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Exploring the perspectives of providers of education and educational support services on their ability to meet the needs of sanctuary-seeking primary school children in South Wales



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Introduction

Schools play an essential role in the promotion of inclusion and general well-being of students seeking sanctuary (asylum seeking and refugee students) in their new communities (1). All sanctuary seeking children have a right to a free school place upon dispersal/resettlement at their local authority. Apart from government resettlement schemes for selected populations, such as Syrian refugee resettlement schemes, these places are offered with little additional resource coming to the school, and even where there are resettlement schemes additional resources often do not meet additional needs. There are certain steps that a school can take to meet the needs of this student population that have been shown to be effective. These include: using suitable teaching strategies, fostering cross-cultural competence, learning about students' backgrounds and having language interpreters (2,3). Additionally, teachers act as crucial facilitators of integration, growth and overall well-being for students (4,5).

The role of educational sites can be seen as particularly important given the adverse consequences that could occur if schools are not prepared to embrace multiculturalism (6). "Polarising and stereotyping tendencies" may arise within a school, and asylum seeking and refugee students may face additional challenges in their learning, which could lead to lasting inequalities (6).

Despite this, policy-relevant research on children seeking sanctuary in an educational setting is still "limited, fragmented, and case-specific" (1). Additionally, recent studies have suggested that teachers and classroom support workers – who act as main conduits through which a culture of active inclusion may or may not be cultivated – may not have the adequate training, skills or knowledge to work with asylum seeking and refugee students, and there is an acute need for professional education or developmental activities to build awareness and skills for education providers (7).

In light of the importance that educational sites hold for the well-being of students seeking sanctuary, as well as a potential lack of resources or policy-level direction for schools, it is crucial to explore the gaps that may exist in support for these establishments as they strive to meet the needs of this population.

This paper thus attempts to increase our understanding of this topic in the context of primary-school-aged students seeking sanctuary in Wales, with the ultimate goal of optimising an environment that has an indelible impact on these students' well-being.



Background

Refugee and asylum seeking children are a diverse population group, arriving in host countries with unique experiences, cultures, education levels and language abilities. While their needs and experiences may differ greatly, they often share a real desire to learn and achieve (7), viewing education as a means to a better life (8). The easier it is for children to settle into and progress through education systems, the more opportunity they have to establish roots, make connections and progress on career paths to develop a more secure future.

Research suggests that refugee and asylum seeking children have a variety of complex needs. These require assessing and supporting on an individual basis (9), to ensure that they can thrive in the education system. These needs include:

- **Physical and mental health issues**, such as malnutrition, dental caries, vision and hearing problems, sleeping problems, post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health issues stemming from separation, loss of loved ones or other trauma (1,10,11). These problems may impact on a child's learning and academic achievement (6).
- **Struggles with identity**, and a need to find a balance between old and new cultures and languages (1).
- **Educational needs**, due to disrupted schooling or limited education in their home countries (12). To be able to progress academically, these children will need to learn the host country language, catch up on learning in other curriculum subjects and adjust to a new educational culture and set of behavioural expectations (1,13).
- **Social isolation**, due to language barriers or refugee status (8), which can make it difficult to make friends and can lead to bullying (8). Building friendships is important in reducing social isolation (1), facilitating resettlement (14), acquiring a new language (8), and developing a sense of belonging and school connectedness, which has been linked to lower levels of depression and higher self-efficacy (15).
- **Wider family stressors**, such as uncertainty around the asylum seeking process, poverty, and unstable accommodation (12,15,16). These stressors can distract students from learning (14).

Through addressing their needs, schools can support refugee and asylum seeking children to engage in school life and progress academically, and can encourage health and well-being. Schools provide the best support for refugee and asylum seeking children when they take an **inclusive approach**, celebrating diversity, adapting curriculums to cater for all students, and providing refugee and asylum seeking children with a sense of welcoming and belonging (1,13,17). Taking a **holistic approach** is also important; one that recognises the varying needs of individual children and provides comprehensive support to address them (1,13). Other practices that can support children to engage and thrive in school include:

- **Supporting and training teachers.** Providing teachers with on-going training is important. This includes: how to best support refugee and asylum seeking children; how to create safe, encouraging and inclusive classroom environments; how to manage classrooms that have a range of English skills; developing understanding of the links between adverse experiences, behaviour and learning; and how to help children recover psychologically from trauma (4,9,13,16). Encouraging teachers to reflect on their own beliefs and biases about refugee children is also helpful (1,8) to help address any discrimination.

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- **Providing physical and mental health care.** Supporting refugee and asylum seeking children with their physical and mental health care needs can help children acculturate in school settings and wider society (18). This can include help from on-site school health or counselling services (10,18) as well as links to off-site community services.
- **Creating partnerships with other agencies.** Refugee and asylum seeking children's needs can be addressed through partnerships with community organisations and services (16,17). These can help students to approach and use community services, as well as increase staff's understanding of services in the community (19). Partners can provide advice and guidance, or help to deliver teaching for certain themes (19).
- **Supporting student's educational needs.** This includes helping children to learn the host country language through, for instance, extra language lessons and homework clubs (12,13,17,20), and supporting children to maintain and develop their mother tongue (12,13). A whole school approach to learning is useful, where language teachers are integrated into and contribute to other subject lessons (17). Additionally, having teachers or assistants that speak children's home languages and understand their cultures is helpful for learning and settling (8,9,20).
- **Providing opportunities to make social connections.** Social support from teachers can promote a sense of belonging within the school community (8) and having a committed and caring adult that can support the child in the longer term is helpful, particularly for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (16). Opportunities to make peer connection – through for instance buddy schemes (9,13) or opportunities for recreation (19) – are also essential to help develop friendships, reduce social isolation and learn the host country language (9,13). Extra-curricular activities can also develop other, non-academic skills and leadership (1).
- **Engaging with parents and families.** Encouraging parental involvement in children's education, and increasing communication between schools and families are important (9,12,21) and can help children feel more included at school (1,13). This could include parent workshops, parent ambassadors, social events, parental involvement in the school community, or visiting families in their homes (9,13), with use of mediators or interpreters to help aid understanding (13). Addressing wider family needs through help accessing health and welfare services, for example, is also important (9).

While our knowledge of how to help engage and integrate refugee and asylum seekers in education is growing, schools and teachers often find that there are barriers to achieving these practices in reality. These include: a lack of funding and resources (9,12,13); little staff time available to provide the necessary pastoral care and inclusive approach (13,19); little understanding of the issues facing refugee and asylum seeking children and their families (13); a lack of training and support to meet children's needs (4); and the challenges of accessing the educational needs of the child, particularly where mental health issues may be impacting on language or learning (9).



Methods

Public Health Wales – in collaboration with medical and post-graduate students from Cardiff University, Swansea University and Yale University – led a series of semi-structured interviews to gain insight into the views of providers on their available support and potential resource gaps as they strive to meet the needs of children seeking sanctuary. The project focused on the region of south Wales, which encompasses three out of the four Home Office dispersal areas in Wales (Cardiff, Newport and Swansea).

