

How NHS organisations in Wales are supporting the Ukraine effort

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Introduction

This briefing provides examples of initiatives being undertaken by NHS organisations as part of the Team Wales effort to support individuals fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. These efforts range from fundraising activities among staff, to donations of medical supplies being sent to Ukraine. Health and care services have also been put in place for Ukrainians arriving in the UK through strong partnership working, such as mental health and wellbeing support and public health screening.

The horrific attack by Russia on Ukraine has sent shockwaves across the world and caused displacement of thousands of Ukrainian people from their homes. The NHS in Wales will continue to stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and our thoughts are with everyone who is affected by what is happening.

The NHS in Wales has been part of a 'Team Wales' effort to support individuals fleeing the conflict in Ukraine and organisations playing their part in providing resources and care to those in need. NHS organisations have been working with a range of partners to support those who have already arrived in Wales and have also provided aid through donations sent directly to Ukraine.

The latest figures as at 23 August 2022 show that 5,226 people with sponsors in Wales have arrived in the UK, with 8,014 visas issued.

The Welsh Government paused its super-sponsor scheme on 10 June 2022 to give more time to provide support to those already arrived in Wales, allowing them to receive good quality accommodation and support so they can integrate with local communities. It noted the initial expectation for the super-sponsor route was 1,000 visas and more than 4,000 have already been issued.

The Welsh Government explained the pause in the scheme will allow people who have arrived in Wales to receive good quality accommodation and support so that they can integrate with local communities. The NHS is committed to continuing to do all it can ensure they are supported as they transition into their life in Wales.

We want to thank all those who have opened up their homes and provided aid and reiterate that NHS Wales is proud of the Team Wales effort.

Fundraising and donations

NHS organisations in Wales have been donating essential resources to support those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. The NHS in Wales has contributed to the donation of supplies of medical equipment and medicines via a coordinated four nations approach, and in response to specific requests.

Beds are among the items donated, with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (CVUHB) donating more than 200 hospital beds. Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) has also sent a consignment of unused field hospital beds to a refugee camp in Moldova, whilst also ensuring that beds were given to support those arriving in the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot areas. It also launched an appeal to health board staff to donate spare new pillows and single duvets, and freshly laundered or new single bed linen in good condition.

Medical supplies have been made available, with the first shipment of medical supplies, including ventilators, bandages and face masks, despatched to Ukraine in March via NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership's IP5 regional distribution centre. CVUHB also donated supplies as part of the Welsh Aid to Ukraine appeal, with the kit delivered in a donated ambulance from the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST). The vehicle was provided through the Ambulances for Ukraine appeal, which was coordinated by Dr Mateo Smidzt, a Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB) emergency medicine consultant who works in Prince Charles Hospital.

WAST also announced it would be donating expired consumable medical items to assist the humanitarian aid effort. Items sent to Ukraine include single use resuscitators, trauma dressings, cannulas, syringes, airways and other vital items.

Fundraising has also taken place across services and staff, with examples including £190 raised by the Teddy Bear nursery at University Hospital of Wales in CVUHB. Staff from the cardiac intensive therapy unit and cardiac theatres at Morriston Hospital in SBUHB also undertook a 1,500 mile challenge for the Disaster Emergency Committee for Ukraine.

NHS services and information

The NHS in Wales is providing a key role in supporting individuals who have come to Wales from Ukraine. Individuals from Ukraine may have a range of complex needs, requiring support from a range of public services including health, social care, education and housing as well as community, spiritual and cultural resources.

All health boards are making an enormous contribution through the additional support they are putting into Welcome Centres (for those arriving via the Super Sponsor route) and through the provision of initial screening and assessments for new arrivals. Guidance is in place on what initial assessments need to cover.

People from Ukraine have the same entitlements to NHS care as UK residents. Primary Care services, whether that be general practitioners, dentists, community pharmacists, optometrists etc. are all playing a role in supporting people from Ukraine as they integrate into life in Wales. The situation in Ukraine has had a significant consequence on population wellbeing and mental health. Health boards are ensuring that individuals' mental health and wellbeing is being assessed and are responding to the additional demand.

NHS organisations are aware that language could potentially be a barrier to accessing the right services and have therefore translated a range of material and sourced professional interpreters to support access to healthcare services.

Information has been created specifically for those coming to Wales from Ukraine, including COVID-19 vaccination leaflets published by Public Health Wales NHS Trust. These have been produced in Ukrainian and Russian and were communicated via social media.

CVUHB has also been signposting resources from its website to assist individuals fleeing the conflict in Ukraine with accessing healthcare and mental health support. CTMUHB has developed an online portal which aims to pull together all the information that Ukrainian people may need, such as relevant services and support.

Health boards have a key role to play in the pan-Wales approach to health screening for those arriving from Ukraine. For example, CVUHB are also planning to undertake public health screenings for all Ukrainian arrivals

into the Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan area. These individuals have arrived in Cardiff and the Vale through a variety of routes, including the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, Welsh Government Super Sponsorship Route and the Family Visa Route. The health board has worked in partnership with GP practices, councils and third sector organisations to facilitate the delivery of the screening programme and provide general medical services.

Further information

How you can help

Information on how you can help support the people of Ukraine can be found on the Welsh Government website.

Register a business or organisation

If you are able to offer help to Ukrainian refugees as a business or an organisation, you can register to provide help within your local area, regionally or across the whole of Wales. Further information can be found on the Welsh Government website.
