply to the invitation email or let us know using the telephone number provided and your details will be removed.

You are not required to provide any additional personal data as part of the interview, with the exception of your image if you agree to an MS Teams interview being video recorded. We wish to record MS Teams interviews for operational reasons. We will make this clear to you before the interview begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. If interviews are recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon as this process is completed. If discussions are not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared during or following the interviews.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

### **What is the lawful basis for using your data?**

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task; that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence about its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to:

- Understand the theory behind the Working Wales programme
- Assess the performance and impact of the service
- Develop recommendations to improve delivery of Working Wales and other employability programmes

### **How secure is your personal data?**

Personal information provided to Wavehill is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Wavehill has cyber essentials certification.

Wavehill has procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Wavehill will report this to the Welsh Government who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Wavehill will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

### **How long do we keep your personal data?**

Wavehill will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed will be deleted by Wavehill three months after the end of the contract. This includes your contact details.

Wavehill will provide Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

### **Individual rights**

Under UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information you provide as part of this research project, you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in that data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113. Website: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

### **Further Information**

If you have any further questions about how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Sean Homer

E-mail address: [KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales](mailto:KASEmployabilityandSkillsResearch@gov.wales)

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email:

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## **Evaluation of the Working Wales programme – interviews with stakeholders**

The Welsh Government has commissioned Wavehill to undertake an evaluation of the Working Wales programme. The aim of this evaluation is to assess how effectively Working Wales is being delivered to the target audiences, to provide lessons to inform future delivery, and to evaluate the impact that Working Wales has had on participants in terms of employment, skill acquisition and development, and well-being.

As part of this evaluation, Wavehill will be gathering information through interviews with strategic stakeholders and partner organisations.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Wavehill will delete any personal data provided through the interviews, and anonymise the raw data, before they are shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website and possibly in other publications by Wavehill and the Welsh Government.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Wavehill is Endaf Griffiths.

Email address: [endaf.griffiths@wavehill.com](mailto:endaf.griffiths@wavehill.com)

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The Welsh Government do not hold your contact details. Wavehill have received your contact details (name, email address and, where available, telephone number) from one of the following:

- Careers Wales, who hold your details because of your involvement with the Working Wales programme, and you have agreed for your details to be shared with Wavehill to take part in this research project; or
- you agreed that your details could be shared with Wavehill after being contacted by someone already participating in this research who suggested that you may wish to take part.

Wavehill will only use provided email addresses and telephone numbers for the purposes of this evaluation.

Participants will be invited via email to take part in an online interview. If no response is received, Wavehill may send out another reminder email or, where information is available, contact participants via telephone. Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders, then please reply to the invitation email or let us know using the telephone number provided and your details will be removed.

You can choose to take part in an interview over the telephone and provide your telephone number to do so if Wavehill have not already received it.

This research does not require the collection of additional personal data from you, except for your image if you agree to an online interview being video-recorded.

We may need to record interviews for operational reasons. If this is the case, we will make this clear to you before the interview begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. If interviews are recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon



as this process is completed. If discussions are not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared during or following the interviews.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

### **What is the lawful basis for using your data?**

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task, that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence on its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to:

- Understand the theory behind the Working Wales programme.
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Personal information provided to Wavehill is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Wavehill will only use these data for research purposes. Wavehill has Cyber Essentials certification.

Wavehill has procedures for dealing with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Wavehill will report this to the Welsh Government, who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Wavehill will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

### **How long do we keep your personal data?**

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Under the UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information that you provide as part of this evaluation. Specifically, you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in those data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), who is our independent regulator for data protection.