The research question guiding this project was: Do primary school education providers and their support services feel they have the necessary resources and support to meet the needs of children seeking sanctuary?

The primary objective of this project was to better understand the following elements in the context of meeting the needs of students seeking sanctuary:

- Resources and support currently available for schools
- Resources and support currently being used in schools
- Resources and support desired and lacking in schools

The secondary objectives of this project included:

- Adding to the current knowledge base regarding the needs of primary school children seeking sanctuary as interpreted through the lens of their teachers and support staff
- Gaining insight into the holistic asylum seeker and refugee childhood experience in south Wales
- Increasing general awareness of this topic in educational and public health sectors
- Fostering networks and relationships between the public health and education sectors

Data collection

The research question was addressed through the sole data collection method of semi-structured interviews delivered either in person or by phone when in-person interviews were not feasible. The semi-structured interview guide (in the Appendix of this report) was primarily formulated with insight from the HEAR report (*Health Experiences of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Wales*) co-produced by Public Health Wales and Swansea University in 2018 (22).

Initially, interviewees were recruited through snowball sampling (chain referral sampling) and an email request. However, to increase recruitment, the decision was made four weeks into the eight-week project to attempt recruitment via in-person visits to schools known to receive sanctuary seeking children and via online searches for relevant contacts. All potential participants were then sent an email officially requesting an interview, alongside a brief introduction of the project team and an attached information sheet.

Seven interviews with ten interviewees were conducted. Interviewees included headteachers, assistant headteachers, classroom teachers, asylum seeker coordinators, heads of local authority support services, and local authority support service officers. Three interviews were conducted in dyads, given the potential for richer conversation and for convenience purposes, while the other four interviews were



conducted individually. Three interviews were conducted with two members of the project team; in these cases, one member would take detailed notes and the other would lead the interview. For the other four interviews, only one member of the project team was able to attend.

All interviews began with an introduction of the project team, a brief description of the project and a review of the consent form. With interviewees' consent, interviews were recorded on a secure device and immediately de-identified by using a random number code. Five out of the seven interviews were recorded. Two interviews were not recorded due to feasibility issues and interviewee preference. For the two interviews that were not recorded, detailed notes were taken.

For the five recorded interviews, specific portions of the interview that were relevant to the research question, which generally totalled roughly 30 minutes, were transcribed. Transcription was verbatim and, for anonymity purposes, any identifying names of third sector organisations, local authority support services, individuals or places were substituted with "(Third sector organisation)", "(Local authority support service)", "(Name)" or "(Place)", respectively.

Data analysis

For this project, the framework method for qualitative analysis was employed. Two members of the project team first independently coded the same two transcripts. Meaningful parts of the text were highlighted ("meaningful" indicating that it lent insight to the research question, or that it demonstrated an impactful or innovative interviewee perspective), and the left-hand margin was used to make note of the general theme and topic of the highlighted text. After this, the two researchers compared general themes and discussed why they felt that their highlighted text was valuable and contributed to the research question. These themes were agreed upon and given a brief definition, forming the initial analytical framework.

Following this, the themes from the initial framework were then used to guide the coding of two additional transcripts; any new codes, patterns or topics that arose were then used to amend the initial framework. This revised framework was discussed with members of the project team and the team's supervisor until a consensus was agreed upon and the framework was finalised. Finally, all transcripts and notes from interviews were read through and highlighted for meaningful text. Each item of meaningful text was then assigned a code from the final framework.

Every item of highlighted text was put into a matrix using direct quotations, organised by code and by interviewee. This matrix was then given to the project team's supervisor to build a consensus on which quotations were most suitable and relevant to be included in the report. The agreed upon quotations were then embedded into the "Results" section of the report, below.

The final report was sent out to all interviewees as well as other individuals who had expressed interest in the project findings. Upon conclusion of the data analysis, all interview audio files, email correspondence with interviewees and interviewee contact information were deleted.

Results

The following section is divided into multiple core themes that were salient during interviews. Several core themes are then further broken down into subthemes. Relevant literature is embedded throughout the section, particularly when themes mapped onto previous findings from the literature.



1) Funding and sustainability

Lack of funding for this specific group was a problem frequently faced by schools and their support services; increased pressure on schools was brought up in relation to the issue of budget cuts.

"I think, really the only thing that I'd say our issue would be is funding. Funding... we really had to fight tooth and nail to have an adult to sort of support the (two sanctuary seeking students), because obviously I'm very keen to make sure I'm doing a good job with everyone in my class. I didn't want to kind of pick and choose... I can't be purely focused on two children, I need to be focused on everybody." (*Teacher 1*)

"There's definitely more pressure on (our school) from all sides. And um, there's also been facilities cut. We used to rely quite heavily on a company called (Third sector organisation), and (Third sector organisation) used to have a (service) which specifically helped asylum seekers ... the (service) made a link between home and school, which was fantastic because we don't get that opportunity to go to their home. And quite often, the accommodation they get is not appropriate. And they tell us it's not appropriate ... But (Third sector organisation) made that link and they did go into the homes to see the family and see the circumstance they were living in. And they also came into the school and they worked with the pupils, there was some element of counselling that came along with that. And yeah, it really did support quite a lot of our families. And the funding for that was cut completely. So we don't have that option any more... We worked with them quite a lot. That was a big blow to us." (*Assistant headteacher 1*)

"The other thing would be, our (Local authority support service) service is being cut. The funding is being cut so what's happening is we are having less support from the (Local authority support service) service. We know it's not their fault. They are just having to spread their services farther and wider through (our city). ... So that has a massive impact on the amount of support that we can give." (*Assistant headteacher 1*)

Discussions with interviewees regarding funding pressures would often lead into conversations about the necessity of sustainable resource management and the importance of being adaptable amidst low resources.

"Well, I think [funding] it is [an issue] if you always try to work in one way. With us, you have to adapt... So we are very much on trying to get training. Trying to get partnership teaching. Trying to get different ways to support schools other than (Bilingual Teaching Assistant) there five days a week, five hours a day. Cause that's not happening, as much as the school would love it. That's impossible. And that's across the UK... as resources are limited. The workload's not shrinking, but you've got to be resourceful. So I think we're very good at trying to adapt." (*Local authority support service staff 1*)

"I think resources, I think they've gone away from that trying to get things bilingually, they've realised that that's not manageable, you know, there's over 96 languages in (our city), that's not feasible. So I think what they need is some time to be able to simplify what they've got to easy language, to English. So you know you've got your welcome booklet, your school rules, your letters, your resources ... Not to translate them, I think those days are gone. But to make it – have your visuals, have your links on there." *(Local authority support service staff 4)*

2) Structural constraints

Transient housing and housing quality

Housing is allocated to asylum seekers by the Home Office and initial accommodation is usually temporary, followed by provision in a "dispersal area". Changes of placement can also be made by the Home Office accommodation providers. Following receipt of refugee status, sanctuary seekers are moved on to their permanent accommodation, which could be in a new area. The need to adjust to life in several schools is a reality for many children.

Particularly in light of these structural elements that may pose increased threats to a sanctuary seeking child's well-being and perceived safety, interviewees spoke about how transient housing and housing quality were issues that students and families seeking sanctuary face. Increased pressure on schools was brought up again in relation to transient housing.



