

Shared ground: integrating migrants in Wales

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Preface

We began to look at integration and community cohesion in June 2019. The outbreak of Coronavirus as we completed the project has had a massive impact on people's lives. While the crisis is first and foremost a public health issue, individuals and communities face social and economic impacts which could have significant implications for integration now and in the future.

The new rules on isolation and social distancing could have far reaching consequences, as meaningful social contact and mixing is a major way in which people from different communities can get to know one another and integrate. We have found that some migrant communities are already socially isolated while others rely on community support networks for social interaction. Many of those groups have had to close their doors and switch to digital platforms, which many migrant groups do not have, making mixing and integration more difficult.

The crisis however has seen a strengthening of community spirit. As every day passes individuals, groups and organisations are responding by supporting others in their community, while some people are actively thinking about their neighbours and how they can help each other.

Without knowing what the impact will be in the long-term, the findings contained in this report offer a platform for delivering a more cohesive Wales in the future.

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Summary

The Welsh Government is responsible for the broad range of policies that support integration including health and social care, equalities, housing, education and is a key player in ensuring communities are cohesive. Over the past decade the Welsh Government has produced a number of strategies and action plans which have attempted to strengthen cohesion.

As part of a larger project on migration in Wales, we have reviewed the current approach to integration in Wales. Whilst we found that the Welsh Government has demonstrated its commitment to integration, often over and above that of the UK government, there are a number of issues and challenges that undermine some of the good work which is currently underway to support integration:

- Wales currently has no strategy which sets out a national integration framework for all migrants.
- There is a lack of consistency in the support available for migrants.
- Migrants' knowledge about their rights can be limited, and they often face discrimination when accessing health, education, housing, welfare benefits and employment.
- Language acts as a barrier to integration, and there is not enough accessible language tuition, particularly more informal types of learning. When accessing services and requiring interpretation migrants often have to rely on informal or poorly skilled translators.
- While the third sector is doing good work to support migrant groups, this tends to be focused on asylum seekers and refugees, yet other groups of migrants who may also find themselves in vulnerable situations lack support.
- Casual interactions between migrants and the settled population can be positive, but many have faced hostility and harassment. EU citizens in particular feel marginalised, and some no longer feel they 'belong' in Wales.
- Opportunities for building social connections can be limited and migrants often feel isolated.

In order to ensure that migrants feel accepted and welcomed we believe there are a number of things the Welsh Government could implement to strengthen its current approach to integration, and build on what has already been achieved. In the short-term the Welsh Government should:

- Set out a visible commitment to the integration of all migrants through the development of a national integration strategy which would:
 - provide national direction to local authorities and other organisations;
 - demonstrate strong leadership on this issue;
 - improve the sense of 'belonging' amongst all migrant groups.
- Prevent discrimination so that all migrants are treated fairly and able to access their entitlements. To do this:
 - frontline staff throughout the public sector should receive training on the rights of migrant groups;
 - the Welsh Government should work with key providers in the private sector including landlords and employers to ensure they are fully aware of migrants' rights.

- Deliver direct messages of ‘welcome’ to migrants through welcome receptions and designated national days to recognise and celebrate different cultures.
- Recognise EU citizens as an ‘unrepresented’ group and appoint an EU ambassador to provide a ‘voice’ to those living in Wales.
- Strengthen the role of the local authority in integration by:
 - expanding and building on the work of cohesion teams so there is one coordinator per local authority area;
 - encourage local authorities to establish an integration action plan which has been developed with partners;
 - supporting local activity via a ‘community chest’ type fund which is managed through the local authority/community cohesion teams;
 - developing advice hubs which provide advice and support to all newcomers, particularly in areas of high levels of migration.
- Support local authorities by providing more consistent guidance around integration, which would be particularly helpful for those areas which have had less experience of managing migration.
- Facilitate a cross-sector approach to integration including partners such as landlords, learning providers and employers through the development of a Welsh ‘cohesion network’ as a vehicle to share good practice and develop partnership working.
- Involve businesses in integration strategies and appoint an employment liaison officer who could work with businesses to strengthen the role they play in integration.
- Strengthen the role of the existing qualification framework and improve support offered at Job Centres to ensure migrants have equal access to the job market.
- Improve access to language tuition and translation, based on an evaluation of current provision, improve access for families and innovative methods of delivery. The Welsh Government should also consider improving translation services available to migrants by providing guidance on their use and strengthening training to improve the quality of provision.

In the longer term we think the Welsh Government should explore the idea of a Welsh ‘Civic’ Citizenship, which would set out people’s rights and responsibilities as citizens of Wales and would develop a sense of ‘belonging’.

1. Introduction

Wales' history has been shaped by migration; people have come to live, work, study, join family and seek sanctuary for centuries. In more recent times there have been significant increases in numbers, and since 2004 the population born outside the UK has nearly doubled from 101,000 to 186,000 people. Recent migration has seen people come and settle in Wales from an increasingly wide range of countries and move to areas outside of the more typical city areas. A similar pattern has emerged for those seeking sanctuary in Wales, and all 22 local authorities now accommodate refugees as part of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS)¹. Wales is also experiencing a greater movement or 'population churn' as many migrants stay for just a short time.

Many people and organisations across Wales are working hard to create a welcoming environment for newcomers, particularly those seeking sanctuary. While there is a body of support for migrants, there are also those who view migration negatively and are concerned about the impact on health, education, jobs and wider social and cultural issues. Immigration had a huge role to play in the UK and Wales' decision to leave the EU in June 2016, with promises that leaving the EU would reduce the number of people coming into the UK from the EU.

While the rapid increase in in-migration has resulted in significant demographic and social changes, the public policy response has been limited. The Welsh Government is responsible for the broad range of policies which support cohesion, yet its Cohesion Plan has not been fully updated since 2017 and its 'migrant worker welcome pack' is more than 10 years old.

More recently Welsh Government has recognised these new challenges and has made a welcome investment in the capacity of cohesion teams working across Wales. However this has not been accompanied by a debate about the impact of migration. While this gap exists, it has allowed divisions to form and has enabled negative perceptions of migrants, poor community relationships and, at worst, discrimination and abuse, to flourish. Reported hate crime has increased (particularly following the EU referendum) and there is evidence of high levels of unreported hate crime in many Welsh communities. There are also anecdotal reports of EU citizens leaving Wales because of community tensions and uncertainty about their future migration status. Without robust debate, divisions will persist and will be exploited by right-wing populists.

The forthcoming challenges that will result from the changes to the immigration system present Wales with a unique opportunity to challenge some of the narrative around migration and meet some of the concerns head-on. We call on the Welsh Government to begin that debate and to develop a strategic framework where *'newcomers are welcomed, the impacts of population change are more actively managed, structural barriers to integration are addressed, and connections between communities are deepened ... to help build greater "shared ground" between communities and a more socially just society where everyone can participate and reach their full potential'*².

This report sets out our conclusions in respect of developing an integration strategy for Wales. The rights of migrants and integration have been one of our priorities since July 2017 and we have been working on immigration policy as part of a wider project funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The aim of our work is to open the debate in Wales on

migration, to increase Wales' capacity to discuss and influence migration and immigration policy, and to provide a foundation for longer-term work on migration in Wales.

1.1. Methods

We have based our findings on evidence gathered from an initial literature review, over 70 stakeholder interviews and discussions with migrants themselves. We concentrated our fieldwork in Carmarthenshire, Newport and Swansea as these areas have different experiences of migration which will be relevant to many areas across Wales. We engaged with 48 migrants who, for a variety of reasons, have made Wales their home either permanently or temporarily. Their involvement allowed us to explore what integration means to them and what barriers they face, and what concerns they have for the future.

We recognise that the numbers of people involved are small and are not necessarily statistically representative. However, their contribution gives us a valuable insight into the experiences of migrants more generally, and as such we are particularly grateful that they shared their experiences openly and honestly. We are also aware that we have not had the time or resources to undertake a review of what is happening in each of the 22 local authorities – indeed while we have drawn on what is happening in three areas, our concern is to move towards a national strategy which sets out a clear overarching framework but will allow local authorities the freedom to address priorities within their own area.

2. UK approaches to migration and the Welsh context

The term 'migrant' is often used carelessly. People are referred to as 'migrants', 'refugees' and 'asylum seekers' interchangeably even though there are many different types of migration statuses and motives for settling in Wales.

Immigration is currently a reserved matter. Over the past twenty years successive UK governments have sought very different approaches to managing migration. The Welsh Government has no control over immigration policy and has had little if any input into its development. This is despite the importance of migration to Wales, both in terms of meeting its demographic challenges and also the contribution migrants make to the economy, our education institutions, our health and social care sectors and our society overall. More recently the Welsh Government has attempted to shape UK policy as it applies in Wales, first through its response to the integration of asylum seekers and more recently on support for EU Citizens and on new criteria for economic migrants wanting to enter the UK.

2.1. The UK Government's immigration policy

Over the past twenty years UK governments have attempted to deal with migration in contrasting ways, often in response to specific events and with the intention to 'reduce' overall migration or specific groups of migrants. For instance, during the 1990s a rising number of conflicts across the world led to increasing numbers of migrants coming to the UK to seek asylum. This prompted the introduction of a number of 'reactive' policies to deal with the large number of asylum cases, put in place restrictions on their right to access welfare benefits, housing and employment and to manage the overall distribution of asylum seekers. In 1999, the Labour Government introduced the Immigration and Asylum Act and created the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) which was charged with coordinating all accommodation and financial support for asylum seekers, and brought in the process of dispersing asylum seekers on a no choice basis to local authorities outside of London and the South East. Subsequent legislation has further reduced the rights of asylum seekers and refugees.

The focus of the Coalition and Conservative governments has been to decrease net-migration to the tens of thousands. Changes to immigration rules have sought to make it more difficult for non-EU students, family members and workers to enter the UK while changes to the immigration rules in 2012 made it more difficult to settle in the UK on a permanent basis.

There has also been an emphasis on curbing irregular migration (which was thought to be particularly unpopular with the public). The Immigration Acts of 2014 and 2016 set about introducing policies to create a 'hostile environment' by placing restrictions on access to employment, housing and healthcare, and by confiscating driving licences, freezing bank accounts and restricting rights of appeal against the Home Office's decisions. A well-known example was the "Go-Home" vans that toured several areas of London in 2013. At the same time, some commonwealth immigrants from the 1950s and 1960s were wrongly detained, denied legal rights, threatened with deportation, and, in some cases, wrongly deported from the UK by the Home Office.

Despite the focus on reducing immigration, in 2015 the UK Government agreed to resettle up to 20,000 Syrian nationals through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement

Scheme (VPRS). Local authorities in Wales as elsewhere now play a central role in the resettlement process as they are required to ensure they have an assistance package in place to support refugees including an initial welcome, accommodation and support to access welfare, education and employment.

In the first 12 months the cost of supporting someone through the Scheme will be met in full by the UK government, and for a further four years thereafter the person will be allocated on a tariff basis, tapering from £5,000 per person in their second year in the UK, to £1,000 per person in year five. There is also an exceptional cases fund to assist the most vulnerable refugees. In a bid to enhance the English language skills of adults to improve their resettlement and integration experience and employability the UK Government has also provided an additional £10m to provide English tuition through the provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). All those who come through this route should receive a language assessment and be able to access a minimum of eight hours of formal language training within one month of arrival³.

Immigration policy and the end of free movement

Brexit is an exceptional moment for immigration policy. Immigration had a huge role to play in the UK and Wales' decision to leave the EU in June 2016, with promises that leaving the EU would reduce the number of people coming into the UK. Since the referendum the UK Government has been consistently committed to ending free movement, and promised a major shake-up of the immigration system.

Following a number of reviews by the Migration Advisory Committee and a now-superseded White Paper on Immigration, the latest proposals are set out in the February 2020 policy statement⁴. This proposes a new points-based system in which EU and Non-EU Citizens will be subject to the same rules.

Currently, EU citizens have treaty rights to live and work in the UK under free movement. This ends on 31 December 2020 after the Brexit transition period. Current arrangements for non-EU citizens who want to live and work in the UK are subject to rules⁵ based on five tiers:

- Tier 1: for highly skilled individuals, who can contribute to growth and productivity and consists of several different strands.
- Tier 2: for skilled workers with a job offer, to fill gaps in the United Kingdom workforce and is also made up of different strands and has an earning threshold of £30,000 a year.
- Tier 3: for limited numbers of low-skilled workers needed to fill temporary labour shortages. This Tier is closed for applications.
- Tier 4: for students who wish to study in an institution that is not an academy, or a school maintained by a local authority.
- Tier 5: for temporary workers and young people covered by the Youth Mobility Scheme, who are allowed to work in the UK for a limited time.