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### **Further information**

If you have any further questions on how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Sean Homer

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The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email:

[dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales](mailto:dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales)

## Annexe Three: Additional Context

An analysis of UK-wide labour market outcomes for refugees based on Labour Force Survey (LFS) data from 2010 to 2017 indicates that different types of migration are associated with different labour market outcomes<sup>48</sup>. The skills of refugee migrants are likely less adapted to the host countries' economic needs compared to those of economically motivated migrants<sup>49,50</sup>. One reason may be uncertainty around the duration of stay which influence skill investment decisions<sup>51</sup>. Asylum migrants have much lower employment rates (51 per cent) than the UK-born workforce (73 per cent)<sup>52</sup> and the overall foreign-born workforce (76 per cent)<sup>53</sup>. When adjusting for socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, ethnicity and location of residence, an employment gap still remains between those that are UK-born and those that are foreign-born, with a difference of 12 percentage points. While narrowing over time, the employment gap can be observed even for those who have been resident in the UK for more than 25 years<sup>54</sup>. These UK-wide findings are corroborated by a 2020 survey of 252 refugees entitled to work and of working age in Wales. The survey found that only 44 per cent of respondents were currently in paid employment or had worked in Wales in the past<sup>55</sup>.

### *Qualification level:*

According to 2021 Census data, migrants in Wales (non-UK born) are more likely to be qualified to level 4 (e.g., certificate of higher education, higher apprenticeship, higher national certificate) or above compared to their UK-born counterparts, this remains true even when accounting for different age profiles<sup>56</sup>. In Wales overall, 31.5 per cent of usual residents over 16 reported their highest qualification as level 4 or above<sup>57</sup>. In almost all Welsh local authorities (except 2; Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent), the share of migrants with qualification level 4 or above is higher than this figure<sup>58</sup>. This suggests that the level 6

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<sup>48</sup> Kone et al. (2019) [Refugees and the UK Labour Market](#).

<sup>49</sup> Brell et al. (2020) [The Labor Market Integration of Refugee Migrants in High-Income Countries](#).

<sup>50</sup> Economically motivated migrants in this context refer to those moving with skills already suited to the host countries economic needs, often with the ability to start work immediately for a known period of time.

<sup>51</sup> Brell et al. (2020) [The Labor Market Integration of Refugee Migrants in High-Income Countries](#).

<sup>52</sup> Kone et al. (2019) [Refugees and the UK Labour Market](#).

<sup>53</sup> Annual Population Survey (2022).

<sup>54</sup> Kone et al. (2019) [Refugees and the UK Labour Market](#).

<sup>55</sup> Holtom, D; Iqbal, H (2020) [Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study](#).

<sup>56</sup> ONS (2023) [How qualification levels across England and Wales differ by country of birth](#).

<sup>57</sup> Welsh Government (2023) [Education in Wales \(Census 2021\)](#).

<sup>58</sup> ONS (2023) [How qualification levels across England and Wales differ by country of birth](#).

careers advice available through Working Wales could be of particular value for non-UK born migrants in Wales.

#### *Earnings:*

According to LFS data (2010 – 2017)<sup>59</sup>, asylum migrants, working as employees, earn less and work fewer hours compared to UK-born workers and other migrants. On average, between 2010 and 2017, asylum migrants earned £9 per hour and £284 per week.

Adjusting for socio-demographic factors, this means that, on average, asylum migrants earn 55% less per week and 38% less per hour than UK-born workers (excluding self-employed individuals) and work 4 fewer hours<sup>60</sup>. This suggests that there is a gap in the support offer available for migrants seeking asylum in Wales, which could be filled by Working Wales, to provide opportunities which allow individuals to achieve their potential.

#### *Types of jobs:*

In Wales, the presence of migrants in different economic sectors varies considerably across their countries of origin. Workers from the EU are disproportionately concentrated in the manufacturing industry, while non-EU workers are overrepresented in the human health and social work sectors and the hospitality sector<sup>61</sup>.

On a UK-wide level, most migrants – except for those from EU-14 countries, North America & Oceania and East & Southeast Asia – display higher levels of over-qualification (or underemployment) compared to their UK-born counterparts<sup>62</sup>. Non-UK-born workers are also more likely to be in involuntary part-time employment as a result of not being able to find a full-time job.

The Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study<sup>63</sup> found that almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of refugees interviewed wanted to work in the same profession as they did in their home country. Nonetheless, 84 per cent were willing to also seek alternative employment. Many were forced to give up their aspirations as they were unable to secure available work that matched their skills and experience. The reasons for underemployment are multiple. They include a lack of language skills, employer attitudes and weakness in labour markets

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<sup>59</sup> Kone et al. (2019) [Refugees and the UK Labour Market](#).

<sup>60</sup> Kone et al. (2019) [Refugees and the UK Labour Market](#).

<sup>61</sup> ONS (2023) [Migration and the labour market, country of birth based estimates, England and Wales](#).

<sup>62</sup> Fernández-Reino & Rienzo (2022) [Migrants in the UK Labour Market: An Overview](#).

<sup>63</sup> Holtom, D; Iqbal, H (2020) [Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study](#).

and job search strategies<sup>64</sup>. Migrants also feel financially pressured to enter any type of employment, even underemployment, and feel unable to retrain and pursue aspirations due to cost, age or other challenges. ‘Many [refugees] become disenchanted and, after meeting multiple barriers or finding out about the cost of requalification, sought any job.’<sup>65</sup>

## **Refugee and migrant needs and barriers to employment**

Migrants to the UK, whether for asylum reasons or otherwise, face a range of barriers in accessing the UK labour market. For example, many face mental health issues<sup>66</sup> and are required to learn a new language, secure the legal status that allows them to work, and find an employment opportunity suitable to their experience and skillset.

### Language Skills

Being able to communicate in the local language is an important aspect of the effective integration of migrants and refugees. Whilst integral to finding employment, being proficient in English is important to enable refugees to meet new people and socialise as well as access services they need as part of their everyday lives such as schools, health systems and transport services.

There are varying degrees of English proficiency amongst migrants and refugees and those that have had the most exposure (for example through education or having spent more time living and working amongst English speakers) typically report higher rates of proficiency which is associated with better labour market outcomes.<sup>67</sup> One study found that English fluency increased the likelihood of employment by 22 percentage points and boosted earnings by 18 to 20 percent.<sup>68</sup>

As such, the availability of [English for Speakers of Other Languages \(ESOL\)](#) provision is vital to support those individuals who are not proficient in English to integrate effectively and in seeking employment.

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<sup>64</sup> Holtom, D; Iqbal, H (2020) [Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study](#).

<sup>65</sup> Phillimore and Goodson (2006) cited in Holtom, D; Iqbal, H (2020) [Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study](#).

<sup>66</sup> [Mental Health Foundation, 2022](#).

<sup>67</sup> Kierans, D. (2021) [Integration in the UK: Understanding the Data](#).

<sup>68</sup> Dustmann, C. & Fabbri, F. (2003) [Language Proficiency and Labour Market Performance Of Immigrants in the UK](#).

## Recognition of Training or Qualifications

Issues with the recognition of qualifications, skills and experience are one of the main reasons why many refugees and migrants end up unemployed or underemployed. This leads to many highly skilled migrants and refugees working in low-skilled, temporary or poorly paid jobs, not only affecting the individual (and their family), but also wider society and economy.<sup>69</sup> This issue is created by the need to juggle the desire to ensure migrant workers are able to find work equal to their skills and experience, whilst also acknowledging that appropriate work is not always accessible due to location and vacancy rate.

Both refugees and migrants face challenges when it comes to having skills and qualifications recognised. However, refugees can often encounter even greater hurdles given they often leave hastily without relevant paperwork and can struggle to access the relevant institutions in their host countries.

## Navigating complicated systems

Another common challenge, faced by migrants and refugees seeking to access the labour market, includes the difficulties they face in successfully navigating various systems. Firstly, to access the labour market requires successfully gaining legal status to work in the UK. This in itself, is a complex and lengthy process and makes up just one aspect of immigration policy that has been described as overly bureaucratic, restrictive and expensive (for both migrants and employers).