The need to adjust to life in several schools is a reality for many children.

"Because of the nature of housing, they tend to be quite transient around schools... and that's an added thing for them isn't it. Getting settled into one school and having to move into another school more often than other learners. That then puts more pressure on schools... Moving around happens to other students too, but could particularly happen to asylum seekers." *(Local authority support service staff 2)*

"And quite often, the accommodation they get is not appropriate. And they tell us it's not appropriate. But we found it difficult to be able to do anything about that." *(Assistant headteacher 1)*

Assistant headteacher 1: "The other thing we find hard is that families are moved from us. So they will be housed temporarily in this area, for a short amount of time. The children come in, they settle, they're obviously very nervous to begin with, they don't speak the language. They've been on a – you know – whoever knows what they've been [through] to get here. They come to us, they settle, they have six months, a year, two years sometimes, and then they're moved on. And quite often there's a lot of distress around that, the families are quite distressed, pupils are distressed. Because they don't want to move again ... I know that that's maybe something that we can't do anything about because once they've got their right to remain they're then rehoused somewhere. But that doesn't help the child's mental health or the family's mental health at all ... And we work so hard to build those relationships for those pupils to make them feel like they're in a safe place, and they open up a little bit, they'll start playing with the other children, they make friends, and then all of a sudden they're moved again. And you just think, you know, they've worked so hard, and we've worked so hard to build those relationships, and they're gone."

Interviewer: "They can be moved anywhere?"

Assistant headteacher 1: "Anywhere. So some have tried to, they've been moved to other parts of (our city) and they still try and get here. So we had an asylum seeker family who tried to join us about two and a half years ago, have refugee status now, but have been rehoused quite a ways away in (our city). And the parents are – can't afford to – but are paying for the children to come on bus every day. They're catching three buses to keep them here. One boy who is disabled and took a long time – never been educated before, never been in the education system ... And dad is determined that they are going to catch these three buses every day even though he brings them in a wheelchair on those buses. Because he wants him to come here because he doesn't want to disrupt his... because they're settled, they've made connections with us, built relationships and... so that's hard. And it's hard knowing what they're going through in terms of having to pay for that. When they don't have a lot of money to be able to do it."

... And dad is determined that they are going to catch these three buses every day even though he brings them in a wheelchair on those buses.

3) The importance of trauma-informed approaches and potential re-traumatisation

The importance of trauma-informed approaches

The presence of trauma-informed approaches is particularly essential; the potential for re-traumatisation and a tie-in with ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) awareness were highlighted by interviewees in the context of emotional needs.

"But we feel that the bilingual teaching assistants are the (most valuable) part of (Local authority support service) ... Because they're the ones, who've got that – if you're a refugee asylum seeker child without language and you're struggling because six months ago your house was bombed ... Who are you gonna talk to? ... You may not talk to (Name) or one of the others, but if you know you've got that person (the bilingual teaching assistant) there to talk to... That's not to say when I was teaching, kids wouldn't talk to me, but you need, unless your language is good enough, how can you..."
(Local authority support service staff 1)

"Well obviously we've all had ACEs training, so just making staff aware of that... I think it's having the staff knowing what they can do with information that gets told to them. So what do they do if a child tells them something or expresses a feeling..." (Local authority support service staff 1)



"As professionals, that it doesn't always show, physically, and you don't always know what (sanctuary seeking children's) needs are. Sometimes very quiet and socially withdrawn and takes a long time to make friends and join in. Sometimes they come in and they're over confident and quite challenging in terms of behaviour. They don't want to sit and listen, there's too much going on. They want to be with the legos, they want to be with the playdoh, they want to be everywhere. And to sit down with a teacher and look at a book, to listen to something ... they're not ready for that yet. They're all over the place. So everybody is different ... But looking at the ACEs, you'd think, well of course there'd be something there. Because if they've experienced some kind of trauma, whether that's leaving home, whether that's seeing something horrendous, whether it's being split up with family members, or whatever it is. There is some kind of trauma there isn't there. So of course they're going to need something. It's just every child needs something different. And it's just tapping into what that is, isn't it, to be able to give the right support." (*Assistant headteacher 1*)

4) Gaps and deficits

During interviews, there were several support, service and knowledge gaps that arose for schools in meeting the needs of students seeking sanctuary.

Language needs were repeatedly mentioned during interviews.

Language needs

Language needs were repeatedly mentioned during interviews. We found that some school staff and support services were able to meet this language need if they had the necessary funding by using EAL (English as an Additional Language) teaching strategies, bilingual teachers/teaching assistants, or translated school materials. However, other schools – frequently because they did not have adequate funding or resources – found that this was indeed a gap for asylum seeking and refugee students.

"I would like to have a basic handbook on the main spoken languages of asylum seeking and refugee children on how to say certain things like going to the toilet, when child is hungry, or unwell etc... [in terms of why these services are not available], I think it comes down to of course the lack of resources available in general, but also the relevant individuals who are able to speak to the designated language of an asylum seeking and refugee child." (*Teacher 2*)

"We don't employ (Local authority support service) staff, they are given to us. But um, what we've also got now is, the teacher who is coming to us speaks English. Which is fine, but we could do with – what we used to have in the past was (Local authority support service) staff in the past who spoke Arabic, who spoke different languages and that, we had that instant connection with the families with the translation. So now we are having (Local authority support service) staff who come to us who are predominantly English speaking, are not able to provide that support in terms of language. So we are having to employ people who speak those languages to then be translators. Which is not – we can't afford to employ translators. And if we do employ someone it means we are employing them as a TA, or as a support staff. But if we want them for translation we then have to take them out of the classroom to provide that translation, which is disrupting school life, if that makes sense ... that is a bit of a barrier for us at the moment in terms of, you know, if we had the funding, or we had more support from (Local authority support service) we could have those translators in." (*Assistant headteacher 1*)

Background knowledge

The lack of background knowledge on asylum seeking and refugee students is another issue frequently mentioned in previous literature. For example, some studies have indicated that teachers would feel better equipped to help asylum seeking and refugee students succeed if they were to have more background information on the child (2). Teachers who are unaware of the background information on a student are left to make assumptions when placing a child into a particular class, which can create potential integration and inclusion issues (2). This general lack of background knowledge was an issue highlighted in our interviews which was also brought up in relation to language needs. Statistical information on asylum seeking and refugee students would also have been welcomed by some interviewees.



“Before a child starts at the school, I personally think it would be valuable to have some background information on the child, in order to understand certain beliefs, medical conditions and family history. I think as a teacher it would also be useful to be aware of the child’s intellectual abilities before coming to the school, so we are not teaching them below or above their initial capabilities. A girl in my class last year who was initially unable to speak any English or understand the basic commands in maths, by the end of the year turned out to be the best at maths in the class, way ahead of children born in this country. For me, she was probably already at a higher intellectual ability before coming to the country so I was probably not enhancing her abilities like I would have been able to, if I had been given her educational history [or capabilities in the key areas].” *(Teacher 2)*

... she was probably already at a higher intellectual ability before coming to the country so I was probably not enhancing her abilities like I would have been able to, if I had been given her educational history ...