After Brexit, EU citizens residing in the UK lose their treaty rights. Instead they are covered by the EU Settlement Scheme⁶. According to the Home Office, the scheme enables EU citizens resident in the UK and their family members to continue living in the UK permanently. Consistent with the draft Withdrawal Agreement with the European Union,⁷ this means that:

- By 31 December 2020, EU citizens and their families who have resided in the UK for five years or more will be eligible for 'settled status' enabling them to stay in the UK indefinitely.
- EU citizens and their family who arrive by 30 December 2020 but have not been continuously resident in the UK for five years will be eligible for 'pre-settled status', enabling them to reside in the UK for five years during which time they can apply for settled status.
- EU citizens and their families with either settled or pre-settled status will have the same access to healthcare, pensions and other benefits that they had previously.

The full roll-out of the EU settlement Scheme began in March 2019 and the deadline to apply for settled or pre-settled status for those residing in the UK by 31 December 2020 will be 30 June 2021.

The proposed points-based system which will apply to all non-UK residents wishing to migrate. It aims to:

- reduce overall levels of migration;
- give top priority to high skills (scientists, engineers and academics) and all applicants, both EU and non-EU citizens, will have to demonstrate that they have a job offer;
- not introduce a general low-skilled or temporary work route;
- make changes to the operation of the UK border and tighten security; and
- introduce a salary threshold of £25,600.

All applicants, both EU and non-EU citizens, will have to demonstrate that they have a job offer from an approved sponsor, that they can speak English, that the job offer is at the required skill level¹ and is above the minimum salary threshold. There may be exceptions to the salary threshold if the job offer is in a specific shortage occupation, but it will not be less than £20,480.

Importantly, on the recommendation of the Migration Advisory Committee, the Government will not introduce regional salary thresholds or different arrangements for different parts of the UK, including Wales.

2.2. Managing migration in Wales

Who comes to work, live, study and seek sanctuary in Wales?

There are various reasons why people choose to migrate to Wales, the most common being study- or work-related. In 2016, half of the people who immigrated to Wales from outside the UK came for formal study – 9,000 people in total. An additional 28 per cent came for work-related reasons: of these 3,000 came for a definite job and 2,000 people came to look for work. A further 11 percent of people came to accompany or join family and 6 percent were returning home.

Since the introduction of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act the numbers of those seeking sanctuary in Wales has grown as a result of asylum seekers being dispersed to accommodation in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham. Asylum seekers are usually

¹ The skills threshold will be lowered from RQF6 to RQF3.

accommodated by a private provider, but the Welsh Government and local authorities have an important role in managing the wider dispersal process and supporting asylum seekers with health care, education and housing. In order to assist with the management of the dispersal process in Wales, the Home Office funds the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership (WSMP)² which was established in 2001. The partnership works with stakeholders in the statutory, voluntary, private and community sectors to provide strategic leadership, advisory and coordination function on migration across Wales and is hosted by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and aims to:⁸

- Facilitate collaboration and debate among UK Visas and Immigration, national, regional and local government and non-governmental organisations and regional and local stakeholders to develop a strategic approach to promoting the benefits of migration refugee resettlement and minimising any adverse impacts.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of local and national migration policy.
- Work with local delivery partners to design and oversee delivery of services that meet asylum seekers', refugees' and migrants' needs in that region / national area, facilitating multi-agency coordination.
- Act as a conduit for two-way information between the Home Office and other government departments and national partners.

Despite increasing numbers of asylum seekers being housed in Wales it is not clear how many of those who are given refugee status choose to remain in Wales. In addition, all 22 Welsh local authorities are participating in the Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). This means that local authorities which don't have a history of accommodating refugees are now playing a central role in their re-settlement. Therefore, some will not have had the infrastructure in place to provide support (such as ESOL provision) and local authorities are taking different approaches.

A key issue for the Welsh Government, local authorities and others who support asylum seekers and refugees in Wales is the UK Government's creation of different schemes, rules and support. Those refugees who arrive through the VPRS programme receive a far greater level of support than those who have gone through the asylum system. This has led to criticism that the UK Government has created a two-tier system for refugees.

The impact of restricting in-migration to Wales

As part of the wider project we have already highlighted the vital importance of immigration to Wales. In the report '*Demographic trends in Wales*⁹', we explained that over the past 20 years nearly all of Wales' population growth was due to internal and international migration. Looking ahead to 2037 Wales' population is projected to decrease unless there is some level of internal or international migration. Even with some levels of migration, it is forecast that the number of people of working age will drop significantly by 2037 while the numbers of older people is projected to rise significantly. The report concluded that Wales' future population growth relies on people coming into Wales from within and outside of the UK.

In our report '*Life after free movement*',¹⁰ we concluded that ending free movement will have significant implications for Wales, affecting approximately 80,000 EU residents, as

² There are also Migration Partnerships in Scotland and Northern Ireland and in each of the English Regions.

well as sectors such as the NHS and social care, Welsh universities, tourism, hospitality and construction, which have become reliant on EU workers and the skills they provide.

Throughout this work we have called on the Welsh Government to recognise the important role migration plays in Wales' population and economy, and we have stressed the need for the National Assembly for Wales to be able to take some of the decisions on who lives, works and studies in Wales. We have throughout recommended that the Welsh Government seek powers around 'regional variations' in immigration policy.

The Welsh Government's responses to immigration policy

Although immigration policy is not devolved, the Welsh Government, local authorities and other public sector bodies play an important role in its delivery, particularly for asylum seekers and refugees. They have developed a number of policies to support integration, although they are sometimes at odds with the UK Government's approach.

In a more radical move, the Welsh Government has set out its own approach to EU migration in '*Securing Wales' Future*'¹¹ and '*A Brighter Future for Wales: Why we should remain in the EU*'¹². It recognised the positive contribution migrants make to Wales' economy. It also adopted a strong stance on the rights of EU citizens who are currently residing in Wales and stated that:

*'EU migrants and their families should continue to be able to access the safety net of the benefits system and our public services in broadly the same way as they do now'*¹³.

The Welsh Government has argued that if the new immigration system does not recognise the needs of Wales, their preference would be for a spatially-differentiated approach in which the Welsh Government has a stronger role in determining how future migration to Wales would be managed. More recently, the Welsh Government has expressed its support for EU Citizens' in Wales, through the promotion of the EUSS.

2.3. Conclusions

Over the past 20 years successive UK governments have sought to make it more difficult for non-EU students, family members and workers to enter the UK, and have also introduced measures to make it more difficult for those seeking asylum in the UK to enter. Looking ahead, the end of free movement signals one of the biggest changes to the immigration system, bringing together EU and non-EU migration under a points-based approach and restricting access to the UK for lower skilled workers.

Wales benefits from in-migration and any measures to reduce numbers will have a significant impact. Currently in-migration contributes to population growth and reduced numbers of migrants will mean fewer people of working age overall, while limits to the numbers of low skilled workers will have an impact on certain sectors in Wales like hospitality and food manufacturing that have become reliant on this workforce.

Immigration policy is currently a reserved matter, yet the Welsh Government has sought to challenge some of the elements of the UK Government's approach through the development of an integration policy for refugees and asylum seekers and more recently through its support for EU Citizens. While Welsh Government has sought to challenge, the recent recommendations by the Migration Advisory Committee rule out the possibility of any regional variations to the UK immigration policy. Therefore, while the Welsh

Government could and should challenge immigration policy to ensure it reflects the needs of those in Wales, in some respects it must also seek to ensure it does its best to manage migration within the confines of the existing and proposed policies.

3. Approaches to integration in Wales

Wales is becoming a more diverse society, yet while many celebrate this there is little discussion about how to successfully manage the impact of population change. In recent years the development of integration policy and initiatives has attracted increased interest from policy makers, academics and civil society groups alike, all of whom have stressed the importance of a strategic approach both at the national and local levels. However, policy discussions can often be based around a confused interpretation of integration, who it affects and how you measure it. Discussion often places responsibility on newcomers to 'fit in', without placing any responsibility on the receiving communities with little, if any, regard to how integration benefits all of society.

This section will look at the concept of integration, why it matters to everyone – not just migrants - and examines the Welsh response to integration. It then considers the views of stakeholders about the current Welsh policy.

3.1. Understanding integration and why it matters

Although the term 'integration' is commonly used by academics and within public debate, there continues to be a lack of consistency and understanding of what it actually describes, who it 'involves', what good integration means and who is responsible for it. The extent to which someone feels 'integrated into their community' is highly subjective and will therefore vary between people and their circumstances. The term 'integration' can be misinterpreted as assimilation or placing responsibility on newcomers to 'fit in' with the cultural norms of the dominant host society. Often the policy of 'integration' has been focused on particular groups of people, including BAME groups and more recently Muslims, implying that they are 'problem' groups and ignoring the prejudice and discrimination they face.

Interest in integration has increased recently, driven by the divisions exposed by Brexit and the 2016 EU referendum. People are living more solitary lives and the reduction in civic spaces like parks, libraries and community centres has led to a decrease in the opportunities for social mixing and meeting other people in the community. Efforts to promote integration are often undermined by a lack of resources, up to date information about population changes and communities, and skills in integration techniques.

Many people recognise that integration policy needs to be developed at all levels of government. A national integration strategy provides leadership and facilitates initiatives through resource allocation and oversight. A local strategy designs and delivers interventions to reflect specific local circumstances, with partners having the knowledge and capacity to build inclusive communities. In the absence of a framework, responses can be ad hoc, led by individual services, groups and organisations with differing objectives rather than working towards a shared goal in a joined-up way. An effective integration strategy will set out the shared vision, consider the demographic context, identify partners and their role, and the measure impacts.

Developing a framework for Integration: Shared Ground

Informing work is the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) 2014 report '*Shared Ground: Strategies for living well together in an era of high immigration*'.¹⁴ The report explores how to support migrants and British people to live well together, and argues for

a more coherent integration strategy in areas characterised by increasing diversity and ongoing, high inflows of immigration, and its recommendations served to strengthen relationships between all citizens rather than target migrants. Their research was grouped into the following three areas:

- **People and relationships:** Their research found that frictions can arise in the relationships between 'fixed' residents and 'transient' residents, which is particularly challenging and finding local solutions is crucially important. The vulnerability of those transient residents can result in exploitation, low wages and poor housing conditions. This can lead to poor integration outcomes for the migrants but can also have affect other residents and lead to tensions in the wider community (if wages are undercut, and anti-social behaviour occurs as a result of poor housing and overcrowding).
- **Public spaces and civic institutions:** Everyday integration can happen at public places and civic institutions yet cuts to public services and civic institutions can limit the opportunities for integration. Tensions can occur when migrants settle into communities where there are pressures on institutions and resources.
- **Services and support:** Local authorities take the lead on integration and are charged with providing both mainstream and additional specialist services (like language tuition) to support newcomers. Yet, this can be difficult when there is little available data to plan and support services, there is little revenue to support programmes and no consistent leadership from central government. This has resulted in varying integration outcomes, with some local authorities developing strategies, and others stuck in 'firefighting' mode.

The report acknowledged that while central government is restricted in the amount it can invest in migrant integration, it is possible for policymakers (at the national and local level) to create a society where citizens live well together through achieving '**shared ground**', which is based on three key principles:

- managing the impacts of flux and churn from immigration
- building inclusivity in institutions and services
- instilling responsibility among all citizens.

We have used this framework to inform our work and believe strongly that, given the extent to which Welsh communities are being shaped by immigration (even in those areas which have traditionally experienced low levels of in-migration), the development of a 'shared ground' is an important priority for Welsh Government and local authorities. Strategies to support the achievement of a 'shared ground' will lead to better integration outcomes for migrants, and communities overall, and so will improve the way many people perceive immigration. Accepting migration and viewing it positively is crucial, especially as it will remain an important part of our communities in the future.

3.2. Welsh Government's cohesion agenda

Many organisations and think-tanks have been calling for a change to UK integration policy and strategy. For instance, in the '*Shared Ground: Strategies for living well together in an era of high immigration*' the IPPR argued for a UK-wide integration strategy which

aims to maximise the contribution of all migrants. However, many of the policy areas which support integration including health and social care, equalities, housing, education are devolved, and as a result different approaches have emerged. Over the past decade the Welsh Government has produced a number of strategies and action plans which have attempted to promote cohesion and the development of cohesive societies.

Community cohesion strategy and action plans

In 2009, the Welsh Government published its *Getting On Together - a Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales* which established a Community Cohesion Unit to oversee the implementation of the strategy. Local authorities were identified as best placed to take the lead on promoting community cohesion at the local level and a community fund was set up to provide support for financial initiatives. An evaluation of the strategy concluded that success in some areas was limited and made recommendations to improve delivery including the appointment of a dedicated community cohesion lead in each local authority¹⁵.

Subsequent action plans in 2014-16 and 2016-17 built on the original strategy. A significant element of the *Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan 2014-16* included provision of eight regional community cohesion coordinators to cover all 22 local authorities. This role of a coordinator involves:

- working at a strategic level to break down barriers to inclusion and integration across marginalised groups;
- working at a local level to break down barriers to inclusion and integration for particular groups and communities;
- supporting migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and host communities during the integration process;
- tackling discrimination, hostility, tensions and extremism.

