



# **Support for Displaced People in Wales in Private Accommodation**



PROFIADAU NIWEIDIOL MEWN PLENTYNDOD  
ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

## **This short guide sets out some of the things to think about if you are hosting individuals or families in your home.**

**People forced to flee from their home country may have experienced distressing events. They may have witnessed violence towards others or experienced it themselves. They may have seen their homes and towns destroyed. They may have lost or become separated from friends and family. They may have had to leave others and their belongings, including pets behind. Children may not have been in education for many weeks.**

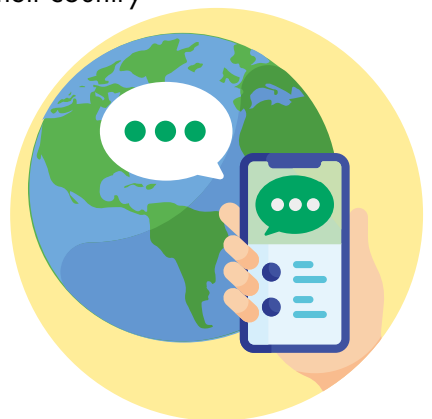
The experience of conflict is an individual experience. Many people experience the emotions of fear, loss, despair, bereavement, stress and shock but the way in which they respond can be very different. There could be concern for others (children, family members, friends and community) as much as concern for themselves. Often people seek to actively support their community and bring strong positive messages of hope and a desire to give back for the help they have received, or to support friends and family financially. These are people who can often help others from their country through peer support and positive outlook.

For more information, the Royal College of Psychiatrists have produced a leaflet on coping after a traumatic event, which contains information for anyone who has experienced a traumatic event, or who knows someone who has:

 **Coping after a traumatic event |**  
**Royal College of Psychiatrists ([rcpsych.ac.uk](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk))**

Adversity and trauma could have been experienced in the home country that people are fleeing from, but also in the countries they fled to, or on their migration journey. People may have become separated from their families, and for children and young people this can sometimes lead to having to travel alone, and taking on more adult roles in finding their way to safety such as engaging with authorities. Food and basic necessities may have been scarce and a daily struggle to feed families may have led to sacrifices in health and nutrition. People may have been subjected to violence, threats or intimidation during their journey, including from authorities in the countries they travel through or from those seeking to exploit and make money from their plight such as traffickers and smugglers. There is also an increased risk of sexual and gender based violence, both in conflict and on the journey to Wales.

When people arrive in Wales, they also may feel frightened, disorientated and struggle to cope with their new surroundings as well as trying to make sense of what they have experienced. There will be things that are difficult such as not knowing English or Welsh, different systems for healthcare and education and for many a concern that they will need to find employment. Often cultural differences can make people feel isolated, so things like being able to cook your own food, access familiar, affordable foodstuffs, and the chance to connect with others from their country may be important. In the forefront of many people's minds will be what is happening to friends and family they have left behind or who have not come to Wales. Maintaining communications where possible with them will be vital, and this is usually facilitated by phone and internet. It will be particularly distressing not to be able to make contact and feel assured about their safety.



## As a sponsor of a displaced family or individual, you are not expected to be a professional in trauma or mental health.

There is support available to you and the people you are hosting if you think this help may be needed. People may display signs of adversity and distress in different ways; all of which are normal and as a result of them for example, they may be withdrawn, disengaged or finding it difficult to make friends, or they may be anxious, fearful, angry or upset. Some will want to talk about what's happened to them; others may not at this stage. Taking a trauma informed approach simply means you understand that anyone may have experienced trauma in their lives. There are things we can all do to help create the most welcoming environment in which people can try to heal from their experiences.

When you are supporting an individual or family briefly, or over a longer period of time, it is important to **build trust** as soon as possible. One of the easiest ways in which people can feel supported is if they feel that they are listened to. They may wish to share what's happened to them, or they may just want to try and move forward with their lives, find work, and get involved in the community. Understanding what they need, and listening to what they tell you is best for them is an important foundation to the relationship you will build with them. Most people prioritise their **safety** and that of their families. Access to basic necessities is vital to support this; food, shelter, hygiene, clothing and healthcare. By hosting them in your home you are already facilitating that.