“It’s very difficult to actually know how many refugees are in a city or in schools. There’s no obligation for schools to record that information. Try to keep some kind of eye on it, but we would only know the ones that have moved from asylum seeker to refugee status. Because there’s not obligation for anyone to ask that question or collect that information.” *(Local authority support service staff 2)*

Assistant headteacher 1: “We’ve had quite a few families from Eritrea recently – and trying to find somebody who speaks Eritrean, very difficult. So to find out enough about their background and what the children have been through to get that overview of them in the first place is more and more difficult at the moment.”

Interviewer: “I assume you are not given much background information...”

Assistant headteacher 1: “No ... quite often we will only find out if they’re an asylum seeker when we have information from the Council. So that will come through to our office. We ask during our admissions whether they’re refugees or asylum seekers. Some will tell you, some parents won’t. I think they think there’s a bit of a stigma attached to it, if they tell you they’re an asylum seeker or refugee they think we will treat them differently. We don’t, at all. But I think, yeah, there’s a bit of a worry of that. So we don’t always know. So we don’t always get the information...”

Emotional needs of students

The lack of emotional and mental health support for students seeking sanctuary was a common issue that arose during interviews. This is again a common finding in previous literature, as many studies have similarly demonstrated the crucial role that emotional support plays for asylum seeking and refugee students (23,24,25).

Several interviewees mentioned they felt there was a lack of mental health support in the student's home language (not simply a direct lack of mental health support). Additionally, two interviewees spoke about how mental health is an issue not only for students seeking sanctuary, but for young people in general, though trauma may be amplified for students seeking sanctuary compared to non-sanctuary-seeking students.

"But there is definitely a lack in meeting [emotional needs]. Which is language. So it's not that there aren't counsellors. It's just having someone specifically who understands the asylum seekers and refugees ... Or, even if you – if you've got a counsellor and then you've got a translator, it can be a bit impersonal. I don't know how you tackle that because you've got so many languages." (*Local authority support service staff 1*)

"If there was one thing that I would say, because you can't compensate [counselling services] any other way... Shouldn't use an interpreter in this situation. That would be the one thing that I really think needs to be in place. You cannot work around it... In terms of bilingual support in schools, can get around it with volunteers, parents ... [But] counselling is such a specific area, that is one thing that I think there is a real lack of. The point is it's there but not through the first or home language." (*Local authority support service staff 2*)

"These are national issues, do you know what I mean? They are not specific to asylum seekers and refugees. Mental health provision, counselling ... all of that is a problem for every child. So I would say it's the same for asylum seekers and refugees ... yeah, it would be a gap. But it's a gap for everyone. Do you know what I mean, it's not worse for asylum seekers and refugees, they are just part of that system, I suppose." (*Local authority support service staff 4*)

"To reduce the degree of mental health in the UK cause it's going bananas isn't it, worldwide. And the thing about preventing is better than... treatment of mental health in the future. So we just went over the signs of trauma, and it is trauma that is the major thing." (*Local authority support service staff 3*)

Interviewer: "Is there anything you wish you could do more of for asylum seeking and refugee children?"

Assistant headteacher 1: "Yes... Obviously we've got our own set of, um, we run [different programmes], so we can give access to pupils who have suffered trauma, a little bit... But we are not professionally trained in that. And to have access to someone who could come in and help counsel some of these children ... We've had children come in in the past who are scared of loud noises, hid under tables when helicopters have gone over, it's been that kind of... it's difficult, we provide a safe place and obviously, you know, eventually they will feel safe. But that mental health and the counselling around that. I don't know whether we are fully equipped to do that. To have somebody who could come in and do that would be great."

We've had children come in in the past who are scared of loud noises, hid under tables when helicopters have gone over, ...

Support for sanctuary seekers – inequities in access to advocacy

An unequal support for asylum seekers, brought up by interviewees, referred to how Syrian refugees who came through the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme received much more support compared to Syrian or other asylum seekers who did not come through the programme (who made their own way to UK and did not arrive on a scheme with refugee status). In particular the need for advocacy regarding school entry and ensuring packages of support was felt to be important, but support services were only resourced to directly provide for those on special Home Office programmes.

Interviewees could not always distinguish the categories of people seeking sanctuary (asylum seekers, refugees, those who had arrived on government resettlement programmes with automatic refugee status); the complex landscape of the asylum process was not necessarily clearly understood by all interviewees.

“Whereas if you get an [asylum/sanctuary] seekers, even from Syria, but they haven’t come in through the [Syrian resettlement] scheme ... I don’t like it, it’s just not fair to me ... So like, a school with a few of those get 2000 [pounds a year] each, and then a school down the road with 10, 15 Syrian ... they don’t get any extra money [other] than of course, the usual [education allowance] money from Welsh government per person. I just think it should be across asylum seekers, the same support.” *(Local authority support service staff 3)*

“There’s lots of support that comes with the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme. That has created, in a way, a two-tiered system. So you’ve got these families that come and their housing is sorted, their education places are sorted, there’s extra funding that comes with them. And they come already with refugee status. That can buy in support – so that could be support linked to trauma, linked to literacy. Anything, that comes with that funding ... And then maybe for those asylum seekers that come on their own not through that – there could be a gap there.” *(Local authority support service staff 4)*

Local authority support service staff 3: “For a child to be admitted into the school, they’ve got to have an interview with the headteacher and the parents ... They have an interview before, ‘okay, now you can start next Monday.’ So (Name) goes to [the interviews for asylum/sanctuary seekers who come in through the resettlement programme], but I think it should be important that we [someone] go to all of them. That all asylum seekers are equally as important.”

Interviewer: “Okay. So then nobody from (Local authority support service) goes to any of the other interviews?”

Local authority support service staff 3: “No. Our input is to train schools to... You find out extra information, use this form. We have an extra form that we get schools to complete about their education background ... things like that.”

Interviewer: “But you wish that somebody could be there to advocate for them at the school...”

Local authority support service staff 3: “Yes. At all (asylum/sanctuary) seeker admission interviews [not just those who come through the resettlement programme]. To make sure they get a buddy, to make sure they get a translator...”

Sharing good practice and experiences in the education sector

Some interviewees mentioned a desire for more communication across organisations, schools and support services.

"I've shared everything I've made, so when I've done the presentation with people and people have come in for training, I've emailed them the picture dictionaries... Pictures in Arabic, who we were, with, things like the toilet and canteen and so on. So all those resources I've shared with the other teachers that've come to us and people who have emailed me asking us." *(Teacher 1)*

"There's (Third sector organisation), there's all these things that go on, but nobody seems to join the dots. You know? So it's a bit of a minefield. Who does what and when ... because they're all funded on short-term projects. Sometimes by the time you've established what's going on, it's changed. So that is a gap, really..." *(Local authority support service staff 4)*

... there's all these things that go on, but nobody seems to join the dots.