The Plan was updated in 2016-17¹⁶ and included the following key actions:

- increased reporting of hate crime, ensuring victims receive support;
- increased reporting, awareness and understanding of modern slavery and improved support for victims;
- increased awareness and engagement across Gypsy and Traveller communities;
- increased evidence and awareness on immigration and supporting the inclusion of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants;
- increased understanding of the impacts of poverty on people with protected characteristics across key service and policy delivery;
- key policies and programmes are supporting and evidencing delivery against the national goal on more cohesive communities through the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015;
- policies and services are responsive to community tensions.

Public sector equality duty (2011), the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

As well as specific steps to increase cohesion, it is also promoted through National Assembly for Wales legislation. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) 2011 (Equality Act

2010) ensures that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society in their day to day activities through paying due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. The specific duties cover engagement, equality impact assessments, pay differences, procurement, reporting arrangements, review and equality and employment information and covers nine protected characteristics including race.

As part of its Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20, Welsh Government funded agencies to provide support to individuals and communities across Wales. This included support for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers by TGP Cymru and other ethnic minorities by EYST), and support for refugees and asylum seekers by a coalition led by Welsh Refugee Council. It also supported Victim Support Cymru to work on hate crime. These interventions complement the Community Cohesion Programme.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 aims to promote equality, improve the quality of services and enhance the provision of information people receive. The Act impacts on Social Services, but also a range of other local authority services such as housing, education, leisure, regeneration, and poverty and third and private sector providers.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015¹⁷ introduces seven national wellbeing goals designed to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The goals include that of 'a Wales of cohesive communities'.

A Nation of Sanctuary

The Welsh Government has produced a separate strategy outlining its commitment to the integration of refugees and asylum seekers:

Refugee inclusion begins on day one of arrival in the UK and successful inclusion is closely related to the standard of reception procedures and people's experiences as asylum seekers (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008).

Its most recent plan *Nation of Sanctuary* builds upon several refugee inclusion strategies and Delivery Plans (2008, 2014 and 2018) and reaffirms this commitment:

The successful integration of refugees and asylum seekers will require concerted effort on the part of the Welsh Government, Welsh public services and Welsh communities³

The policy sets out to provide more opportunities to meet existing Welsh residents, encourage good relations and community cohesion. It also highlights the role that all Welsh local authorities (not just the four dispersal areas) have played in the resettlement of refugees as part of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) and its commitment to continue the scheme. The strategy includes a number of varied actions including health, education, prosperity and learning, all of which are relevant to achieving successful integration. Specific examples include:

- Supporting the employability of refugees through the £2m Restart: Refugee Integration Project, promotion of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales to assist the recognition of qualifications, support the Wales Asylum Seeking

³ Welsh Government (2019) *Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan*, p5

and Refugee Doctors (WARD) group which helps refugees to meet professional qualifications.

- Working with Business Wales to support refugees to establish their own businesses.
- Promoting the Welsh Government as a place for refugees to work.
- Monitoring community tensions and support to report hate crime.
- Fostering good relations between refugees and asylum seekers via a communications plan to promote equality and diversity emphasising the benefits of immigration and the dispelling myths about refugees and asylum seekers, working with the media to promote more balanced reporting.
- Continuing to fund the Asylum Rights Programme to provide advocacy and advice, to train members to become sanctuary speakers and develop communications with the wider community and consult with people through the 'advocacy forums' (and other bespoke consultations).
- Promoting participation of all sectors of society in refugee week.
- Supporting community-led initiatives which welcome, support and integrate refugees.
- Reviewing and updating 'Welcome to Wales' through the new 'Sanctuary' website with embedded translation to include essential information, including rights and entitlements and Welsh culture.
- Supporting volunteering and mentoring initiatives (particularly for asylum seekers who do not have the right to work).
- Supporting opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to share their language and culture with their local communities.
- Working towards Wales becoming a 'Nation of Sanctuary'.
- Engaging with all key stakeholders involved in integration.
- Promoting an understanding of Welsh culture and heritage by maintaining and promoting free access to the National Museum, explore opportunities with Cadw to promote Welsh heritage, promote involvement in the Welsh Governments 'Fusion' culture programme.
- Working with the UK Government and local authorities to ensure people can access the internet and raise awareness of facilities in public buildings such as libraries.

The cohesion agenda in a post-Brexit Wales

In the run up to the UK leaving the EU, the Welsh Government acknowledged that rising community tensions had become a cause for concern:

The EU referendum has created divisions in families, communities and society, which could take a generation to heal. In some cases it has led to increased tensions in communities. As we move closer to EU exit – with the additional uncertainty of no deal Brexit – these tensions could be further exacerbated¹⁸.

Through the transition fund, the Welsh Government is providing advice to EU citizens including introductory advice through Citizens Advice Cymru, complex case advice via Newfields Law and additional funding for Settled (a charity founded by The '3 million' a grassroots EU citizen advocacy group). The EUSS Wales Coordination group has also been established to co-ordinate advice and support across Wales, and an additional £30,000 has been allocated to communications with EU citizens¹⁹.

Alongside this, the Welsh Government has expanded the capacity of the community cohesion regions through an additional £750,000 from the European Transition Fund⁴. This equates to £93,750 p.a. for a two-year period) for each of the eight cohesion regions. Areas have used this additional funding to employ cohesion officers and fund additional activities.

Table 1: Welsh Government Community Cohesion Regions

Community Cohesion Region	Local Authorities in each region
West Gwent	Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly
East Gwent	Monmouthshire, Newport City Council
Cardiff and the Vale	Cardiff Council, Vale of Glamorgan Council
Cwm Taff	Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil
Swansea Bay	Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend, Swansea
Mid and West	Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire Powys, Ceredigion
North East	Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy
North West	Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire

Priorities in each of the areas, based on the Cohesion Action Plan 2016/17, include: engagement and community mapping, dealing with community tensions, engaging with schools and police (around hate crime).

Hate crime reporting remains a central theme of the community cohesion policy framework. The Welsh Government has provided additional funding to Victim Support Cymru to increase the capacity of the National Hate Crime Report & Support Centre, which provides independent advocacy and support for victims. The Hate Crime Minority Communities Grant is also supporting organisations who work with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and minority faith communities to tackle hate crime experienced by these members of our community.

Looking ahead to 2020-21 Welsh Government has committed £2.3 million to support cohesion, which specifically includes²⁰:

- £760,000 to employ cohesion officers
- £600,000 for organisations working on hate crime prevention and victim support
- £500,000 to provide advice on the EU Settlement Scheme and support 4,500 people around workplace rights and social welfare issues
- £355,000 to provide advice and support to those seeking asylum in Wales, and £50,000 to ensure their cases are presented effectively
- £40,000 to provide Windrush day celebrations across Wales.

⁴ The EU Transition Fund was announced in 2018 and was supported by an initial £50m to provide tailored support as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

Integration and language

The Welsh Government has recognised the important role language plays in the integration of migrants and the benefits for Wales' society and economy when migrants are able to speak English or Welsh. The first English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) strategy in 2014 and its updated version of November 2019²¹ set out a firm commitment to the provision of ESOL. It recognises English or Welsh as an 'essential skill', putting them in the same category as numeracy and literacy. The strategy stresses the fact that the 'average' learner does not exist, and thus ESOL needs to be provided for a range of different learners. The adult learning policy also sets out a commitment that ESOL will be free all learners up to the level of functionality.²² While this commitment is clear, provision has not kept up with the scale of migration, which has led to waiting lists, particularly in areas where there is a higher demand.

ESOL is delivered by a number of different organisations in the public sector, private sector and third sector. The Welsh Government provides funding to local authorities and further education institutions to deliver mainstream provision and other more informal or community-based organisations. There are different forms of ESOL both formal and more informal, different levels and different outcome based. For instance ESOL+ courses offers more vocational and employment focused opportunities for ESOL learners to better prepare them for progression onto mainstream vocational courses or employment and Cardiff and Vale College now offers ESOL+ courses in a range of subjects including Hospitality, Construction, IT and Accounting.

As part of the strategy to reduce waiting lists and to encourage organisations to work together, the REACH or Regional ESOL Assessment Central Hub has been delivered in partnership between Cardiff and Vale College and Adult Learning Wales. It was piloted in Cardiff and aims to improve pathways and outcomes for learners. It also aims to encourage strategic collaboration between providers in planning and delivering provision. The £2m project is financed by £1.5m from the UK Responsible Authority's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and £500,000 match funding from the Welsh Government, and has now been rolled out in Newport and more recently Swansea.

In addition, the UK Government funds ESOL provision of at least eight hours a week in areas receiving Syrian refugees which do not have existing ESOL provision. There are some concerns that this creates a two-tier system, with refugees settled through the VPRS receiving better access to ESOL than others.

There is a therefore a very considerable commitment by the Welsh Government to the integration of migrant communities. Nevertheless, as the rest of this section will show, there are clearly some challenges that were highlighted by stakeholders we spoke to and changes that are needed.

3.3. Views on the current 'national' approach to cohesion

The Welsh Government's commitment to cohesion and its stand on the integration of asylum seekers and refugees has been met with particular praise. Yet there are concerns that this effort will be undermined in the absence of an up-to-date strategic framework. In its recent inquiry, the Assembly's External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee²³ concluded that, in light of challenges to cohesion including increased hate crime, the Welsh Government should update its Community Cohesion Plan. It also recommended that the Welsh Government should take a stronger lead on issues relating

to EU citizens and increase its efforts to extend message of welcome to those already living in Wales.

Stakeholders agree that the Welsh Government could do more to support cohesion across Wales, and said that it should:

- a. Produce a national integration strategy which includes all migrant groups, and places the responsibility for integration on everybody (not just newcomers), and provides a framework for local authorities and other organisations

We found that most stakeholders consider the current cohesion plan to be out of date. They felt that it was time for a new strategy which reflects the new challenges facing Wales, and they emphasised that integration is a two-way process with responsibilities for both the migrant and host community. Many stakeholders agreed that the most recent policy Nation of Sanctuary is focused on asylum seekers and refugees, and does not represent an integration strategy in its broadest sense:

The focus is on refugees and asylum seekers and although we are still not where I would like to be, for years whenever we make noises that it should be wider than that and every time we raise it as an issue we don't get any response whatever. Compared to the services for refugees and asylum seekers – you can count on one hand the services for migrants. Whereas the number of migrants is much higher than the number of refugees and asylum seekers and I don't know what this is based on although they face (not all) but similar barriers (Stakeholder)

[Welsh Government] forget that there are other migrants who, for a variety of reasons, can end up in precarious situations through no fault of their own because of a lack of information and because of changes to legislation which are complex and some lawyers don't understand (Stakeholder).

In addition, while many stakeholders agreed with the sentiment behind the current strategy, some said the strategy itself lacks accountability. It does not set out timescales for achieving the actions and provides few details on who would be accountable and how it will be delivered. Some also said the premise behind the strategy is flawed given Newport is not a City of Sanctuary and all four of the dispersal areas should be if Wales is to be a fully-fledged Nation of Sanctuary. It was argued that without additional funding and resources this is difficult to achieve. Furthermore, once cities have achieved 'sanctuary' status, it is unclear who is responsible for it and whether there is any monitoring.

Most agreed that by focusing on the integration of refugees and asylum seekers, this has led to increased support for them (as opposed to other migrant groups) within communities. Some agreed that while asylum seekers and refugees are a particularly vulnerable group, many migrants also find themselves in vulnerable situations. People agree that support for all migrants to integrate should be part of a new strategic framework.

Currently, there is a 'cohesion' framework agreed by the regional cohesion teams and Welsh Government, however, some stakeholders said this was too broad and lacked real direction, and felt that local authorities would benefit from an overarching strategy which would provide a framework, but allowed scope to develop their own priorities:

The new funding has been distributed with little clarity about what it is for. Cardiff has chosen to use it to do outreach – so it is all staff costs. Other local authorities have

held some money back – so they can use resources for things like events
(Stakeholder).

- b. Develop a joined-up approach to integration which is linked with relevant strategies

A major issue for stakeholders is the current existence of several strategies with no links between them. Most agree that this has been detrimental to the overall approach to integration in Wales and feel strongly that it would be beneficial to one overarching strategy or some believe it should be linked to other strategies:

The legislation is not linked up- it is too siloed, and it doesn't look deep enough, it isn't seen as lateral information (Stakeholder).

- c. Provide national leadership on integration, through a less reactive approach

Most of those who took part in this project expressed their disappointment over the perceived lack of leadership on migration and integration issues by Welsh Government. Most felt that, although the Welsh Government has provided funding for cohesion officers and the EU rights programme, they are not taking notice of some of the more fundamental issues:

Most of the things we have discussed today we have told Welsh Government and it has fallen on deaf ears, I would like to know why they do not action those things and why the ideas we have – they don't think are good ideas – it would be helpful to have more feedback. Why do we have to keep saying things? (Stakeholder).

