



Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/00116/22

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
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11 February 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your recent letter on behalf of the Petitions Committee seeking views raised in Petition P-06-1256 requesting consideration of the request to hold a referendum on the Welsh Government's Nation of Sanctuary policy and in particular referring to costs associated with resettling those who have been evacuated from Afghanistan.

Equality and human rights are the cornerstone of the Welsh Government and our vision for Wales. They are also the cornerstone of our national identity. I do not believe that the strength of what it is to be Welsh is defined by a desire to turn a blind eye, but by a compassion that is so profoundly entrenched in our identities. The crisis in Afghanistan that we witnessed late in 2021 and still continues, demonstrates how this compassion and kindness remains within the hearts of Welsh people.

The Nation of Sanctuary plan was developed through a three month open consultation which commenced on 22 March 2018 and concluded on 25 June 2018. We met and listened to people seeking sanctuary and public services across Wales, both before and during the consultation. The consultation was also open to the public to comment. A copy of the consultation summary of responses can be found [here](#). As the report makes clear "Overall, the consultation responses demonstrate substantial support for the draft Nation of Sanctuary proposals."

I should also mention that this petition is very similar to P-06-1174 which came before your Committee in July 2021. As Committee member Joel James MS said at during Committee on 13 September 2021, *"I know it was previously in the Conservative manifesto about creating a nation of sanctuary and I assume it was in the Welsh Labour one as well, really. We've had an election recently, and regardless of whether or not we were supportive of the outcome or happy with the outcome, that should really end the discussion in terms of not*

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

having a say on the matter... I would be saying that we'd probably just agree that there's no further action and to close the petition, really. I think this is something that has already been discussed previously at quite a length really, even in the Senedd Chamber..."

The Nation of Sanctuary plan is about ensuring people seeking sanctuary can rebuild their lives here. It is about ensuring they can become a part of our communities and can utilise their skills and experience to the fullest extent. This Government remains steadfast in our commitment to the Nation of Sanctuary plan and to the people it seeks to support, including those from Afghanistan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'J'.

Jane Hutt AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Justice