"You know, it's kind of just, connecting. Because quite often there is a charity out there, or there's something out there but we're not aware of it. I just wish there was more communication ... And that would be really useful ... But things like refugee week and raising awareness, all of that is helping. But more of that would be good ... because it's quite frustrating, I think. When you want to help but you're not quite sure where to go." *(Assistant headteacher 1)*

Lack of education while waiting for dispersal

Another gap that arose was the lack of education/schooling site for asylum seeking children while they are waiting for dispersal.

"We are a dispersal area for Home Office so there is a system where when they're dispersed, the children are in that system until they're dispersed either within Wales... Whilst the children are there waiting for the decision they don't access school, until that decision..." *(Support service staff 4)*

Lack of volunteering opportunities for asylum seeking parents

Another gap that arose was how sanctuary seeking parents may be keen to volunteer at schools or in the community, but in some localities, there is no system in place to facilitate this.

"What would be good is – because the asylum seekers in particular are not allowed to work – many of them are very keen to volunteer ... That system doesn't seem to be there. It would be good to have a national programme that would say, 'right, these people are asylum seekers, they want to volunteer.' They don't have 30/40 pounds to do their own ... checks, you know, their criminal bureau checks, etc. We can't expect them to do that. But to have a programme that would be able to support them to volunteer..." *(Local authority support service staff 4)*

... the asylum seekers in particular are not allowed to work – many of them are very keen to volunteer.

5) Embracing diversity

Understanding the benefits that embracing diversity brings to a school culture is essential to the health of a school and the well-being of any student with an ethnic minority background. Literature has emphasised the importance of inclusion and integration for asylum seeking and refugee students in schools and its essentiality for the health and wellbeing of students seeking sanctuary (1,2,6).



The importance of inclusion

Several examples of inclusion and its importance arose during interviews.

"The class they were in ... they were just the loveliest children. They were so welcoming straight away. They were really excited when we announced that we were having two girls from Syria. And they went home that evening. I think they made about ten letters that came in the next day and cards. They had gone home and they typed into Google translate, they came in letters and cards, and the community themselves have been amazing. We've got parents offering clothes, if they needed televisions, microwaves ... and they're really popular... (sanctuary seeking student), initially, she didn't wear the headscarf in the first six months. Then she came in with the headscarf on and not one of the children ... Not one of them asked her what it was for..." *(Teacher 1)*

They were really excited when we announced that we were having two girls from Syria.

"Because we want them to. It's a school, (Name of school) is a school that respects each other and that's very much embedded in our culture, that we respect each other's views and opinions and differences. That's part of being an ethical informed citizen apart from anything else. And it's been an embedded culture here." *(Headteacher 1)*

"So we've looked more at our curriculum ... in terms of teaching the children about refugees and telling the stories of refugees and allowing the children to talk about it a little more openly." *(Assistant headteacher 1)*

Similarly, the importance of engaging with parents both in a school setting as well as helping them engage with the larger community was highlighted.

"I feel I am able to build a good relationship with the carer in order to make them feel comfortable – if they know you can do the best for their child, they are more willing to trust you, especially when you can give those parents more time to understand things... like in parents evening or something." *(Teacher 2)*

"We've got a really long list of things that we ask the parents. And we give them information about the school so the parents know class teacher's name, they know about uniform, they know about dinners, they know about start times, pick up times, school holidays, all of that stuff, um, how the education system works, because parents don't often know that when they get here ... So our admissions takes quite a long time, interview would normally take an hour plus." *(Assistant headteacher 1)*

Assistant headteacher 1: "In terms of services locally, we tap into (Third sector organisation). That is a really fantastic resource for our families, and we signpost all asylum seeking and refugee families there as soon as they arrive."

Interviewer: "What's the main thing you refer them for?"

Assistant headteacher 1: "Um, to be honest, fitting into society, making social groups. So they've got friendships, they can signpost them to places where they can get clothes, food, food banks, we are a food bank distributing school so we can give food bank vouchers. But it's just a completely different environment there. And they are with people who are in the same boat as them, so they make friends and it's all in their local environment. So we do things like we give out bus timetables, we give out things like, which doctor surgeries people can use, where they need to go for health care, dental care, things like that. But obviously they get far more support from (Third sector organisation)."

However, some interviewees spoke about how there is not enough engagement and/or involvement with asylum seeking and refugee students' home lives and their families. Additionally, though formal family engagement may exist, it was noted that greater emphasis could be put on a more organic, informal (and thus more sustainable) inclusion of families seeking sanctuary into the local community.

"We do have some schools running ... family engagement classes. But I think there could be more of that and I think that would help the families integrate and build confidence in like, going to school, cause sometimes it can be quite intimidating, you know. Even if you are well educated and you don't have the language, you feel that you stay away from school. Cause it can be quite challenging." (*Local authority support service staff 4*)

"And not necessarily focusing just on language, but that meeting of the parents, meeting other people within the community, within the school setting, you know, to break down those barriers of, 'I'm a bit scared to go to school.' You know, cause I can't speak ... But I think it's on that informal bit. So maybe the parents could come in at 3 until 4. Have a cup of tea, have a coffee, practise their English ... is a lot of good work with family engagement but I don't think it's targeted enough at those asylum seeker refugee families." (*Local authority support service staff 4*)

... a lot of good work with family engagement but I don't think it's targeted enough at those asylum seeker refugee families.

"The other thing like I said before, was to have that link with home. And what we're finding is, quite often the families who come to us are – and I know this is an issue with asylum seekers who come into the city not necessarily just because they're in school – but when the families come into us and say they need support, we say, you know, it's an open door, come in, we've got a family liaison officer, come and talk to us. But the issue is always around, for them, housing, money, not being able to work, not having a social group." (*Assistant headteacher 1*)

Tokenisation

A school culture embracing diversity and multiculturalism is crucial to the well-being of any student with an ethnic minority background (as well as crucial to the general health of a school). However, this must not be conflated with racial tokenism.

"Often schools think they're being inclusive but it's often very tokenistic, until you have a big shift in that understanding. More difficulties when you're looking at integration and so on ... strands over to equality, actually realising that you've got biases yourself. It's a huge one this is, it's a really, really huge one ... Schools love doing things like international days, but if that's not also with looking at the cultural diversity in the curriculum, or looking at things through different colour lens. That emphasises difference." *(Local authority support service staff 2)*

"And a lot of schools are doing a really good job, but ... we're still stuck... it's not all out of racist attitudes, it's just... it needs a big shift. But I don't think top down is right either. Ethnic role models, in the teacher profession, in local authorities, so there isn't that... it's going to take a long time to manoeuvre that." *(Local authority support service staff 2)*

6) Effective supportive strategies

There were many supportive strategies deemed effective and helpful to interviewees in meeting the needs of students seeking sanctuary and improving their experiences.

Language assistance

As mentioned above, the language needs of the asylum seeker and refugee student population were frequently brought up during interviews. Specifically, the efficacy of bilingual teaching assistants and specific EAL teaching strategies were highlighted by interviewees.