Local authority officers agree that integration happens at the local level but are of the view that Welsh Government needs to provide leadership on this issue. Most feel that more needs to be done by Welsh Government to provide a positive environment in which to promote integration within communities. They add that the Welsh Government has been very reactive in its response to migration which has tended to concentrate on the economic case for support (rather than cultural and social). Some added that periodic support delivered via social media will never be as effective as a sustained national campaign.

- d. Lead a national campaign to support migrants and promote why Wales needs migration

Many stakeholders praised Welsh Government on its recent public support for EU migrants, and called on them to lead a national campaign which would:

- send a message directly to communities that migrants belong and should be welcomed;
- educate people on the benefits and necessity of migration to Wales; and
- recognise the contribution migrants make to Wales historically, economically, socially and culturally.

Many stakeholders were keen to stress that any campaign should include personal stories to educate and create an awareness, celebrating difference but stressing what makes people 'like us' and should be led by Welsh Government and local authorities:

Would be good to have more campaigns – such as black history month which celebrates diversity and helps cohesion. Some action needs to be taken by Welsh Government and Local Authorities to do this in the media (Stakeholder).

e. Provide more resources to support integration

Many we spoke to said that they have witnessed a decline in the level of resources available to them. Indeed, in the past few years cuts to public spending have resulted in reduced funding to many services and community organisations, or in some cases losing funding completely. It is felt that without funding *integration* will take longer.

In some respects, stakeholders said that Brexit had been helpful as it has led to additional 'cohesion' funding, for instance the appointment of 16 additional cohesion officers was particularly welcomed. However, while this funding is appreciated, many said that it is simply not enough to deal with the broad range of issues that it has been tasked to cover and some said that it would be more beneficial if each local authority had its own coordinator with supporting cohesion officers, on longer-term contracts to enable them to develop 'integration' expertise and build trust within the communities:

The role is very broad and there are lots to cover. It is only a two-year post and it is only 20 hours ... the pro rata is £22k which isn't enough ... The job description was vague so it didn't put people off by saying they need knowledge of all the different policy areas ... it takes a long time to build up this kind of knowledge (Stakeholder).

There just aren't enough resources to deal with such a massive area of work. For example anti-slavery – there should be one person in each local authority tackling this (Stakeholder).

Some said that there is a lack of resources within the third sector to go above and beyond providing support services such as financial, health and emotional support and it was noted that community groups often don't have the capacity, training, skills and resources to support integration into mainstream services or groups, and this can create a dependency on the support groups.

Groups are doing good work in the community to support asylum seekers and refugees. However, this can create a dependency – so a church does a drop in and then that is all they do all week ... There is a lack of money to integrate with mainstream groups. There is a lack of transition from support groups to mainstream groups. (Stakeholder, third sector organisation)

f. Reevaluate its approach to language and interpretation support

All stakeholders acknowledged the difficulties around providing English support; learners will have different levels of language skills, they will have different levels of education and educational needs, they will have different motivation for wanting to learn English (from just wanting to have the basics to those who need a very high levels of English proficiency for a job or specific profession). Some learners will be able to devote a lot of time to learning English, while others need to fit it around busy lives and childcare. Given the array of challenges, stakeholders agree that the Welsh Government has certainly demonstrated a commitment to addressing some of these challenges through the ESOL policy, and also efforts like the Reach programme but feels there are shortcomings with the current operation of ESOL, and also the extent to which it is promoted to all learners. In addition, due to schemes like Reach and the 'gold standard' support that people receive through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), many stakeholders feel strongly that there is currently not a level playing field for learners. Given stakeholders perceive language

as essential to integration many see language support as being critical to any integration policy.

Stakeholders feel strongly that there needs to be more support for English language tuition. Some were particularly critical of the operation of the Reach programme which they said had been rolled out without proper appraisal of the pilot area in Cardiff where both registration and assessment processes had run into difficulties. Most people agreed with the principle behind the Reach programme (to provide a central hub where learners could be directed to) but also felt that while formal class structures were suitable for some learners, others preferred to learn in a more informal environment where there was less emphasis on exams and certificates.

Many stakeholders called on Welsh Government and local authorities to provide resources to support community-based learning initiatives, where people could learn English in a less formal way and to also have opportunities to socialise. They called for more support for community-based support through conversation type cafes and more English language clubs.

Some stakeholders said that Welsh Government and learning providers need to think about what would motivate learners – to think about what they actually want from English support. Many suggested offering learners a vocational-based course, this does not have to be bespoke to the person but offer them additional learning resources tailored to their desired profession e.g. carpentry.

While many said it is the responsibility of Welsh Government, local authorities or learning providers to provide language support, some felt strongly that employers should be providing language support.

Some stakeholders called for stricter guidelines around the use of interpreters, in particular informal interpreters who may provide inaccurate translations to migrants especially of legal documents.

3.4. Conclusions

Communities across Wales are becoming more diverse, and it is therefore important to consider how to foster integration. The Welsh Government, local authorities along with an array of other organisations and individuals have been doing an enormous amount to support integration particularly for specific groups like refugees and asylum seekers and more recently for EU citizens. However there are growing concerns that without an updated clear national strategy this effort will lack direction and oversight on initiatives and resource allocation.

Stakeholders suggested that Welsh Government leads on migration and integration issues by developing a strategy which includes all migrant groups, and places responsibility on everyone (not just migrants) and is linked-up to other 'relevant' strategies. They were particularly supportive of a campaign to support migrants and to educate the population on the benefits of migration. Given the amount of support and work needed to improve integration, stakeholders called on Welsh Government to allocate additional more resources to local authorities and organisations.

Lastly, but perhaps most important, stakeholders called on Welsh Government to reevaluate their support for English learners, including more informal and vocational support. They also feel that current support via interpretation is poor, and more is required to ensure people are offered good quality translation services.

4. Lived experiences: being a migrant in Wales

To understand migrants' experiences of integration it is important to listen to those who have made their home here to gain insights into the barriers and challenges they face. This section outlines some of the key issues that those with lived experience raised during the interviews.

4.1. Rights and discrimination

During our interviews we found that not all migrants are aware of their rights and that some groups in particular lack more in-depth knowledge. Some people explained that they often consider their 'rights' in the context of the country they moved from, so if they came from a country where, say for instance, women have fewer rights than men, they continue to believe this will be the case in Wales, as this example demonstrates:

It is very important to know your rights as a woman, as a family I don't think I know that much ... we don't find that much information about your rights ... when we are looking for a job it is different to be a woman here ... the woman have to stay home and look after the children but here I see a lot of women working (asylum seeker from South America, with one child, living in Newport for four months).

They can also lack more in-depth knowledge, for instance the following quote highlights an example of a woman who didn't fully understand employment rights and maternity leave, and as a result she felt her employer made unfair demands on her:

They [employer] kept asking could I come back on a Sunday and I was saying I cannot ... I didn't know that on maternity that I could have three months off; no one has told me that ... I didn't have any advice ... mums in the school told me, one had a baby and they were talking and said how long her husband got off and she said five weeks and then said I am glad I have got a year and I said "but how have you got a year?" They [employer] didn't tell me ... they are trying to keep stuff from me ... they don't explain because you are foreigners and you do as they telling you ... I think they are a bit sly ... there are lots of migrants working there – so it could be happening to them too (female from Bulgaria with 3 children, living in Swansea for 8 years).

During the discussions, some revealed that they had not been able to access things they have a right to and didn't have the confidence, knowledge or skills to challenge this. One example is Andrej from the Czech Republic who came to the UK in 2010 to work and has lived in various places since then, before moving to Newport two months prior to the interview. He has tried to register at a GP on several occasions, but the receptionist appears to have been preventing him to do so. He hasn't challenged her directly and has not reported this to anyone:

We have gone to the surgery and the woman on reception keeps saying we have missed something off the application ... we have been there three times and three times we have been told that we have missed something ... the first time we went there she said that we have to fill in the NHS number but I don't remember; it's a long time I have been here and I forgot and have lost the documentation ... I call them [NHS help line] and the lady on the phone said "why do they want them – they can find you" ... we go in again and we went in at 11:30am and she said the

registration is 1-5pm go home so we went home and the third time she said you need to have details of your previous doctor and I said it was a long time ago and I don't remember and she said it didn't matter I had to find out ... if I had come by myself I wouldn't care but I have a young son.

4.2. Harassment, abuse and hate crime

When speaking to those with lived experiences on the surface things appear to be okay - many described Wales and the area they live as friendly and welcoming and say they are encouraged when people on the street smile and say hello. Most said their local community was friendly, with some saying they have a good relationship with their neighbour/s. However, when probed this sense of friendliness does have limitations and differs according to type of migrant (e.g. refugee, asylum seeker or EU migrant), which country they originate from, where they live and social situation.

Overall, the asylum seekers and refugees who took part in this work do not report much hostility towards them, indeed most of their experiences have been positive. Some typical examples includes:

It is good for me. It is friendly. People are not racist (Male asylum seeker from Iran living in Newport, came to Wales in 2019).

Now we see familiar people on the bus, they start talking to us. Apart from the colour of our skin they have accepted us (Male asylum seeker from India living in Swansea, came to Wales in 2018).

However, a few reported occasions where people had been less friendly, and unfortunately on one occasion one person had encountered racial abuse:

... [the neighbours] when I first came there was a blank face. I have had two racist attacks but they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol. I don't think she is a normal person, they are being influenced because usually very good. (Male Refugee from India, came to Wales in 2018 and lives in Swansea).

Economic migrants and students had different experiences which often depended on the country of their birth and where they live. Some, particularly EU residents, have experienced hostility themselves or have witnessed abuse of others. People gave different accounts of their experiences, some said that community tensions have got better once people have got used to them living there, whereas others said it has got worse as a direct consequence of Brexit with some experiencing direct hostility or had been affected through less direct avenues such as social media. Some examples are provided below:

Because I came in 1998, one year after New Labour, I think it was a bit different than it is now. I was always made to feel welcome but I know for people coming now it is quite different, there are completely different attitudes ... especially after the referendum xenophobia ... hate crimes on the rise. I myself was made to feel like this sometimes because of my accent. I have British Citizenship but I can't get rid of my accent; as soon as I open my mouth you see people's reactions ... the way people look at you and ask you "where are you from?". All the time. It is like defining who you are by from where you are from ... most ask you if you are Polish and why are you here? (Female from Slovakia, came to Wales in 1998 and lives in Newport).

I know my accent is not perfect, how could it be after such a short time ... most people stay friendly and open 95% are just interested ... This 5% still think that people from the EU came to the UK for benefits and easy life ... The 5% show it and will say they have a problem with it (Female from Czech Republic, came to Wales in 2016 and lives in Newport).

I was at a store and was with my aunt who is disabled and hard of hearing, another customer asked my aunt to move and she didn't hear her and they heard us speaking Polish and they said something derogatory about Polish people ... This was a needle in my heart. I wasn't brave enough to say something. Just generalising the whole nationality is stupid (Female from Poland, came to Wales in 2005 and lives in Swansea).

Some said that although Wales has been friendly – that is only because they believed people are not openly racist:

I like Wales, I have had a good experience ... there are people that are racist but they are never showing off that ... they respect each other and never make you feel it (Female from Bulgaria, came to Wales in 2010).

One person (originally from Italy) said that although residents in Swansea have been very receptive and friendly, this is because as an Italian he is treated more favourably than people from other countries, but has witnessed a more negative response to other people from different countries:

It helps that Welsh and Italian people have a long history, connections and have roots in Swansea ... I have never felt not welcome but it is probably because I am Italian and they like Italian ... sometimes they can say jokes which are annoying that we only like pasta, pizza and cappuccinos and the mafia but at the end of the day you can take it the wrong way but you get used to it They say it is about the 'foreigners' but they say they don't mean Italians ... they say the Polish, my girlfriend is Polish and she has two jobs she works hard, Amazon is full of foreign workers so I don't know why they come down on the foreigners and then they say it is the international; the black Africans, even though a lot are British. It makes me feel they don't know anything (Male from Italy living in Swansea, came to Wales in 2005).

One person talked about the hostility she has faced while carrying out her role as a health support assistant within a hospital. She described this situation as very upsetting because it had been in the workplace, when she was caring for the relatives of the people who expressed the hostility:

Family members are difficult to deal with because I am here to help your family ... a few of them are really kind ... I have had more questions about what would happen to me because of Brexit ... Lots of people say where are you from and I say Poland and they go quiet ... their silence implies something. Some at the hospital has said "ahh, another Polish". (female from Poland living in Carmarthen, came to Wales in 2005).

4.3. Language and integration

The acquisition of language skills can help people to integrate; It enables them to find employment, access education and healthcare, know their rights and responsibilities and helps people develop social bonds and connections to their communities. Without

language skills simple everyday activities like visiting the bank, going shopping or accessing public transport can become extremely difficult and, in some cases, virtually impossible. Those without these skills often end up isolated and vulnerable and dependent on members of their own ethnic group, with very little contact with the rest of the community. Language barriers can also give rise to misunderstandings between migrants and other members of the community which can lead to tensions. Attending formal tuition classes can help people learn English in a structured way.