Those who are entitled to work often require some form of employability support in order to enter employment, such as job searching, CV writing, application support, interview preparation and networking. One report found that unemployed migrants are twice as likely to rely on public agencies to look for work than UK-born job seekers<sup>70</sup>. This highlights the important role these kinds of support services play for asylum and migrant groups. Despite this, there have been criticisms of many employability programmes in relation to the 'fragmented' and patchy support landscape and the perception that many fail to take into consideration the specific support needs of migrant and refugee job seekers<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> NGO Network of Integration Focal Points (2009) [Policy briefing on the assessment of skills and recognition of qualifications of refugees and migrants in Europe](#).

<sup>70</sup> Kone et al. (2019) [Refugees and the UK Labour Market](#).

<sup>71</sup> Calo et al. (2022) ["You have to work...but you can't!": Contradictions of the Active Labour Market Policies for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK](#).

## Cultural Barriers

Cultural differences and a lack of cultural capital are another barrier frequently faced by refugees hindering labour market integration<sup>72</sup>. For example, there are cultural differences in forms of communication, which manifest themselves in the ways in which applicants present their skills during the recruitment process<sup>73</sup>. Refugees and migrants may also lack knowledge on local work culture<sup>74</sup>.

## Discrimination

Finally, migrants may be discriminated against in the labour market for multiple reasons. Discrimination does not only occur due to their country of origin, but also due to characteristics such as ethnicity, skill level and religion. This means that not all migrants are equally affected<sup>75</sup>.

Anti-discrimination policies and, to some extent, anti-exploitation policies often do not have the necessary teeth to enforce their supposed purpose and, although they could be considered as a facilitator, the lack of investment in these policies seriously restricts their potential impact<sup>76</sup>.

## **Review of best practice support for refugees and migrants**

### Legal certainty and rapid access to labour market

More inclusive labour market access regulations, that facilitate refugees' and migrants' rapid access to the labour market, have been shown to improve employment outcomes. This has most recently been identified as one of the key reasons for the successful integration of Ukrainian refugees across Europe<sup>77</sup>, but was previously also identified as beneficial in

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<sup>72</sup> Udayar, S. et al. (2021) [Labour market integration of young refugees and asylum seekers: a look at perceived barriers and resources](#).

<sup>73</sup> Crerar, C. (n.d.) [What are perceived to be the major barriers to employment facing the asylum seeker community in Glasgow and how do guidance and other agencies work with customers and each other to address them?](#)

<sup>74</sup> Crerar, C. (n.d.) [What are perceived to be the major barriers to employment facing the asylum seeker community in Glasgow and how do guidance and other agencies work with customers and each other to address them?](#)

<sup>75</sup> The Migration Observatory (2020) [Migrants and discrimination in the UK](#).

<sup>76</sup> Valfort, M-A. (2018) [Do anti-discrimination policies work?](#)

<sup>77</sup> WEF (2023) [Enabling the Economic Inclusion of Refugees: Lessons on Providing Refugees with Timely Access to Labour Markets](#).

Germany<sup>78</sup> and Switzerland<sup>79</sup>. The faster refugees and migrants are given permission to work, the better, as long wait times negatively affect their mental health and motivation, while their skills are more likely to atrophy<sup>80</sup>.

Another aspect of facilitating a swift transition into the host country's labour market is the early identification and verification of skills and credentials/qualifications. Refugees often lack formal proof of qualifications by virtue of their situation, such as fleeing danger or purposefully arriving without documentation. Employers are also often unfamiliar with the educational and business environments of refugees' and migrants' origin country. Therefore, the use of effective skills assessment tools and frameworks for the recognition of foreign credentials is crucial to reduce the uncertainties involved for employers hiring refugees and migrants<sup>81</sup>. Skills-first approaches to skills assessment that do not rely on migrants' knowledge of the host country's language were used by IKEA across Europe to help manage the Ukraine refugee crisis<sup>82</sup>.