"But we feel that the bilingual teaching assistants are the [most valuable] part of (Local authority support service)" *(Local authority support service staff 1)*

"Well, we're doing the education, we are trying to capacity build schools... So we help schools a lot with how they can scaffold (asylum seeking and refugee students') learning. With pictures, objects, word banks and things like that. So that's where our major work comes in." *(Local authority support service staff 3)*

"Last year I was able to have a contact in (Local authority support service) who supported me and provided relevant help if they had time to sit down and help the child... one particular lady working for (Local authority support service) last year was able to join in on activities where I was going through different vegetables and she was able to tell the child what these were in her native language and allow the child to learn what they were in English... I thought this was a great help." *(Teacher 2)*

... one particular lady ... was able to join in on activities where I was going through different vegetables and she was able to tell the child what these were in her native language and allow the child to learn what they were in English...

"It's the confidence I think... I think most of the other teachers said straight away, we wouldn't know where to start ... I think that's where (Local authority support service) has been particularly good in other schools, actually sort of supporting teachers..."
(Teacher 1)

"We've got a colour-coded system so they understand the different word classes, they understand that verbs are yellow, if they see a yellow box they know straightaway that it is going to be a doing word. If it's a green it's a noun, a noun person or a noun thing... So that is up on the wall in every classroom. It's always around ... And again it is very basic but it is sentence structure. So for (asylum seeking and refugee) she's really studying the language, really understands the structure." (Teacher 1)

"I think it was all of it, I think it's the fact of how you've gone about it. The Pictionary, the colourful semantics, the communicating print, you've taught the structure of the language. You've had – cause that's what we wouldn't have – when teachers say they wouldn't have had a clue how to start, people would seriously have been thinking, 'well I'll carry on and hope they pick it up.' As opposed to the real understanding that when you have children in, that you need to teach English as a foreign language, you must make sure you've got those structures in place, so they can begin to understand the grammatics." (Headteacher 1)

'New to English' class

Having a classroom consisting of only students who are new to English was a helpful strategy that was used in one school with a high number of migrant students, including but not exclusively sanctuary seeking students, or students from homes where English was not their first language.



"Because what we were finding was we were having so many new arrivals through the years, some of them asylum seeking and refugee, not all, but they were coming in with no English at all and some of them with no education background whatsoever. So, never been in a classroom ... and some of those older children. So we put those classes on so we can provide English role models but also so we can teach in a different way. So we overteach the [inaudible], teaching a lot of vocabulary, we do a lot of circle time, we do lots of things in a practical way. We are [inaudible] play based, because quite often children have missed out on that opportunity to learn through play. So we provide that opportunity for them ... When the children have developed enough English they then go and access the curriculum." (Assistant headteacher 1)

"Which is why we've got these new to English classes. Because trying to get those children to come in and join a mainstream classroom where children are sat, working, learning, listening to English, was really difficult. And what staff tended to say was that they felt guilty. That they would spend a lot of time with the children who needed the play... Or they were trying to push the standards and the education of the children who were able to learn... So we felt we needed to do something about it. We had to address their needs... so it's working for us at the moment. And what we get from the pupils is that they like being in that environment." (Assistant headteacher 1)

Signposting

Signposting was a theme that arose repeatedly throughout the interviews. Schools signposted parents to various resources, while local authority support services signposted schools to different services and organisations.

“Every school in (our city) knows of (Local authority support service), so there’s not an issue of they don’t know who to go to. Everyone knows (Local authority support service). So they know that we’re here. So for language support, they’ll come to us. Um, particularly for parental support, they’ll come to us. So we’re there ... And if there’s anything... some of our asylum seeking and refugee children potentially have got very complex emotional needs. Schools may come to us and then often, we might refer, say there’s this person that you can contact. So we’re sometimes that stopgap, aren’t we. Yeah, like to signpost...” *(Local authority support service staff 1)*

“Um, also being in (our city), things like Refugee Week is really good to us because it just raises awareness, gives us access to more resources, lots of charities will publish resources that we can use as staff ... But accessing [that conference] gave us lots of information of other people we can signpost parents to. So it just means that when things like that are put on, if we’re aware of it, somebody can go and then we have more information.” *(Assistant headteacher 1)*

... it just means that when things like that are put on, if we’re aware of it, somebody can go and then we have more information.

Family engagement

The importance of having a designated family engagement officer for sanctuary seeking families was mentioned for one school.

“So, yeah, the admissions [process into our school] – parents do it online now. That causes a lot of families, especially asylum seeking and refugee families, problems when they get here because they can’t access... They need an email address, they don’t know what they’re doing, it’s in English, they haven’t got any support, it’s really difficult. So quite often we will get families in who say, we want to come to this school, but we don’t know how. So that’s where (Name), our family liaison officer will come in. So she will help people fill in the admissions forms.” *(Assistant headteacher 1)*

Training and raising awareness of issues

Raising awareness proved to be an essential aspect of the training that support services offer; the importance of understanding and being sensitive to asylum seeker and refugee students’ needs and experiences was generally emphasised throughout interviews. One conduit of raising awareness was via the School of Sanctuary and City of Sanctuary programmes which reinforce a culture of awareness, perhaps through intra-organisation self-reflection.

“And also the fact that it’s given us an audit to look at, to be able to apply for it, and it just meant that we have been able to self-reflect on things. So we will have other things in school – we have our, like, buddy systems. So when children come into schools we will buddy them up with somebody who speaks their language who has been here longer. Just to give them that instant connection. And this audit allowed us to go back and just review all of the things like that that we’ve put in place.” *(Assistant headteacher 1)*



"So when we do our training it's all about that kind of thing. Educating... And asking people to put themselves in those shoes..." (*Local authority support service staff 4*)

Interviewer: "What is a service that (Local authority support service) provides, perhaps the most of one of the most important services, that is very crucial for this population?"

Local authority support service staff 4: "I think it's the raising awareness. You know, what is an asylum seeker, what is a refugee. Dispelling the myths, you know the world that we live in, people are quite judgemental, you've got Brexit, you've got Trump, you've got lots of issues with cohesion. It's just stating the facts, you know, they get 35 pound a week, you don't see that highlighted in the *Mail* ... It's that kind of, the training ... I think it's raising awareness. People don't know these things until you tell them."

"Just making sure when staff come in they are aware of what an asylum seeker is and what a refugee is. Because we have some staff that join us and they aren't aware, some staff have been here longer, would know more. Things about, we've done a bit of myth busting about where asylum seekers come from, how many asylum seekers settle in this area. But, um, we've also then looked at the impact that they've made to society. So we've done that training with staff and then we've also done that with pupils." (*Assistant headteacher 1*)

One interviewee cited a specific example demonstrating the importance of exhibiting cultural sensitivity and awareness.

"Plus it's really tricky, I've had cases in the past where we've requested translators for case reviews for children, for ... purposes or other things, exclusions, for example ... and you request somebody ... through that official channel of a translator who is impartial. And the interpreter is speaking Somali, for example, but coming from Somalia and not Somaliland, and these are the two ... there's a civil war going on over there... So you didn't want the Somali person interpreting for the people from Somaliland. So speaking the same language doesn't necessarily work out. You've got to be very aware of the backgrounds. So speaking Arabic, but coming from a different part of the world... Cause it can create tension. For that case, it was a Home Office case, and um, the little boy, just when he clocked that this guy was from that place, he just went under the table and couldn't get him out. But because he'd seen horrific things done. So you've got to be so careful when you're using translators." (*Local authority support service staff 4*)

7) Wider significance of these strategies

Realising potential and enabling students seeking sanctuary living meaningful lives

In the aforementioned section regarding supportive strategies, the undertone of all interviewee statements stemmed from a desire to enable students seeking sanctuary and to improve their experiences. The value and purpose of discussing these strategies lie in the possibility of empowering students seeking sanctuary to lead healthy, productive and meaningful lives.