Nearly all those interviewed could speak English to varying degrees, and most were very keen to stress the importance of learning the majority language. The following quote highlights quite vividly the issues caused as a result of the language barriers:

When I first came here I remember I had a migraine and I was crying and I need a pain killer but I don't know how I need to buy it ... I went to the pharmacy and I started crying ... I can't buy anything, read anything, nothing. I went crying and I came back crying. My landlord saw me and say why are you crying? ... he bought me stuff for migraine but he told me if you are going to live in the UK or any other country first thing you need to do is learn the language and then all the laws and rights and I really pushed myself to learn English and the care job helped me a lot to practice (female from Bulgaria with 3 children, living in Swansea for 8 years).

Nearly all agree that speaking English/Welsh helps people to:

- Avoid isolation: some people said that going to ESOL classes got them out of the house. Women in particular said it was the only time they got out of the family home.
- Understand their rights and challenge when faced with discrimination: A knowledge of English is vital to understand their rights, and also to have the skills to challenge discrimination. ESOL classes can be a useful source of information about rights, discrimination and reporting hate crime. Some women said they had received useful information about domestic violence and where to go for help.
- Support basic day-to-day living: going to and liaising with education/school, going shopping, visiting the GP/hospital, going to the bank, were some of the many examples given where some level of English is helpful.
- Find suitable or better employment: having better English skills enable people to find suitable employment.

However, accessing ESOL can be difficult and people face a number of barriers before they can do so. Some asylum seekers said they had been dispersed a long time before being able to attend ESOL classes, and there was nothing to do in the meantime. Some of those we interviewed had been waiting some time to access ESOL classes:

They told us that we can learn English here which is really important because my husband cannot speak any English ... we tried to start but we have to go to the library and fill in forms and we are just waiting to do an exam and then can start ... my husband only speaks Spanish ... we wanted to do it together but we have the baby ... we have been waiting two and half months ... the library said they would call us but nothing (female asylum seeker from South America, with one child, living in Newport for four months)

I have been waiting for a month In Newport it is not so easy ... there is not online system and harder than before and system changed and we must go to library and

write my name, and library say to me you must wait and two days ago she called to me and make an appointment for ESOL (refugee from Iran, living in UK for 18 months and Newport for two months)

Families with children are often prevented from accessing ESOL provision because of the lack of or no childcare provision:

The Job Centre offered it to me but I couldn't go because he was small and I was not able to pay for nursery (female from Bulgaria with 3 children, living in Swansea for 8 years)

I cannot go to college because I have baby when he goes to school I can go ... there is no childcare if there is childcare I would go I would love it ... When I get papers from the Home Office I want to get a small car so I am learning the theory driving test, I study in my house. When I receive paper I will be ready (female from Iraq with 3 children one and half years old, 8 and 9 year old been living in Swansea for 2 years).

Economic migrants and those in employment also find it difficult to attend ESOL classes because of work commitments. Some told us they had been unable to attend formal classes because: they tend to happen during normal working hours, they work shifts, they are employed through an agency and don't have consistent work patterns. Some also said that due to employment and other responsibilities they don't have the time to attend formal classes. This has led to a situation whereby some people or groups are at a particular disadvantage, for instance if you are an economic migrant and are female with caring commitments you are less likely to be able to access English classes. This has repercussions in terms of their employment prospects and can lead to significant isolation.

Some of the EU migrants we spoke to were unaware that ESOL classes are available, and had only learned about them through attending a drop-in session via the European Citizen's Rights programme. Those we spoke to said that after learning that there are community classes they are interested in attending.

Some also told us they are not interested in attending classes as they can learn 'on the job' and in their workplace. This means that often it relies on English being spoken actively in the workplace, and we were told that that is certainly not the case for many jobs and sectors, and many told us this is simply not the case:

Those employed in the meat factories just speak Polish, there is one person who speaks English and they are the link with the management (Polish female, Carmarthen, moved to Wales in 2005).

What we found from talking to migrants is that they feel employers can play a massive role in encouraging people to learn the majority language and supporting them to do so. What the following example illustrates is how the action of an employer can play a positive part in the integration process and this can happen in a simple, non-expensive way:

It was very scary. To be honest I couldn't speak any English, I was shocked when she [employer] gave me the job. I couldn't speak English and I was working with vulnerable people. It wasn't easy coming to this country, they speak a different language, it was a different culture and I was missing family ... for the first two

months she [employer] made me work with English people – away from the Polish friends I had made because she wanted me to learn English: In two months I could understand basic English. I could work with friends but she encouraged me to speak English and said that if there is anything I don't understand that I must ask; she was very supportive (Polish female, Carmarthen, came to Wales in 2005).

Some were particularly critical of employers (sometimes quite large employers) and said they do not encourage or provide support for people to learn English, and in some respects actively discourage it through the line management structures they have in place.

During the work, we were told of some issues that faced the Polish community, which is potentially a serious issue around payment for translation. Some people from the Polish community told us that due to the low levels of language acquisition, many Polish people are turning to other members of the community to translate in turn for payment. This includes attending appointments, accompanying them to the bank or interpreting official letters. This could leave people in potentially vulnerable positions, as these people may not be qualified to do and may not be acting in their best interests, as one person explained:

So many Polish people don't speak English; they don't want to learn. Sometimes they don't have an opportunity because they are out in the countryside, don't have the time and they don't drive. A few of my friends said they don't want to learn and their children will translate for them ... there are lots of Polish mums who don't work and could go to ESOL when their children are in school. Most people don't know their rights and spend loads of money having things translated. (Polish female, Carmarthen, moved to Wales in 2005).

When asked what more could be done to help support people to learn English, some saw it as a problem caused by a lack of motivation, and said that people should be forced to learn English or Welsh, otherwise they should leave Wales. However, many agreed that there should simply be more opportunities to learn English, particularly through employment.

Overall, people can and do find ways around this to learn English/Welsh, as this example clearly demonstrates:

When I moved to South Wales I was on my own with my two boys and I needed to learn it. I couldn't go to school and I was learning by watching TV and translating ... I remember when my son was young I would go into the city centre and I would go for a coffee and I would sit by local people and listen how they were describing the sentence ... (single mother from Bulgaria with 3 children, living in Swansea for 8 years).

However, people said that more support would be helpful, and people asked for more access to community, informal provision and mentioned groups that do provide language support in more relaxed, social type situations:

There is the English corner which happens on a Friday night ... I know them but a lot of them are Chinese and come here to learn English. It is a Friday night and it is a bit difficult. I would like more of these groups; it is nice. (Italian male, Swansea, moved to Wales in 2004).

For those who do not have the language skills, they should be able to access translation if required. However, those we spoke to said this is often not the case, and often people are asked to bring in family members. One person told us about the experiences working as a Polish health care worker:

Huge problem in hospital ... I will translate for most Polish people. There are so many Polish people who come in and can't speak English ...one lady said to me that they [English speaking staff] do not want to help her and I said "how can they help you if they don't know what you are saying". There are loads of opportunities to learn English ... I am not a translator, I don't have a certificate, I do it out of good will. I had to tell a gentleman he was going to die in two days. This was stressful and then I had to tell his family. Google translate doesn't translate properly and they often look for healthcare assistants to do that. Some won't do it. Try and ring language line but then it could be much harder to do this over the phone ... the Sister will sometimes call me on my day off to come in and help. I will do it in emergency situations, but I won't do it otherwise because people will come to depend on me (Polish female, Carmarthen, moved to Wales in 2005)

Another issue that was raised is the unprofessionalism, poorly skilled and trained interpreters that are used, sometimes in very sensitive situations. Without highlighting the extremely sensitive quote directly, one refugee offered an alarming example of witnessing a social services visit to an asylum seeker. During the visit the interpreter became aggressive towards the asylum seeker and was asking to see things that the social worker had not asked to see. This caused the refugee to intervene and request another interpreter. The refugee who reported this to us felt that, had she not been there, this could have had serious repercussions for the asylum seeker who didn't think she had the right to change interpreter.

4.4. Moving from casual interactions to social connections

Most people talked positively about the casual interactions they had, but less so about the social connections they developed. When asked about their social connections, most said it is limited and people tended to make friends with people from the same ethnic background, or language:

There is a Kurdish – Iraqi family we met them here by the beach and my daughter saw their daughter and heard them speaking Kurdish they are not capable of the language that much ... that is very important if foreigners come here and they don't have the language ... If you have the language you can understand what it taught to you and secondly you can communicate and share your feelings (Male asylum seeker from Iraq living in Swansea, came to Wales in 2019).

I go to Neath to see my Syrian friends. I met them in Swansea and I said where are you from, Syria? (Male refugee from Syria came to Wales 2016).

Overall, asylum seekers and refugees tended to interact with 'other asylum seekers and refugees' they met via support groups, these social connections and the support offered as part of this is clearly invaluable:

The children went to school and I just stayed in the house ... there wasn't anyone to talk to ... I needed someone to talk to and there was no one. Towards the time of being dispersed to Swansea I got involved in singing and drumming at Oasis

and that was good (female asylum seeker from Nigeria living in Swansea, came to Wales in 2018).

However, some wanted to develop friendships with people outside this group, yet they said the opportunities to do so are limited:

I want to meet people other than asylum seekers; I don't want to be stuck in the asylum stigma as it reminds me of my situation and who I am and what I am. I want to learn new things and meet other people. In Swansea I have only seen certain groups – they are not mixed groups of people ... there could be a kid who comes from Africa and they are just put with African people and they don't know anything else ... if you mix you get to know people then you start to feel like you belong (female asylum seeker from Nigeria living in Swansea, came to Wales in 2019).

On the other hand, some said that there are some individuals who don't look for opportunities to make connections with others and will 'isolate' themselves from the rest of the community. For instance, some of those we spoke to in Carmarthenshire and Swansea said that some Polish people *can* be reluctant to make friends outside of their ethnic group, and also within it. It seems that there is a tendency for people to live their lives through home and work, and despite a strong tradition of attending church, it is difficult to develop any strong social connections. This issue has been exacerbated due to the loss of a representative/support group in Carmarthenshire, and the lack of an established group in Swansea.

While many chose to live in a very similar way, this may be worsened due to the lack of language acquisition.

Building social connections through local spaces

When asked how they would go about developing social connections, many of those we spoke to feel there are few places (other than support groups) where they could go to develop relationships with other members of the community. Most of those we spoke to did not identify any 'local' spaces within their community and only one of the 47 people we spoke to said her family had met other people by visiting the park in the local area. It was interesting that many people, particularly asylum seekers and refugees, will in a sense by-pass their local communities, preferring to travel (at some expense) to the nearest support group. An example is the experience of a refugee who has lived in Swansea for over ten years who said that she (and other families) prefer to travel into the town centre because there is nothing in the local area, although the area does have a library, churches, parks, shops and a leisure centre (although some of these areas do have these facilities):

The bus pass is really expensive because you have moved the asylum seeker to very far away ... Morriston is like a village there is nothing round there, Mayhill and Townhill there is nothing there ... there are no activities, there are no playgrounds, so many mothers complain that there is nowhere to take children ... Swansea is small and there is nothing in it – somewhere families can go – there are lots of drugs you can smell marijuana it isn't healthy for children. They [asylum seekers and refugees] live in small houses, the children cannot use their energy they stay home, they are miserable, their parents are as well and they are on a small amount of money ... the children can't play (female Refugee, aged 36, living in Swansea for 15 years)

There could be more of a focus on supporting people to develop social connections within their communities. The following example in Swansea demonstrates the way in which individuals can be supported to access mainstream organisations, and to feel more integrated as a result:

Naz is originally from Bulgaria and is a single mother of three. She lives in Swansea in an area outside of the city centre. Naz feels she is well integrated, and said that she has many friends in the local area and has formed long-standing relationships with other parents in the school. She said that this has helped her and her children and said she was supported by her housing officer who told her about a toddler group (and attended with her) where she met other parents prior to her children attending school: *She [housing officer] was really kind, she was interested in me and she brought books for [her son] and came to the toddler group and now these children are in school with [her son].*

Considering this, it would be useful and beneficial if mainstream organisations like housing providers support people to access services and develop relationships in their own local communities. This could be through sign-posting to community events and groups – rather than just groups that are specifically targeted at migrants. With greater capacity this could be supported via the community cohesion teams who could work with local community groups and support them to provide safe spaces for migrants, and encourage them to be ‘inviting and welcoming’.

Building social connections through employment and the workplace

People told us that employment is a key driver for social interactions, building social connections and integration. For instance, we spoke to a health worker who, after ten years of living in Carmarthenshire, had begun to socialise as a result of the friends she has made in the workplace:

I have met so many nice people, there are loads of Filipinos, and loads of Welsh and English people ... and we have started going out (Polish female, Carmarthen, came to Wales in 2005).