Sponsors could have a conversation about what would make people feel safer; maybe things like physical safety and security within the house, somewhere they can lock away personal possessions. Discuss the

boundaries to the use of space in the home allowing for connection and friendships but also privacy when needed, and ensuring children in the household are safeguarded. There may be some concerns about personal safety. Discuss together how people feel about being in your home, do they feel safe, what might make them feel less anxious? They may have concerns about being in public spaces outside or for children on the journey for school for example. Reassurance and advice will be important as well as connecting them to people who can help such as support within the local community.

**Connection** to the community, inclusion and access to peer support from others are also things that can help someone trying to overcome adversity and trauma. Conversations around interests, hobbies and **collaboration** is key. Providing information that allows them to make **choices** about things they could be become involved with or opportunities to progress their interests will support independence and confidence. Perhaps there are some shared interests you have you may be able to help develop or introductions that can be made to local organisations and groups. Do they have a faith that could be supported by a local church or other religious and community institution?

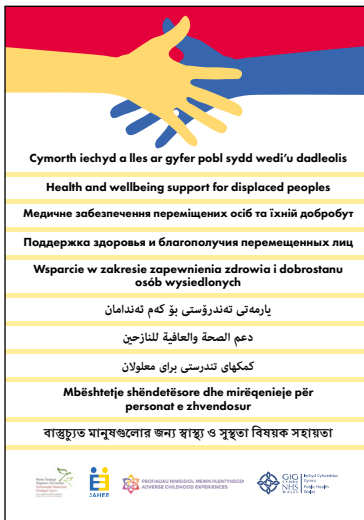


People newly arrived in the UK will have very little knowledge of the local area; hosts can **empower** newly arrived people to find out more about on offer by helping them navigate the town or city in which you live and providing practical tools such as public transport options, local guides, job centres, libraries and places of interest. This will improve confidence in exploring and the opportunity to make connection in the local area, which will then support their language development, possible employment and sense of belonging in the wider community.

The  **DEWIS website** contains helpful information about community organisations locally that can support health and wellbeing.

Some people in the local area may have questions and concerns about new families or individuals joining them; your local authority will be able to provide support if necessary to reassure people and answer any questions about support for displaced people in the area.

There are services that everyone needs to access from time to time, but may be more difficult to locate and navigate if you are newly arrived. Registering with a GP, dentist, health services, education and welfare support are key, but this also may be daunting. There are also other services that may be important to know about; for example services for domestic abuse, mental health and how to report and get support if you are a victim of crime, including racism and hate crime.



The leaflet **Health and Wellbeing Support for Displaced Peoples** provides information about national services available in a range of languages to ensure that everyone knows where in Wales support is available. Sometimes people feel ashamed or unable to reach out, but there are services available to all and having this information in case it is ever needed is important. Help should be sought immediately if you have concerns about anyone in the household or yourself.

Remember that you also may experience a range of emotions hearing about what has happened to people, or the impact it has had on them. You may also need additional support in developing your relationships, living together and adapting to living with more people in your home. Self-care and identifying where you or your family get your own support is important too as well as where you might go if additional assistance is needed.

**Above all, it is important to remember that showing kindness, compassion and enabling connection are the things that can all do to support everyone in our families and communities every day.**

If you are concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of the person or family staying with you, the **C.A.L.L. (Community Advice & Listening Line) Mental Health Helpline** offers a confidential listening and support service. CALL offers emotional support and information/literature on mental health and related matters to the people of Wales.

C.A.L.L is available 24 hours a day to listen and provide support.

Call 📞 **0800 132737** or text 'Help' to **81066**.

📶 [www.callhelpline.org.uk](http://www.callhelpline.org.uk)