

**Grŵp Addysg, Diwylliant a'r Gymraeg**  
**Education, Culture and Welsh Language Group**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Adrian Crompton,  
Auditor General for Wales  
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c/o Matthew Mortlock, Director  
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21 May 2024

Dear Auditor General,

Please see attached the Welsh Government's response to the Audit Wales Report on Supporting Ukrainians in Wales.

This letter has been copied to the Chair of the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sioned', with a horizontal line underneath.

Sioned Evans  
Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol, Grŵp Addysg, Diwylliant a'r Gymraeg  
Director General, Education, Culture and Welsh Language Group

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.

## Organisational response

**Report title:** Supporting Ukrainians in Wales

**Completion date:** March 2024

| Ref | Recommendation   | <b>Organisational response</b><br>Please set out here relevant commentary on the planned actions in response to the recommendations  | <b>Completion date</b><br>Please set out by when the planned actions will be complete | <b>Responsible officer (title)</b>             |
|-----|--|--|---|--|
| R1  | <p>The Welsh Government should develop and maintain contingency plans it can use if it decides to implement a similar scheme to accommodate refugees in future. These should apply lessons learned from what has worked well and what could have gone better for the Ukraine response, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the use of the Contact Centre, Arrival Hubs and Welcome Centres;</li> <li>• having a clear offer for refugees that takes account of other resettlement schemes;</li> <li>• methods for assessing need from the service user perspective;</li> <li>• methods for early modelling of demand, capacity and costs;</li> <li>• governance arrangements agreed with partners in advance that can be set up quickly; and</li> <li>• agreed data requirements and an agreed method for data sharing from the outset.</li> </ul> | <p>The Welsh Government accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>Due to the unique and groundbreaking nature of the Homes for Ukraine programme, development of the programme framework and methodology has been an iterative process. Considering this, a great deal has been accomplished within a short period of time. Our response was developed from learning taken from Afghan and Syrian resettlement programmes, as well as lessons relating to the asylum system.</p> <p>We recognise the importance of learning from each new scheme and we have already incorporated many of the lessons learnt into current approaches. We will continue to implement this recommendation by keeping our Policy Handbook updated to help us prepare effectively if a similar scheme is required in the future. The Policy Handbook has already been used to ensure consistency of approach and alignment with our Nation of Sanctuary Principles.</p> <p>In addition to the Policy Handbook, an internal 'principle recommendations from lessons learned' document will be created, highlighting lessons learned and best practices.</p> <p>Future updates to the Policy Handbook will be informed by the 'principal recommendations from lessons learned' document.</p> | August 2024   | Deputy Director, Cohesive Communities Division |

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| <p><b>R2</b></p> | <p>The Welsh Government should review and update relevant guidance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make clear that decisions to not publish Contract Award Notices, and the rationale for that, should be fully recorded at the time; and</li> <li>• promote a consistent approach to publishing, or not publishing, notices where the Welsh Government works with partners to procure goods or services.</li> </ul> | <p>The Welsh Government accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>Decisions whether to publish or not to publish contract award notices must comply with the Procurement Regulations, currently Public Contracts Regulations 2015- Welsh Contracting Authorities must comply with these regulations.</p> <p>Internal Welsh Government procurement procedures will be updated as per the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Immediately update the WG Procurement Tender Checklist to       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. provide guidance in line with the regulations on when it is appropriate to withhold an award notice.</li> <li>ii. include space for Welsh Government to record the rationale for not publishing an award notice, if that decision is taken;</li> <li>iii. include guidance to state where WG are working with other public sector partners to procure, a single, consistent approach should be adopted.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Review the checklist autumn 2024 in light of the Procurement Act coming into force and amend notes/guidance as necessary.</li> </ol> | <p>1 – April 2024</p> <p>2 – November 2024</p> | <p>1 - Welsh Government Corporate Procurement Services</p> <p>2 - Welsh Government Procurement Delivery/Operations</p> |
| <p><b>R3</b></p> | <p>The Welsh Government should work with local authorities to review whether to retrospectively publish Contract Award Notices for Welcome Centres that have closed.</p>  | <p>The Welsh Government accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>Local authorities retain their own procurement guidelines, including their commitments to publish contract award notices. In relation to most Welcome Centres, publishing retrospective notices will ultimately be a decision for Welsh local authorities.</p> <p>The Welsh Government will however undertake the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct an internal review of Contract Award Notices issued or not, and</li> </ol>   | <p>30 June 2024</p>                            | <p>Deputy Director, Cohesive Communities Division</p>  |

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|           |   | <p>2. Remind Local Authorities of their responsibilities to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as per the Grant terms and conditions and</p> <p>3. Ensure that where notices have not been published, that a rationale has been recorded for not publishing an award notice in line with Welsh Government decisions not to publish a notice.</p>  |              |  |
| <b>R4</b> | <p>The Welsh Government should establish whether local authorities are using the refusals policy consistently to support move-on while ensuring equitable treatment of Ukrainians in initial accommodation, regardless of their location.</p> | <p>The Welsh Government accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>The refusals policy has supported more effective move-on from Welcome Centres and initial accommodation and has provided a level of assurance to the Homes for Ukraine programme. Timely move-on supports the integration outcomes of those arriving, supports good value for money and helps to ensure more equity of treatment for different groups in housing need.</p> <p>Use of the refusals policy is discussed in our regular meetings with local authorities to help ensure consistency of its application.</p> <p>The policy has been kept under review since its trial and full introduction, with changes being made based on partner feedback and to reflect good practice. Changes have also been made to the guest Code of Conduct to ensure that guests understand what is expected of them in terms of engagement with move-on and payment of fees associated with continuing to refuse offers of move-on accommodation. A review will be completed on how consistently the refusals policy has been used within local authorities.</p> <p>Our 'Initial Accommodation' is now in the closure phase with the final initial accommodation venues closing early summer,</p> | 30 June 2024 | Deputy Director, Cohesive Communities Division |

but we will ensure learning is taken from implementation and impact of the refusals policy to shape a revised refusals policy under any new strategy for welcoming new Ukrainian arrivals. This will be developed in consultation with local authorities.