However, for those who do work many said that employment can also limit opportunities to build social connections. Many people simply don't have the time to socialise or go to a community group or have hobbies, and this is worsened as a result of some of the working conditions that migrants are facing. We know from anecdotal evidence that many migrants end up in large factories, with very little interaction with people outside of their ethnic group, and are also required to work shift work and unsociable hours, or because many are working on zero hour contracts they spend their time simply waiting around to see whether they will have any shifts that week.

For those migrants who cannot work, particularly asylum seekers, they miss out on the benefits that employment brings. The asylum seekers we spoke to were extremely upset that they could not work, and while they acknowledge that this is enforced by the UK Government, they feel let down that there are also few opportunities for meaningful voluntary opportunities. One refugee talked about her frustration in obtaining any volunteer work:

I want to work, I want to be a good citizen. I have been on benefits for a long time and I want to give back but my health is not 100% so I want to start somewhere ... I have found this difficult. I don't know why. I have gone some places but there are

always issues ... in Swansea I have never had a proper place, they always give me some excuses and I feel let down ... I can't do the computer so I can't go there, I have been to Victim Support but I can't drive and you have to drive a car, but with my first assessment they told me it was okay then they said no ... or they just want me to tidy up ... I feel really sad about it (Female Refugee, aged 36, living in Swansea for 15 years).

4.5. Conclusions

From our discussions it was clear that migrants face sometimes significant barriers when attempting to integrate. Many lack knowledge about their rights, and often don't have support or the skills to challenge it when their rights are not upheld. Many want to learn English and see it as an important part of integration, and although many have been able to learn the language, some migrants face particular challenges which prevents them to do this. Without language skills, people often face issues around translation and interpretation, and many are not provided with adequate interpretation when required, which can have serious consequences.

Although overall people shared positive experiences of living in Wales, some face harassment and abuse. Although casual interactions are friendly, people do not often progress beyond the saying "hello" to their neighbours, and very few talk of meaningful interactions and social connections with people outside their ethnic or support group. While some would rather keep to themselves or their families, other people want to develop relationships with other people in the community yet there are very few opportunities to do so, and people tend to seek those opportunities outside of their local communities. While employment offers some people the opportunity to integrate, often employment (or the lack of) inhibits integration, and asylum seekers (who cannot work) lack opportunities for voluntary placements.

5. Local case studies: Local is where the 'integration' is

As shown in the previous section integration happens at the local level. Many people's views about migration are formed by their perception of the impact on their local communities. Understanding local experiences of integration is therefore crucial, particularly as some areas with traditionally low levels of in-migration have seen rapid increases and are less experienced in dealing with local impacts. We have chosen to study experiences of integration in three different areas in Wales: Carmarthenshire, Newport and Swansea. These areas were chosen as they are quite different in terms of their historic and present migration patterns, demographic profiles, the geographic area, local authority policies and approaches and local context and issues.

This section will examine the experiences of these three areas, provide a profile of international migration and a brief overview of the local authority approach to managing integration, followed by the views of local stakeholders and an overview of migrants' experiences in these areas to establish whether there are specifically 'local' issues or whether there are commonalities across the areas.

5.1. Newport City Council

Due to the docks and steel industry Newport has traditionally attracted people from across the globe, and has long established communities including the Irish, Somalian and Bangladeshi communities. Newport continues to attract people from a wide range of countries who come to live and work, sometimes for a short period and sometimes to settle. In the centre of Newport is the University of South Wales which attracts a number of UK and international students. The Celtic Manor resort is situated on the outskirts of Newport and employs many staff from migrant communities.

Newport is an asylum dispersal area, and 453 asylum seekers were in the city at the end December 2019, many of whom will stay on after they have received a positive decision²⁴. Newport has also signed up to the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

Local authority approaches to integration

Newport Council, in collaboration with its public service boards partners, has set out how they will support an inclusive city in which people from all backgrounds are welcomed. The 'One Newport' webpage²⁵ also includes a number of policies which support integration including the Well-Being Plan²⁶ and the Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020²⁷ (which is currently being updated).

In order to develop a framework for an integration plan, the local authority has recently signed-up to the Inclusive Cities Programme²⁸ which currently supports nine UK cities and their local partners to change their approach towards integration of newcomers in the city. Drawing on ideas and experience from within Europe and innovative approaches from cities in the United States, it aims to support development of an approach.

At the time of undertaking this work, the ESOL Reach project had been in place for several months.

Third sector and civil society in Newport

In Newport the third sector was characterised as being 'in decline', with a small number of groups that 'come and go' quite quickly. The city has also recently lost SEWREC, a charity which covered advocacy and casework and worked with migrants, asylum seekers & refugees.

There are however voluntary groups that are running successful projects in the area, like for instance the 'Sanctuary Gap project'²⁹ which provides a welcome and support for refugees and asylum seekers. This is an active group which runs its own English (with childcare) classes, a youth group, a women's group and sports activities to name but a few. The British Red Cross also runs the 'Avail' project³⁰ which through a co-production approach brings together refugees and asylum seekers to create, design and implement activities and services.

Views of Newport residents

Newport residents' views about cohesion in the city were mixed and reflected very different experiences: the positive reflected the good work that has been put in by the local authority, the third sector and the wider community:

It is a really nice place, it is really calm and not noisy and the area where I live there is not much pollution ... I feel more security by myself and for all my family ... Cardiff it is noisy there and it is quiet here (asylum seeker from South America, with one child, living in Newport for four months).

Asylum seekers and refugees we spoke to particularly liked the groups they attend, and said they would like more provision:

More places like this. They can help us a lot ... we can know other people so we don't feel alone ... if you feel alone you feel depressed ... at the beginning I was depressed and I was crying all the time ... more spaces to know other cultures and other people you can talk to in your own languages (asylum seeker from South America, with one child, living in Newport for four months)

However, the more negative reflections illustrate that, despite all the good work, more could be done to improve integration and prevent isolation:

Newport is quiet ... after 6pm it is quiet. I feel lonely. In my country I felt lonely, but I had work, I got up early ... go to work and after that go to gym, then go eat and house ... I don't have time for anything ... I have nothing to do here (asylum seeker from Saudi Arabi, living in Newport for around 4 months).

Some of those said their communities had changed, and there are tensions, particularly the EU residents we spoke to and some said this has got worse since Brexit:

I have been here for a short while but you can see that Brexit has changed the mood. You cannot be sure what it is going to be like next month, after two years, its change and change and change, it is a never-ending story with Brexit (EU Citizen, Newport).

Many said they had faced issues accessing ESOL through the new Reach project and are waiting for months before getting a place, and many liked the informal provision they were attending via the third sector groups:

In Newport it is not so easy ... there is not online system and harder than before and system changed and we must go to library and write my name and library say to me you must wait ... I have been waiting for a month (refugee from Iran, living in Newport for around 18 months).

Views of local stakeholders

Stakeholders told us that there are community tensions, particularly between migrant groups, some of which have been exacerbated by Brexit:

There are tensions. You see kids from different communities fighting, Pakistani and Slovakian kids fighting (Stakeholder, Newport)

There has always been tensions between Asian communities and Roma, but with Brexit they are saying "well you will be going home now, anyway" so Brexit is fuelling it in a different way. It has always been like this towards newcomers, but it used to be you are coming here to take our girls, but now it is Brexit (Stakeholder, Newport).

Many agree that it is important to have a local strategy in place to deal with these issues, and this has been one of the drivers for pursuing membership of the Inclusive Cities Programme. However, it was stressed that there also needs to be national leadership, and currently there is very little direction from Welsh Government:

People are looking for a stronger message from the Welsh Government, people can assume what their message is but what is it? They need to openly support these communities and say they want them to stay ... Correct me if I am wrong but I have never seen someone from Welsh Government speak out ... when I speak to people they do bring up racism. People don't see a clear message from our leaders (Stakeholder, Newport).

Some felt that the current approach lacks a joined-up approach:

The legislation is not linked up- it is too siloed, and it doesn't look deep enough, it isn't seen as lateral information (Stakeholder, Newport)

Some were critical of the Welsh Government's 'Nation of Sanctuary', especially as Newport is currently not yet a City of Sanctuary. Stakeholders said that while they are busy promoting it, the Welsh Government has not followed this through by supporting Newport to achieve this status (despite all four dispersal areas needing to have this status).

Similar to Swansea, stakeholders believe the third sector response has been too focused on refugees and asylum seekers, and while migrants should be able to access support via mainstream service providers, there should be specific support for vulnerable groups of migrants. The issue of EU migrants was raised, and many stakeholders feel that it is unfortunate that SEWREC has gone as it was an excellent source of support for this group. Some former staff were now working with other organisations which was said to be particularly helpful as they have already built up the trust of the community, have links with them, and know how to engage them.

With the high turnover of voluntary groups, stakeholders said that they are often unaware of who and where to signpost as they lack up-to-date knowledge about the groups. For example a 17 year old could be directed to a group which turns out to be only for those up to the age of 16. This is a source of frustration for the local authority in particular, as any attempt to put together a 'map' would become out of date quite quickly.

Some stakeholders we spoke to expressed concerns about pressure from third sector organisations to have a cultural hub (similar to the one in Swansea) and noted that the council had previously tried this approach and it had not worked. They said that in their experience:

- Groups should remain located within communities to support the maintenance of local spaces and protect community assets.
- More people will have to travel out of their community into a central place.
- Problems could arise if different groups have different resources, for instance if one group has significant IT resources will this be shared with the other groups?
- If there is one organisation managing this space there need to be clear roles and responsibilities.
- It needs to be inclusive of all groups and could be perceived negatively if some groups are excluded.
- To support integration, a hub needs to be available to all, including groups like Scouts, disability and other community groups.
- Issues could arise if a communication strategy isn't developed. Many local stakeholders agree that there has been some criticisms of the hub and it would need to be managed sensitively.

Most stakeholders shared their concerns around language tuition and were deeply dissatisfied with the operation of the Reach project for the following reasons:

- Reach is targeted at asylum seekers and refugees – not all those who need it.
- The ability to access ESOL is tiered and unequal, with those who have come through the VPRS getting access to a much better service than other refugees or asylum seekers. Some people have to pay for ESOL (an admin and exam charge which can vary) and others do not.
- There is not enough pre-entry ESOL and not enough 'higher' provision.
- Formal ESOL settings like Coleg Gwent do not provide childcare and are only available at certain times, and resources have been taken away from community settings which often do provide this.
- Formal provision works for some, but not all learners have the confidence or experience to sit in a classroom environment, and not all will want a certificate to demonstrate their level of English, but want more conversational or 'for socialising' type of provision.

Stakeholders agree that providing language tuition that is accessible to all is difficult, but when thinking about an approach all groups should be considered, and employers should play more of a role in providing language tuition and support:

It should be delivered in workplaces with a high number of migrant workers, if the shift finishes at 8pm then there should be an ESOL class then ... In England they have had slighter longer lunch hours and have delivered ESOL classes there and things like that, there are examples and we should look at that but there isn't one silver bullet (Stakeholder, Newport).

5.2. The City and County of Swansea

Swansea is Wales' second city, and as a port it has always had a diverse population with long established Italian, Bangladeshi and Chinese communities. More recently Swansea's

demographic profile is changing largely as a result of the growing number of international students and staff attracted to the area by the expansion of the university. Many migrants have settled in Swansea and work in some of the city's major employers including the two hospitals and Amazon. Swansea is one of the key asylum dispersal areas in Wales, with 817 asylum seekers in September 2019 (many of whom will stay on after they have received a positive decision)³¹. Swansea also resettles Syrian refugees as part of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

Local Authority approaches to integration

Within the local authority there are a number of people working on integration, which includes (but is not limited to) the equalities, culture and tourism, poverty and prevention departments. There are also people working directly on asylum seeker and refugee integration and resettlement as well as a community cohesion team, which also covers Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot.⁵

Swansea has taken a proactive approach to welcoming asylum seekers and was the second city in the UK to become a City of Sanctuary³², celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. The local authority has developed a number of policies and action plans which relate to community cohesion including the City and County of Swansea's Corporate Plan 2018-22³³, the Well-Being Plan³⁴ and the Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020³⁵ (which is currently being updated). In 2017 Swansea also developed a Local Strategic Framework on New and Emerging Communities, however this is only available in draft form and was never published.

In order to support cohesion further, in 2018 Swansea signed up to the Intercultural Cities programme³⁶ which, under the Council for Europe, provides expert and peer support to member cities on ways to manage and benefit from diversity. A representative explained that Swansea had been inspired to join after attending an event and saw it as a good opportunity to share good practice and learn from areas outside of Wales. Since joining the representative said that it had gleaned some useful information and ideas³⁷, however, continued membership comes at a cost, and it is unclear if the local authority will continue its membership, despite the perceived benefits.