### Personalised skills development

Refugees and migrants may arrive with a range of issues they require support with, including trauma, other health issues, lack of language skills and facing skills requirements that differ considerably from their origin country.

Language skills have been shown to be a key factor for the labour market integration of refugees and migrants<sup>83</sup>. Language learning must therefore also account for the wide range of needs and skill levels among the migrant population, ensuring that everyone is able to access classes (particularly women and parents with children) at the speed and in the format appropriate to their level.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Home Office (2019) [Integrating refugees: What works? What can work? What does not work? A summary of the evidence.](#)

<sup>79</sup> Slotwinski, M. et al. (2019) [Are asylum seekers more likely to work with more inclusive labor market access regulations?](#)

<sup>80</sup> WEF (2023) [Enabling the Economic Inclusion of Refugees: Lessons on Providing Refugees with Timely Access to Labour Markets.](#)

<sup>81</sup> OECD & UNHCR (2018) [Engaging with Employers in the Hiring of Refugees.](#)

<sup>82</sup> WEF (2023) [Enabling the Economic Integration of Refugees: Lessons learned on refugee employment and employability from the rapid response to Ukraine.](#)

<sup>83</sup> Degler, E. et al. (2017) [Integrating Refugees into the Labour Market - Where Does Germany Stand?](#)

<sup>84</sup> OECD & UNHCR (2018) [Engaging with Employers in the Hiring of Refugees.](#)



Additionally, vocation-specific language training can facilitate integration into the labour market, as was shown in Sweden<sup>85</sup>. Accessing language classes as soon as possible, and in classes with a mixture of nationalities, is particularly effective and provides the added benefits of improving well-being, network building and community cohesion<sup>86</sup>.

### Support job matching

There are a number of challenges to matching refugees and migrants to suitable jobs. The geographical distance between migrants' location and suitable or preferred employment opportunities is one challenge. Refugees or migrants that are resettled to rural areas may struggle to access employment due to a lack of public transport infrastructure<sup>87</sup>. It has therefore been suggested, by several organisations, to attempt to match refugees based on their skills profiles and the labour market needs of communities to facilitate their integration into the labour market<sup>88 89</sup>. Some countries are already selecting appropriate dispersal locations based on refugees' level of education and work experience<sup>90</sup>.

Another challenge can be migrants' lack of networks and social capital within their host countries, which can prevent them from finding out about suitable job openings. One measure that has been proven successful in the handling of the Ukraine refugee crisis, was the effort to emphasise the visibility of job openings for refugees<sup>91</sup>. As detailed in Section 4, Working Wales has looked to do this by offering translated lists of job opportunities in different sectors.

### Prepare the work environment

Working and engaging with employers and professional bodies is crucial for supporting refugees and migrants into work. Successful economic integration requires employers to be open and motivated to recruit refugees and migrants<sup>92</sup>. Employer engagement tends to be a relatively neglected aspect of migrant support but has a critical impact on integration on a

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<sup>85</sup> Home Office (2019) [Integrating refugees: What works? What can work? What does not work? A summary of the evidence](#).

<sup>86</sup> Degler, E. et al. (2017) [Integrating Refugees into the Labour Market - Where Does Germany Stand?](#).

<sup>87</sup> Degler, E. et al. (2017) [Integrating Refugees into the Labour Market - Where Does Germany Stand?](#).

<sup>88</sup> OECD & UNHCR (2018) [Engaging with Employers in the Hiring of Refugees](#).

<sup>89</sup> Home Office (2019) [Integrating refugees: What works? What can work? What does not work? A summary of the evidence](#).

<sup>90</sup> OECD (2016) [Making Integration Work: Refugees and others in need of protection](#).

<sup>91</sup> WEF (2023) [Enabling the Economic Integration of Refugees: Lessons learned on refugee employment and employability from the rapid response to Ukraine](#).