"To me that was the other advantage of having the necessary funding ... it's equipping the school itself to accommodate children who are refugees ... and be able to know how to go about teaching them and ensuring that they have the best possible chance."
(Headteacher 1)

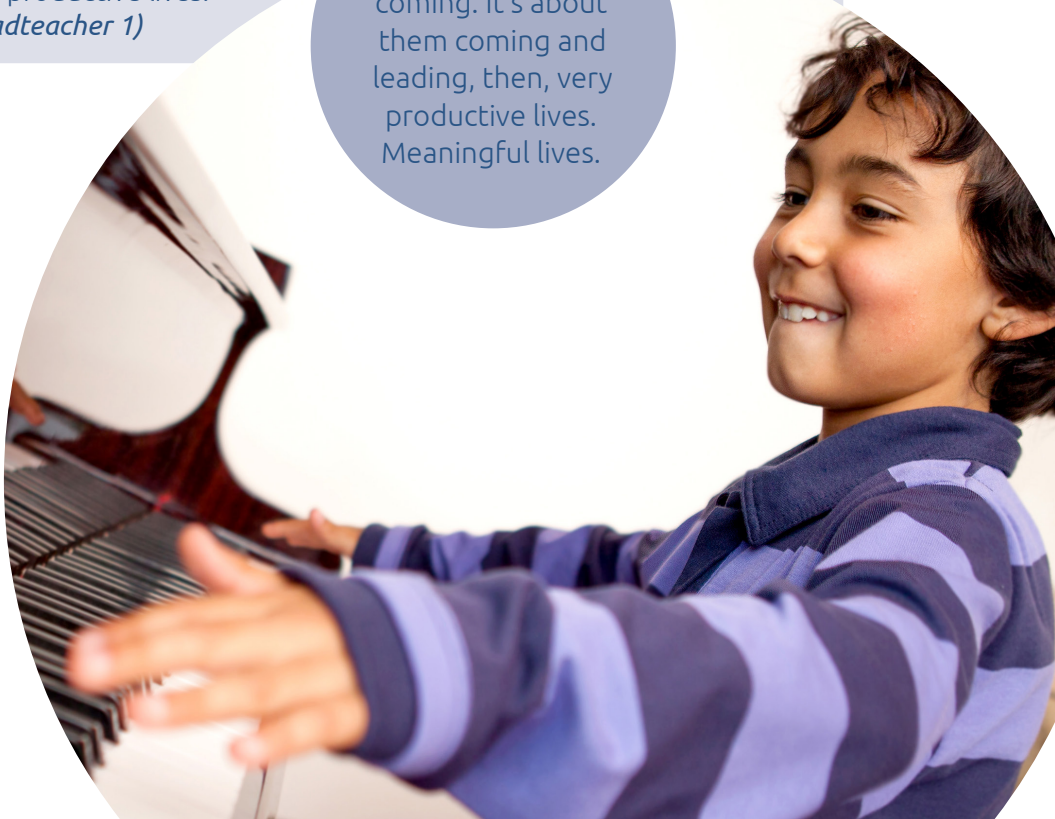
"Also the bilingual teaching assistants can pass on information, like, 'do you know what, they're an excellent piano player,' for example ... which means that child then is asked to go and join the orchestra, which means if they're in the orchestra, they're happy. It's surprising I suppose what information ... just having somebody to communicate with helps." *(Local authority support service staff 1)*

"Children once they know you speak their language ... they're more open and they can share sometimes, you know, you can see what they've done at home... they might share how they feel depending on their age, and saying what they want to say. They have that connection." *(Asylum seeker coordinator 1)*

"Allow the child to see they can achieve opportunities that are presented them as equally as native children." [as one of the main needs of asylum seeking and refugee students] *(Teacher 2)*

"Cause as I said at the time, it's not just about them coming. It's about them coming and leading, then, very productive lives. Meaningful lives." *(Headteacher 1)*

... it's not just about them coming. It's about them coming and leading, then, very productive lives. Meaningful lives.



The high potential of students seeking sanctuary

"I think at first she felt quite frustrated, because she's so bright, I think she felt sort of this frustration that she wanted to be able to do this work that she knew she was capable of but she just couldn't get it down initially. So I think for her that was one of the biggest challenges is sort of taking a time to actually... she was sort of, she knew that she was so capable but struggled to sort of see this work that she knew wasn't as good as other children's." *(Teacher 1)*

"And I think we've [inaudible] them. I've seen that in children of this age group before, children who know that they are good at school and usually, in their own native tongue, and everything... There's an incredible frustration and they also have got to the age where they want everybody to know that 'I can do it.' The frustration that they can't do it because of the language acquisition." *(Headteacher 1)*

"Even yesterday when I went to that school, the child she knows in her language all of the numbers, you know, counting down, backwards. But in English she needs more support. So you know where that child is fluent in her language, can she write in her language..." *(Asylum seeker coordinator 1)*

"A girl in my class last year who was initially unable to speak any English or understand the basic commands in maths, by the end of the year turned out to be the best at maths in the class, way ahead of children born in this country. For me, she was probably already at a higher intellectual ability before coming to the country...." *(Teacher 2)*

Limitations and strengths of the project

This project had several limitations. Firstly, the eight-week time period for the project was a major barrier to conducting more interviews and recruiting more participants. A larger sample size in general as well as, particularly, with more school-based staff, would have been helpful to learn more about the uptake of services and to better understand what kind of programmes were most useful to the school for students seeking sanctuary. Additionally, because this project was conducted during the end of the school calendar year, school-based staff were particularly busy, making their recruitment more difficult. Having fewer school-based interviewees than desired in the interviewee population could lead to a potential bias within this project. Secondly, because of the small sample size, there may only have been one or two individuals representing a key area, which could lead to less reliable findings. Additionally, interviewer and research team bias could skew data collection and the representation of findings.

One strength of this project is the non-educational professional objective point of view of the project team. This allowed for fewer biases when conducting interviews, during research protocol development and while concluding findings themes. In hindsight, the team's diverse background was able to allow for a more holistic and representative project.

Discussion and recommendations

Education and local authority support service providers were willing to talk about this topic and it was considered to be important. The qualitative data from the interviews echo themes from previous research and also bring new insights.

A series of recommendations can be made based on the information revealed by interviewees. These recommendations range from those relevant to individual schools, to those applicable for national organisations. Because the nature of this work is innately collaborative (involving signposting, referrals, working to improve experiences for a common population), and because educational institutions and support services across south Wales face many of the same issues, it seems that knowledge sharing and collaboration could be given greater emphasis.