The local authority has taken forward a number of cohesion related activities, including the 'Big Conversation' project which has brought together 53 young people across the city to discuss tackling extremism, what they think about name calling and ideas around developing a counter narrative. Sessions have been filmed and the team have worked with an advertising company to develop branding and a logo. It is hoped that this will lead to a documentary (to be used in schools or a roadshow). Other projects in the pipeline include a cultural 'come dine with me'. At the time of writing, the priority for the cohesion team is the promotion of the EUSS and encouraging people to apply. The cohesion officer was also carrying out a community mapping exercise. However, it was acknowledged that the role is limited given the part-time hours.

At the time of this work, the Reach project had only just been introduced in Swansea, so stakeholders were not able to comment about its operation.

⁵ Bridgend and Port-Talbot have full time cohesion officers as a result of additional local authority funding in each of the areas.

Third sector and civil society in Swansea

There are many third sector organisations providing support to different groups. The local authority funds some initiatives through the Change Fund, and there are alternative funding channels (including the National Lottery fund, charitable foundations, and Welsh Government). A few examples of the groups include the Ethnic Minority and Youth Support team (EYST), Race Council Cymru (RCC), Chinese in Wales, the African Community Centre (ACC), Welsh Refugee Council (WRC) and Swansea Bay Asylum Seeker Support Group. This list is certainly not exhaustive, and even local authority representatives were unable to provide a definitive list of the support groups in the area.

In a recent development, a number of third sector groups (led by RCC) have come together and have relocated into the Arts Wing of the Grand Theatre which now forms a 'cultural hub'. The local authority has supported this by granting three years free rent and utilities, after which the groups should become self-funding. Many of those we spoke to were positive about the prospects of the cultural hub and said that on a very basic level it has helped them with rental costs etc. but more significantly has enabled integration through increased contact between the groups. The hub will also be hosting a digital skills section and a 'cultural café'. Partners told us that the 'hub' will be a useful place to meet with groups, and the South Wales Police 'Hate Crime Team' undertake a weekly-drop in session, and it is hoped that other organisations will do the same.

In the short time the hub has been running it has already put on events aimed at all members of the community, and once the café is open it is hoped that will attract a wide range of community members.

Views of Swansea residents

The residents we interviewed gave a mixed account of their experiences of living in the city. Most did speak positively about living in Swansea. Most asylum seekers and refugees acknowledged the 'sanctuary status' and had been welcomed via the support groups:

I took Swansea to my heart because it was the City of Sanctuary and I was like wow "it is the City that welcomes you" and that meant a lot (asylum seeker living in Swansea for eight months)

However, the more negative reflections illustrate that, despite all the good work, migrants have had negative experiences, including isolation and feeling unwelcomed, as well as just wanting to meet more people and have more opportunities to do so:

In Swansea I have only seen certain groups – they are not mixed groups of people ... there could be a kid who comes from Africa and they are just put with African people and they don't know anything else ... if you mix you get to know people then you start to feel like you belong (asylum seeker living in Swansea for four months)

Most people are okay, I am settled here; I would like to meet more people (Chinese resident, living in Swansea for 17 years)

I have gone from feeling welcomed here to 'I have permission to stay' (EU resident, originally from Poland, lived in Swansea since 2010).

Views of local stakeholders in Swansea

It is clear that through policies, partnerships and activities, the council is actively trying to promote integration. Their efforts have reached surrounding authorities and a stakeholder from a different authority told us that they had been in touch with Swansea so they could learn from and share their ideas. Despite the positive feedback, stakeholders raised issues around integration and felt more could be done. Migration and integration are considered to be strategic priorities for the city, especially as Swansea needs to continue to encourage international students as well as other migrant groups to come to the City. Some believe that Welsh Government should be helping to promote this at a national level:

Need to have discussions, be confident to be open about it. Swansea needs to be bold; they need to be welcoming. Recognition that we will need people to come to Swansea in the future. The Welsh Government needs to have input into this (Stakeholder, Swansea).

In addition, many called on Welsh Government to carry out a national campaign based on educating the wider public about migration and the benefits, and the importance of integration:

Would be good to have more campaigns – such as black history month which celebrates diversity and helps cohesion. Some action needs to be taken by Welsh Government and Local Authorities to do this in the media (Stakeholder, South Wales).

While positive overall, some questioned the local authority's leadership on this issue, especially around partnership working, with some feeling that it had relied on other organisations and groups to take the lead. Some felt it was difficult for the local authority to take the lead because it did not have oversight of or control over funding.

Thinking about the role of the third sector, much praise was given to organisations and their efforts to improve integration. One example is the award-winning community transport scheme which has been developed by the African Community Centre (ACC). Through local volunteers, asylum seekers are taken to sign-on at the local dispersal centre and it is hoped that the scheme '*improves integration because people talk to each and tell stories, then they go back and tell other people*'.

Representatives of the third sector told us that integration is expensive, and therefore there are barriers created by limited resources. They also said that the sector currently lacks the skills, training and resources so has to focus on the 'pressing issues'. Activities like integration, working with the wider local communities, and advocacy work are not top priorities:

Doing things like netball and football would help ... this needs transport and this is expensive (Stakeholder, Swansea).

While the third sector efforts are welcomed, some shared the following concerns:

- The response is narrowly focused on very specific groups of people including BAME communities, asylum seekers and refugees with little or no representation for other groups.

- Groups do compete with each as they bid for the same funding, they duplicate each other and often don't work together to address gaps.
- The sector is dominated by a small number of established groups, with little room for other, smaller groups.
- The 'cultural hub' needs to demonstrate its diversity and should be 'open' to all groups and members of the community.
- Measuring the impact of third sector groups is difficult, and they should be evaluated in such a way which demonstrates impact, but also enables them to share what works'.

5.3. Carmarthenshire

Carmarthenshire is the third largest local authority in Wales with a population of 186,500. The largest towns in Carmarthenshire are Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford. The majority of migrant workers in this area are Polish and most reside in and around the Llanelli and Carmarthen areas. In Carmarthen there is a small community of people who have been living in Carmarthenshire since the Second World War, and a much larger community who have migrated to Carmarthenshire after Poland became a member of the EU (2004). There is also a large population of Filipino migrants. Many migrants have been attracted to Carmarthenshire to work within the agricultural sector, the meat processing sector and health care sector including care homes. Carmarthenshire is not one of the asylum dispersal areas, but is now accommodating Syrian refugees as part of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

Local authority approaches to integration

The local authority, in collaboration with its public service board partners, has set out how they will support cohesion via the 'Carmarthenshire we Want' ³⁸ webpage, and includes a number of policies which support integration including the Well-Being Plan³⁹ and the Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020⁴⁰ (which is currently being updated).

There are many individuals working on cohesion across the area, including the equalities team and the VPRS coordinator who works with EYST to provide support to Syrian refugees in the area.

The cohesion coordinator has been in post since July 2019. Covering the mid and west region the coordinator works for one day per week in following local authorities: Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Powys and Pembrokeshire . In December 2019 a further two cohesion officers were recruited and each is allocated two of the four areas. Thirteen projects have been funded across the cohesion region including a community mapping exercise which had been commissioned at the time of writing this report. Three projects have been funded in Carmarthenshire:

- International Women's Day in Llanelli
- A media campaign and work to create films about Syrian refugees and victims of hate crime
- Setting up of a FAN group⁶ in the area.

⁶ Friends and Neighbours groups are voluntary groups which have been set -up in each of our case study areas. There are informal groups which invite all members of the community to attend.

The team's forthcoming priorities includes promoting the EUSS, promoting hate crime reporting, getting out different messages about hate crime and developing integration techniques.

Third sector and civil society in Carmarthenshire

There are now few third sector groups supporting migrants. In response to the arrival of Polish people in 2004, the Polish Mutual Association was set-up. It was a wholly voluntary organisation until the Welsh Government provided funding in 2006 and the Association was able to provide its own premises and employed two to three staff. The aim of the Association was to support members of the local Polish community with a wide variety of issues. They also arranged a number of trips and events for local people and Polish people. Funding was withdrawn in 2016 and the Association closed.

Similarly, the Llanelli Multi-Cultural Network is a long-established group that offers support to all migrant communities, but it has scaled back its activities due to funding cuts. A support group for the small number of Syrian refugees has also been set-up.

Views of Carmarthenshire residents

Within Carmarthenshire we spoke to Polish residents who were particularly concerned about migrants who said didn't want to integrate, had not learned English and are unaware of their rights and rely on other members of the community for translation, are not able to access services, and can lead to isolation:

Most people don't know their rights and spend loads of money having things translated. I translated for a patient and he had to come back the next day, he offered me money to do it but I didn't do it

Some Polish will get out in the community and make friends – others will stay together. Sometimes I see my friends and they think they are better than Welsh people, that's why they don't socialise

So many Polish people don't speak English; they don't want to learn. Sometimes they don't have an opportunity because they are out in the countryside, don't have the time and they don't drive. A few of my friends said they don't want to learn and their children will translate for them

Those employed in the meat factories just speak Polish, there is one person who speaks English and they are the link with the management.

In the factories some people don't speak English and something should be done about that.

Unfortunately, all of those we spoke to said they had witnessed or been the victim of racist abuse of harassment, none of which they had reported:

I had a few difficult situations. You get on with it, you are afraid to say something. Now I just laugh ... (Polish female living in Carmarthen, came to Wales in 2005).

Overall, residents feel there the local authority and the Welsh Government has done little to address any of these issues and concerns:

At the beginning they were promoting integration ... but now because the money isn't there they don't – integration will take longer. There is no organisation there

and there is no funding. The Welsh Government are not very sympathetic. There is no organisation there and there is no funding. (Polish resident, living in Carmarthenshire).

Views of local stakeholders in Carmarthenshire

Overall, stakeholders feel that cohesion is an issue, and while some migrants are integrating, others are not:

... the kids are okay and some people are having BBQs with neighbours. Some lads are in the local football teams and one is top scorer and one man is coaching for a local football team - other families are sitting watching Arabic TV all day (Stakeholder, Carmarthenshire).

Many people expressed their concerns about the lack of Polish integration. Stakeholders explained that the migration that happened in Llanelli was atypical in that those who came were from a small town in Poland and they all knew each other, since coming they have continued to work and stick together. Although there are now a number of shops which has helped integration, the view is that there is little integration, and in places like Llandeilo and Llanybydder they are isolated.

The lack of language acquisition is seen as an issue, and many don't have the skills to integrate:

Lots of people don't learn English because some people never intended on staying here. There are manual workers who don't need to learn any English. It does depend on age. Middle aged and older don't tend to feel the need to. In school in Poland you have to learn English in school, so younger have some skills (Stakeholder, Carmarthenshire)

Some felt it was due to the lack of motivation to learn English, whereas others said it was due to the style of language tuition and barriers such as not having time due to employment and caring responsibilities:

ESOL – the way ESOL is delivered can be difficult. They started to teach it phonetically which seemed to work. Sometimes they start ESOL and they find it difficult to put together full sentences. They can't cope and they leave (Stakeholder, Carmarthenshire).

Others said that the 'white Welsh' community had not done 'their bit' to encourage integration, and there are limited social spaces that they can mix:

They are still not mixing with Welsh people. They don't go to pubs etc. It is a very slow process We organised a free trip to Welshpool and allocated half Polish and half white Welsh – but they didn't want to know. We stopped even trying in the end. They live side by side with no meaningful contact (Stakeholder, Carmarthenshire).

Some explained that people had formed a perception of the Polish community, but this was based on misunderstandings and past tensions, which have never been resolved:

Polish come across as defensive, cold and reserved. But they did have a bit to put up with when they first came along they did have to put up with quite a lot of abuse. There is a stigma and that takes a long time to break – Punjabi community only now being accepted (Stakeholder, Carmarthenshire).

Overall, the loss of the Polish Mutual Association has been detrimental, particularly as it provided much needed support around language, advice and advocacy:

It is important to teach them how to live here, how to drive in this country, the speed limits. How to look after children in this country - it is common in their country to leave children on their own. This puts people in danger of having their children taken off them (Stakeholder).

Stakeholders were also concerned about the employment situations for many migrants living in the area, and said that many are in very precarious situations:

Where employment laws don't mean anything, they can be sacked for getting there a couple of minutes late. The unions did recruit some people but they did not do enough to keep them paying their fees (Stakeholder, Carmarthenshire).

5.4. Measuring success

When examining the experiences of the three local case studies it is clear that all are undertaking initiatives to improve integration, yet it is very difficult to attribute any level of success to any particular initiatives. Given the lack of demographic data many stakeholders admitted not actually knowing or understanding the needs of their various communities, and therefore found it difficult to know if the community needs or wants initiatives, or if interventions are working. Therefore, when asked 'how well integrated the area is' or 'what does success look like', people really could not answer beyond 'we think we are doing well'. Some stakeholders tended to refer to hate crime figures, concluding that low recorded crime meant that there are no 'major' issues.

