

10 February 2025

Dear

Re: ATISN 23300 – Grant Funding Provided to Support the Nation of Sanctuary Plan

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 13 January 2025. You asked for: A breakdown of all grant funding provided over the past 5 years to support the Welsh Government's Nation of Sanctuary plan, specifying the nature of the grant, the individual or organisations in receipt and the sums of money provided.

Our response

A copy of the information I have decided to release is enclosed at Annex 2.

I have decided that some of the information is exempt from disclosure under section 38 of the Freedom of Information Act and is therefore withheld. The reasons for applying these exemptions are set out in full at Annex 1 to this letter.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

Annex 1

Application of exemptions/exceptions

The Freedom of information Act/Environmental Information Regulations provide a right for anyone to ask a public authority to make requested information available to the wider public. As the release of requested information is to the world, not just the requester, public authorities need to consider the effects of making the information freely available to everybody. Any personal interest the requester has for accessing the information cannot override those wider considerations.

I have decided to withhold the following information:

Organisation names for those who expressed Health and Safety concerns under Section 38 of the Freedom of Information Act.

This Annex sets out the reasons for the engagement of section **38** of the **Freedom of Information Act** and our subsequent consideration of the Public Interest Test.

Engagement of section 38 (Health and Safety) of the Freedom of Information Act.

This exemption states:

(1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to—

- (a) endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or
- (b) endanger the safety of any individual.

The Commissioner's Guidance on s38 states (inter alia):

Section 38 provides an exemption from disclosing information if it would endanger any individual (including the applicant, the supplier of the information or anyone else). The exemption does not necessarily deal with what are usually thought of as health and safety matters, such as establishing the cause of an accident.

The Welsh Government believes that the organisation names for those who expressed Health and Safety concerns should be exempt from disclosure due to the targeting and direct abuse of certain organisations linked to the Welsh Government's Nation of Sanctuary policy.

Public interest arguments in favour of disclosure

The Welsh Government acknowledges the general public interest in openness and transparency that release of this information would engender. Further, we recognise there is a public interest in supporting the public to better understand the Nation of Sanctuary policy.

Public interest arguments in favour of withholding

Officials have received evidence detailing how involvement with supporting refugees and asylum seekers in Wales has led to online misinformation, targeting and abuse. This clearly evidences the harms that releasing this information may have on individuals.

Third sector organisations have all been targeted for abuse, both online and via threats, and the disclosure of this information is likely to escalate issues, resulting in the endangerment of both the physical/mental health of funded organisation staff, as well as endangering their safety. The Welsh Government can see no public interest in such an outcome and so believes the public interest favours withholding under the above stated exemption.

Annex 2

Breakdown of Activity covering FY 2019/2020 to FY 2023/24

A full breakdown of expenditure between April 2019 and March 2024 for Nation of Sanctuary-related projects was provided to the Member under WQ93398.

PROJECT	INFORMATION
Refugee Well Housing (Move On)	Support newly recognised refugees to find alternative 'Move On' accommodation and register with banking and other services within 28 days, after the Home Office has granted refugee status.
Hate Crime Funding [CEASED]	Support awareness of hate crime and reporting processes.
Asylum Seeker Transport Pilot [CEASED] (February to April 2022)	a consortium of several organisations on transport.
Refugee Week Awards [Non-recurrent]	An event to promote the contributions of sanctuary seekers and the organisations who support them in Wales.
Global Resettlement Launch event [Non-recurrent; Concluded] Organisation: Various services for event booking.	One-off funding to support awareness and participation of Welsh local authorities in the successor scheme to the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.
ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) Hubs Organisation: Cardiff and Vale College	Provision of common assessment of language proficiency, collation of tuition opportunities, and central allocation point for courses.
Seeking Sanctuary Grant hosting	Support short-term voluntary hosted placements for those requiring access to shelter, stability, and legal advice.
Asylum Internet Project (2021-2024) [CEASED] Organisation: Clearsprings Ready Homes	For three years, starting during the pandemic, the Welsh Government provided free internet access to ensure asylum seekers could access public health messaging, orientate to new communities, and access remote integration services.
Homes for Ukraine hosting support (2022-2024) [CEASED]	Support (including guidance, training and advice) for volunteer Welsh households who hosted Ukrainians.
Immigration law providers infrastructure	Support immigration law organisations in Wales to mitigate acute cost pressures arising from the lack of

Organisations: Newfields Law Cardiff University Asylum Justice	asylum decision making at UK level and loss of legal practitioners.
OISC (the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner) Training	Support the accreditation of officers to enable provision of basic immigration legal advice.
Family Reunion Integration Service	Support to help refugees living in Wales to be reunited families with family members, where the UK Government have approved reunion applications.
Homes for Ukraine Local Authority funding Organisations: Local authorities	Support for Local Authorities to support the integration of Ukrainian guests and the role played by their sponsors, under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.