

Jane Hutt AC/AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MA - P/JH-/2153/19

Bethan Sayed AM
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12th June 2019

Dear Bethan,

At business questions on 6 June you raised the issue of an asylum seeking woman not being able to access the support she needed due to her having no recourse to public funds (NRPF). The Minister for Finance and Trefnydd has asked me to provide you with an update, as this falls within my portfolio.

Everyone, regardless of their status, should be able to receive the support they require and, as you have said, should not have to stay with their abusive partner. First and foremost, they should be treated as a victim and receive an appropriate and timely response.

We are determined in Wales to do all that we can to achieve this. To this end, we provide funding to Bawso whose services play a vital role in ensuring that Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic women and girls are able to access the support they need when they need it, that the needs of all victims are met and that no victims are turned away. This includes funding for women accessing their refuge provision including some with no recourse to public funds. Bawso is also able to offer specialist advice and support via the 24 hour advice and support helpline, 08007 318147. Welsh Government also funds the Live Fear Free helpline which can be accessed on 0808 8010 800. Live Fear Free can offer support, advice and guidance.

Our statutory VAWDASV commissioning guidance sets out the expectation that commissioning should consider the specific needs, issues and barriers that may be experienced by people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, including refugees and asylum seekers. Our National Strategy 2016-2021 also emphasises that efforts should be made to ensure that anyone presenting with experience of domestic abuse is provided with the support they require at the time needed.

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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.

In furthering our commitment to make Wales the safest place for women in Europe, we have commissioned the Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) to undertake a review of accommodation-based service for those fleeing domestic violence in Wales. I have asked my officials to ensure that the WCCP engages with Bawso and includes the experience of asylum seeking women, particularly those with no recourse to public funds.

As part of my regular correspondence with the Home Office, I will be including my concerns raised through this particular case. I want to make sure the commitments they have set out in their draft Domestic Abuse Bill, including raising awareness of the Destitute Domestic Violence concession, are realised.

We have been exploring the boundaries of our response on no recourse to public funds but we are limited by our powers. For example, we are not currently able to make payment of Supporting People monies to those with no recourse to public funds. We are seeking further clarification of the parameters of what is possible and we are looking forward to ratification of the Istanbul Convention by UK Government through the Domestic Abuse Bill which could affect the legal position of Welsh Ministers.

We will continue in our efforts to ensure that every woman receives the support they deserve at the time when needed.

Best wishes,

Jane

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