However, the more general view is that hate crime figures are misleading due to the scale of under-reporting. Hate crimes go unreported for a variety of reasons including a lack of awareness about what constitutes a hate crime and what is acceptable behaviour, how to go about reporting hate crime and who to go to and a distrust of authorities including the police. Many stakeholders said that they were aware of incidents that had gone unreported as many people (especially the Polish community) will ignore it:

People don't have the knowledge to report hate crimes. They think the police and home office are linked. If they try and claim British citizenship they can use these incidents against their application ... Distrust of the police can be based on experience in own country. (Stakeholder, All-Wales)

Because they [Polish] don't integrate some comments are made and they won't necessarily go to the police because of the distrust of the police. (Stakeholder, All-Wales)

Indeed, when faced with hostility nobody who took part in this project had reported any incidents.

Furthermore, stakeholders say that hate crime figures themselves are unhelpful as they do not provide enough information about who has been targeted, whether there are any patterns to this and whether it is in response to a particular event. In addition, some stakeholders said that although attempts to increase awareness around hate crime is important and it should be made easier to do, it does not tend to pick up any issues that can be viewed as 'low level' or issues that happen say within an educational setting like a

school and is dealt with internally. Many felt that while efforts went into reporting more resource should go into prevention.

Monitoring third sector outcomes is a constant frustration for stakeholders, who are concerned that many of organisations are subject to little in the way of evaluation and cannot demonstrate the impact of what they are doing. While some say this raises questions around the finance and funding, there was more concern that best practice and impact is difficult to prove, therefore there is a considerable loss of 'learning' that could be shared more widely.

There needs to be more performance monitoring – there isn't any indicators of what services are doing well and you have various organisations shouting from the rooftops that they are ... but there are issues (stakeholder, Newport)

Overall, stakeholders called on the Welsh Government to improve the collection of data and the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), but couldn't suggest any real progression or ideas around how they can do this, but said that it needs further consideration and resources by Welsh Government to ensure local authorities and other organisations are collecting better more robust data, and also have the skills to use this data to improve impact.

5.5. Conclusions

There are clearly different issues that face each local authority, yet also some common concerns and frustrations. For instance, most stakeholders at the local level agree that their local authority could do more to support integration, but also feel Welsh Government could assist their effort by providing strategic direction and additional resources. Although most welcomed the investment in the community cohesion capacity, it is clear that the cohesion teams in each of the case study areas have to cover a broad area of work across several local authorities. This raises questions of their effectiveness given their limited resources.

The third sector is an important contributor to integration, and residents we talked to told us what a difference attending a group had made to their lives. Yet the case studies show that the distribution of third sector groups is uneven across the different local authorities. While third sector organisations are relatively strong in Swansea, they are in decline in other areas. One factor common across all three areas is the lack of a coordinated third sector response to all migrant groups and therefore any efforts to improve integration, say for instance through the cultural hub, will face some criticism. There is a need to develop the capacity of the third sector to be more responsive to all migrant groups, and to look at how to address gaps (rather than create duplication). The lack of access to language tuition in Newport and Carmarthenshire, was highlighted by stakeholders and residents highlighted issues relating to access, and most wanted more community-based, informal support.

Despite efforts to improve cohesion, it is very hard to measure the efforts made in each of the local authorities as there is a lack of monitoring and performance data.

6. Recommendations

We want to ensure that Wales is an inclusive place to live, where all people are respected and newcomers welcomed. In this section, we propose ways in which the issues identified can be addressed, and how we can ensure integration is strengthened. Working with local authorities, civil society organisations, business and long-standing Welsh communities, we believe the Welsh Government can build on its current commitment to cohesion and strengthen even further the communities it represents. The first involve changes that can be made in the short-term, followed by a long-term commitment to explore the idea of a Welsh 'civic citizenship'.

6.1. Immediate steps to improve integration

The Welsh Government has introduced a number of policies, guidance and resources aimed at improving integration in Wales, we think this could be strengthened by bringing it together under a national integration strategy. This would demonstrate a visible national commitment to integration while sending clear guidance to local authorities and other organisations across Wales.

A new strategy would set a new framework for Wales in the new post-Brexit era, and be inclusive of all migrants. It will clearly set out ways to deal with barriers to integration, propose new ways of encouraging integration and also the challenges that will result out of the changes to the immigration system. It should send a clear message to all communities that integration is a two-way process, and is not just the responsibility of newcomers to 'fit in'.

Other key actions which we believe would lead to better outcomes are:

1. A visible commitment to the integration of all migrants

- Some migrants currently feel unwelcome, and one of the immediate steps would be to demonstrate a visible commitment to integration for all. Welsh ministers have already been demonstrating their support for EU Citizens, particularly around promoting the EU Settlement Scheme, and we believe there is an opportunity to build upon this through a wider national campaign. Examples of where this has been done include the 'we are Bristol'⁴¹ and '#WeAreScotland'⁴² campaigns which are based on targeting the wider community, while sending positive message to migrant groups.
- To prevent further discrimination towards migrant groups, we believe it a matter of urgency that public sector providers, especially those in the housing, education and health sectors and local authority staff more generally are trained to be aware of and understand the rights of migrants. It would be beneficial if frontline staff receive cultural awareness and/or non-bias training. We also feel this should be targeted at others in the private sector, including businesses and housing providers/private landlords.
- A quick way to ensure all newcomers feel welcome (and to send a message to wider communities that they are welcome), is to hold arrival receptions. Newcomers should also receive a welcome pack/app which contains information about people's rights, responsibilities and useful information e.g. where to go for language tuition, areas of interest, community groups etc.

- Welsh Government could build on the success they have achieved through celebrating Black History month and refugee week, and include other cultures/groups or international migrants day through national and local events (e.g. schools).
- Building on the commitment to integration from day one, Welsh Government could explore ways of enhancing opportunities for volunteer roles and work placements for migrants, particularly asylum seekers who cannot work. They should also continue to put pressure on UK Government to lift the current work restrictions placed on asylum seekers.
- Appoint an EU 'ambassador'/ representative to support and oversee the EU Citizens' Rights programme, and also liaise with EU residents and their respective consulates.

2. Strengthening the role of local authorities

Local authorities play a crucial role in the integration of communities and need to be allowed to develop their own approaches, however we found they also need direction and guidance to deliver more integrated communities. We believe that a national strategy would provide this, and in addition recommend that:

- Local authorities are given further resources to strengthen the community cohesion teams. We propose there should be a minimum of one coordinator plus two cohesion officers per local authority area, to allow coordinators to focus their efforts, have more time to strengthen local relationships and partnerships, and have more of a 'local' focus.
- Through a partnership approach, local authorities should develop their own action plans, which sets out its commitment to the integration of all migrants, and the actions through which it will tackle some of the challenges in its area. As part of their action plans local authorities should strengthen the messages around inclusivity and migration. The Welsh Government could support local efforts by providing guidance, training and support to authorities, particularly those who have less experience of migration. A Wales-wide role to oversee the efforts of local authorities and provide practical hands-on advice and support could be useful.
- Local authorities should receive a 'community chest' fund which could be managed by the cohesion teams and be used to support integration ideas or small community projects like befriending schemes. Migrants, stakeholders and others told of us of some interesting original ideas they had to improve integration, but they had nowhere to access funding. We think that these ideas should be supported and encouraged, especially those who do not already have support from larger organisations.
- Local authorities should endeavour to provide free, friendly accessible spaces for social mixing and support existing community-based schemes.
- Advice hubs which provide information about the local area, areas of interest, services and accessibility (e.g. public transport) and advice and support could be a useful way to support integration, and while it may not be necessary in every local

authority in Wales it may be something to consider. This service should be targeted at all newcomers, and existing community members.

3. Facilitating cross sector involvement in integration policy and activities

Community tensions affect everyone, whether as a landlord, a learning provider, a provider of charitable services or as a business, yet different kinds of organisations rarely engage with or learn from each other. Currently, there is no network that brings together organisations working on integration in Wales. This is despite many of the public services that contribute to inclusion being fully devolved, and the Welsh Government's own commitment to greater cohesion. We believe their role should be acknowledged within a strategy.

It would also be beneficial for Welsh Government to support the development of a Welsh network, where organisations will be able to consider the public policies that affect them directly and discuss ways in which they can work together to promote the integration agenda. This should also act as a vehicle to share good practice and to develop partnership working. We believe this would complement the cohesion network (attended by the local cohesion coordinators) and the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership.

4. Employment and the business sector

We support the Welsh Government's commitment to tackling modern day slavery. We were told that this is a particular challenging area, and there are currently not enough resources in place to tackle this sufficiently. This could be strengthened by investing further in the capacity of the cohesion team, particularly in areas with high numbers of migrant workers.

There are currently businesses (local and national) which employ large numbers of migrants, yet, we did not find much evidence that businesses are playing a role in promoting or supporting integration. It would be useful if the Welsh Government appointed someone who could act as a liaison, to work with businesses and community cohesion teams to support integration and partnership working. We also believe that the Welsh Government should lobby the UK Government to ensure that, as part of the reforms to the immigration system, employers play a more active role in supporting integration. This could include ensuring that employers are only granted a certificate of sponsorship (which allows them to employ staff from overseas) if they can demonstrate that they are taking active measures to support the integration of their workers in the local community.

Many stakeholders said that currently migrants are unable to use qualifications they may have as they are not recognised. The Welsh Government could look again at strengthening the current qualifications framework to ensure migrants are able to utilise the qualifications they have.

5. Measuring impact, improving data collection and monitoring outcomes

Data collection and monitoring outcomes are key areas of concern for stakeholders, and the lack of data is detrimental in terms of planning, managing demographic changes and measuring impact.

We do not believe there is a quick remedy in terms of improving data collection, but we think that it would be beneficial to set up a task and finish group to explore how data collection across all sectors could be improved.

In terms of monitoring outcomes, the Welsh Government should introduce a more rigorous evaluation framework to ensure all projects funded by Welsh Government is able to demonstrate impact. While this would be useful to learn from projects which 'have worked' it would also give confidence to stakeholders who work in this sector that funding is being targeted in the right ways.

6. Improving access to language tuition and translation

There is a clear commitment from Welsh Government to support language tuition. However, despite this effort many people are still unable to access this support. Welsh government should consider an immediate evaluation of what is currently provided as well as examining to what extent the 'Reach' scheme is benefitting all learners. There should be additional work to explore ways to improve the childcare offer to potential learners including what can be provided via community groups and in partnership with schools etc.

Currently, access to language tuition is different depending on which group of migrant you belong. While we are aware that some groups are supported by the UK Government, any evaluation must consider how to make language support a 'level playing field'

Any new approach to language tuition should include the role of informal provision like community groups and conversation cafes. We also think there are other opportunities to provide more flexible language support through the development of other forms of learning such as language apps.

While language acquisition should be encouraged and supported, those who do not have the necessary language skills should be offered good quality interpretation service. We understand this can be expensive, but fixing problems as a result of poor translation could prove to be equally or more expensive, and we found examples where people are not able to fully access their rights as a result of poor or informal translation.

To prevent this strict guidance about the use of translators should be given to all those statutory bodies and those who provide direct frontline service, and the use of informal translation should be used as an exception not the rule. Those who do rely on professional translation services should also be able to access good quality translators, and we believe the Welsh Government could do more to improve the training and skills within this profession.

6.2. The long-term vision: A Welsh 'civic' citizenship pledge

As set out in its recent report *The reset moment: Immigration in a new parliament*, British Future and the Policy Institute, Kings College London explained that people prefer it when migrants choose to settle in the UK, over those who stay for a short-term. The decision to become a British Citizen allays some of the public concerns over integration. In research conducted by ICM they found that half of those who voted Leave in the EU referendum support migrants having the opportunity to become a British Citizen ⁴³.

Currently, the UK Government is not planning any real overall of its citizenship policy, other than reviewing the role of citizenship test, its handbook and ceremonies. However,

this does not consider any of the benefits of citizenships and the impact on integration, and removing any of the barriers to citizenship which includes the expense.

We believe that a vision of an inclusive Wales would be supported through a Welsh 'civic' citizenship pledge. All those who settle or have settled in Wales could be given the opportunity to become a citizen, through passing a language test in English or Welsh, completing a short test and could be charged a nominal fee. While many would question the point of citizenship without legal rights, we think that it would send a strong message of welcome not just to migrants who regard Wales as their home, but would allay some of the fears around migration in the wider community.

We did not seek to explore this idea at the outset of this project, and only touched on it with a couple of those we spoke to at the end of the fieldwork, but we were particularly struck by the emotion it caused, and as a result we certainly think this is an idea worth exploring in Wales, particularly as similar considerations have also begun elsewhere in the UK⁴⁴.

6.3. Final thoughts

We recognise that these proposals increase expenditure at a time when there is mounting pressure on public spending, however we strongly believe that with additional resources and policy direction, Welsh Government can build upon the current success and commitment and increase integration for the benefit of all.

While the forthcoming changes to the immigration system means the door will be closed to unskilled migrants, it does bring about an opportunity for the Welsh Government to lead a wider public debate about migration, particularly around Wales' long-term future and how migration can contribute to making Wales a thriving and prosperous place.

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