1. Training needs

- The process of seeking asylum is complex, and education and support service providers may find it difficult to understand and follow. This opens up opportunities for training on these topics (including the complexities of the Syrian resettlement programme versus other sanctuary seekers, entitlements, financial allocations, etc.). There are also opportunities for training on inclusion, cultural sensitivity, avoidance of tokenism, and integration.

2. Additional resources

- Additional resources could assist those schools receiving sanctuary seekers to meet needs such as access to language support materials/advice, and service development/referral routes to educational psychology or counselling inside and outside of schools.

3. Support at initial orientation

- There is a need for local authority support at a family's initial orientation with the school for all sanctuary seekers – to include a review of the child's strengths, weaknesses, interests and challenges, ultimately to enable a holistic approach for engagement with that child to optimise learning and well-being outcomes.

4. Trauma-informed approaches

- There is a need for trauma-informed approaches and therefore training on the effects of trauma for education providers and support service staff who are supporting sanctuary seeking children.

5. School-to-home interaction

- Better school-to-home interaction could create needed linkage between a child's home life and school life. This might include support available to the family (e.g. family engagement classes, signposting to services/community assets), progress of an individual child, and/or parental assistance and involvement in learning.

6. Parental engagement and opportunities

- Schools could act as avenues of opportunity for parents to integrate, volunteer and acquire skills.

7. Sharing good practice within the education sector

- Inter-school training opportunities and increased sharing of strategies was requested by several interviewees and could be explored.

8. Sharing good practice between sectors

- In terms of “connecting the dots” between which services are provided by which sectors/ organisations across south Wales, a service directory of resources could increase confidence, collaboration and general awareness of the activities of others who are ultimately working towards the same goal.

9. Uptake and efficacy of services provided to schools

- There is a need to better understand and monitor the uptake and efficacy of support services provided to schools which could foster efficiency and continue improvement.

10. Security of a stable home

- Instability of housing following initial dispersal by Home Office and subsequently also at “move on”, when refugee status is granted, is potentially re-traumatising and should be kept to a minimum.



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Appendices

Semi-structured interview guide

Introduction for interviewee: From this project, want to learn more about resources and support that are available and/or gaps that may be present. → This could inform future policy recommendations, create support for potential trainings, or help build other supportive functions *to ultimately improve experiences and well-being of students seeking sanctuary.*

(Optional) Preliminary questions:

**** Can be used to “get to know” interviewee, to facilitate a more comfortable environment**

- I. Overall role/position
 - a. I understand that you are ___, what would you say your overall goals are as ___?
 - b. How long have you been teaching/working in this field?
 - c. In this role, how often do you interact with asylum seeking and refugee children?
 - d. What type of interaction with asylum seeking and refugee students? (e.g. teaching, counselling, pastoral care)

Assessing needs:

**** We want to know: What do professionals working in the educational sector believe are the needs of sanctuary seeking students?**

- I. What comes to mind if I ask about the key needs of asylum seeking and refugee students?
 - a. Prompts: needs that have a large effect, needs that are prevalent, needs that are different from non-asylum-seeking and refugee students
 - b. Prompts: culture, health, relationship-building/social, communication/language, attendance, inclusivity and integration, sense of belonging, attitude from peers (bullying, hostility?)
- II. (Optional) Do you feel confident in your understanding of asylum seeking and refugee students' needs?

Supportive resources or obstacles:

**** We want to know: Do primary school education providers feel that schools/education system have the necessary resources and support to meet the needs of asylum seeking and refugee children?**

- I. What kind of things would be helpful to educational professionals broadly, to meet the needs of asylum seeking and refugee students?
- II. What do you believe is needed to improve support for asylum seeking and refugee students? Do you feel like you have the necessary resources to support asylum seeking and refugee students?
 - a. Prompts: transition in the beginning, language, training, parental support, psychological emotional support, healthcare
 - b. If not available, why not? (Prompts: What are barriers to this being available? e.g. funding, lack of personnel or political drive, etc.)

****** Anything else you'd like to add?**

****** Do you have any contacts that might be helpful for us to interview?**

Information about the project



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

Title: Exploring the perspectives of providers of education and educational support services on their ability to meet the needs of sanctuary seeking primary school children in South Wales

What is this project about?

Recent literature on sanctuary seeking (asylum seeking and refugee) children has shown that these individuals have unique social, educational and health needs. Public Health Wales is thus leading a series of semi-structured interviews to gain insight into the available resources and the desired support for educational professionals as they strive to meet the needs of sanctuary seeking children. Our intention in interviewing educational professionals comes from an understanding that teachers act as crucial facilitators of integration, growth and overall well-being for these students.

Looking forward, these interviews could inform future policy recommendations, create support for potential trainings and/or help build other supportive functions, all ultimately to improve the experiences and well-being of sanctuary seeking children.

Why have you been given this leaflet?

We would like to invite you to take part in this study because of your position as an educational professional as well as your expertise in the asylum seeking and refugee child's school experience. Your involvement is voluntary. Please take time to read the following information to decide if you wish to take part.

What would taking part in this project involve?

Taking part in this project will consist of one semi-structured interview, done in-person at your place of work (your school, office, etc.). This interview will not take longer than 1.5 hours. During the interview, we will ask about the resources available for educational professionals as pertaining to the needs of students seeking sanctuary. We will also ask for your email address so that at the conclusion of the project we can email you a summary of the pertinent themes we found from the interviews. We anticipate this summary to be sent out in the beginning of August.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is important that you understand that you do not have to take part in the study. The primary benefit from partaking in this project is a potential contribution to bettering well-being for asylum seeking and refugee children.

What will happen at the end of the project?

We will conclude this project at the beginning of August. When the project is completed, the recording of the interview and any identifiable information will be deleted; it will not be possible to know which individual participated in the interview, and the report will not identify any participants. Once the report has been sent out to participants in the beginning of August, all interviewee email addresses and contact information will be deleted.

Who has reviewed this project?

Experts from the Policy and International Directorate at Public Health Wales have reviewed this project and provided feedback. Additionally, we consulted the Public Health Wales Research & Development Office for information on research governance and ethics.

Who is organising and funding this project?

Public Health Wales is leading this project, in collaboration with medical and postgraduate students from Cardiff University, Swansea University and Yale University.

What are my rights participating in this project?

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the project to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from this project, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible.

You can find out more about how we use your information at <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/47400>.

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Our Data Protection Officer is John Lawson and you can contact him at john.lawson@wales.nhs.uk. Public Health Wales will collect information from you for this project in accordance with our instructions.

Where can I get further information?

If you would like to have more information on this project, or if at any time you decide you no longer want to take part, you can speak to a member of the study team at: Jessica.leung@wales.nhs.uk. If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the supervisor of the study team at Gill.richardson2@nhs.wales.uk.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Consent Form



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WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

Title of Project: Exploring the perspectives of providers of education and educational support services on their ability to meet the needs of sanctuary seeking primary school children in South Wales

Name of Project lead: Jessica Leung

Please **initial** boxes

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

3. I understand that my data will be stored securely in an anonymised fashion.

4. Any disclosures of safeguarding issues will need to be shared in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act.

5. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Contact email

Name of Person Taking Consent

Date

Signature



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