<sup>92</sup> Gloster, R. & Wimalasiri, V. (2022) [Supporting refugees into work: What can we do better?](#).

local and interpersonal level<sup>93</sup>. To address this issue, the EU has funded a project that successfully provides comprehensive support for enterprises and organisations that want to employ and integrate refugees at their workplaces<sup>94</sup>.

Helping migrants to establish themselves in their new location, beyond the workplace, was also beneficial. Coordinating efforts of community-based partners and employers to provide holistic support, have been shown to be effective for Ukrainian refugees' fast integration into the labour market.<sup>95</sup> Such partnerships have enabled companies to implement tailored recruitment and onboarding approaches, while accommodating wider support around housing, psychological support and help throughout the administrative process<sup>96</sup>. Partnerships that combine workplace exposure with broad support are particularly promising.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> REST (n.d.) [Refugees Employment Support and Training: Good Practice Brochure](#).

<sup>94</sup> REST (n.d.) [Refugees Employment Support and Training: Good Practice Brochure](#).

<sup>95</sup> WEF (2023) [Enabling the Economic Integration of Refugees: Lessons learned on refugee employment and employability from the rapid response to Ukraine](#).

<sup>96</sup> WEF (2023) [Enabling the Economic Integration of Refugees: Lessons learned on refugee employment and employability from the rapid response to Ukraine](#).

<sup>97</sup> WEF (2023) [Enabling the Economic Integration of Refugees: Lessons learned on refugee employment and employability from the rapid response to Ukraine](#).

## Annexe Four: Variables Analysed

- Year joined
- Duration of support
- Referral\_source
- Referred\_by\_org
- Status\_at\_joining
- Ward
- Local Authority
- Ruralurbanindicator
- Urbangroups
- Age (available only for 2019–2021 data)
- Age\_bracket
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Is\_disabled
- Home\_language
- Highest\_qual\_level
- Preferred\_language\_verbal
- Preferred\_language\_written
- Forced migrant, refugee, asylum seeker
- Origin\_country
- Repeat\_joiner\_within\_year
- Motivation\_issues
- Free\_school\_meals
- Alternative\_curriculum
- Substance\_issues
- School\_poor\_non\_attender
- English\_additional\_language
- Veteran\_or\_service\_family
- English\_as\_additional\_language
- Housing\_issues\_or\_homeless
- Lac\_or\_care\_leaver
- Carer
- Young\_single\_parent\_or\_pregnancy
- Other\_forced\_migrant
- Refugee
- Asylum\_seeker
- Rurality
- Probation
- In\_custody
- Yos\_offending\_behaviour
- Support
- One\_to\_one\_count
- One\_to\_one\_duration
- Cwc\_support\_count
- Cwc\_support\_duration
- Advocacy\_liaison\_count
- Advocacy\_liaison\_duration
- Interactions
- In\_person\_interactions

- Email\_interactions
- Letter\_interactions
- Messaging\_service\_interactions
- Telephone\_interactions
- Text\_interactions
- Video\_interactions
- Webchat\_interactions
- Webinar\_interactions
- Referrals
- R\_access
- R\_apprenticeship
- R\_business\_wales
- R\_citizens\_advice
- R\_college
- R\_college\_pla
- R\_cfw\_plus
- R\_employability\_coaching
- R\_employability\_skills\_programme
- R\_employment
- R\_engagement
- R\_esf\_project
- R\_event
- R\_housing\_support
- R\_jcp\_youth\_journey
- R\_jgw\_plus\_advancement
- R\_jgw\_plus\_employment
- R\_jgw\_plus\_engagement
- R\_jobcentre\_plus
- R\_jgw\_legacy
- R\_learning\_training\_provider
- R\_level\_1
- R\_la\_provision
- R\_other
- R\_pace
- R\_prison\_project
- R\_react\_iii
- R\_react\_plus
- R\_self\_help
- R\_skills\_to\_succeed
- R\_social\_services
- R\_summer\_sorted
- R\_support\_agency
- R\_uk\_enic
- R\_union
- R\_university
- R\_voluntary\_work
- R\_youth\_service