

Welsh Refugee Council Scoops Top Welsh Charity Award

Full List of Welsh Winners Announced

Wednesday 11 October 2023: Under strict embargo until 10.30pm

The [Welsh Refugee Council \(WRC\)](#) has been named 'Organisation of the Year' at this year's [Welsh Charity Awards](#) in Cardiff's Parkgate Hotel, scooping the top award. The leading charity has been recognised for its outstanding contribution in supporting asylum seekers and refugees across Wales.

Announced late on 11 October, WRC fought off stiff competition from finalists [Calan DVS](#), [Cycling4all](#), [FareShare Cymru](#), and [Llamau](#) to win the coveted prize. It has been commended for a programme of work, over the past year, that has successfully homed over 200 refugees who would otherwise have been homeless and for initiating a unique pan-Wales project benefiting over 1,700 Ukrainians.

Andrea Cleaver, Chief Executive Officer, of the Welsh Refugee Council said: 'I am delighted to accept this award on behalf of the Welsh Refugee Council's volunteers and staff helping sanctuary-seekers rebuild their lives in Wales. Despite the hostility shown by the UK Government, I am deeply moved by the daily acts of kindness shown by our staff and volunteers. I am so proud that Wales is a Nation of Sanctuary.'

Speaking at this year's ceremony, at Cardiff's Parkgate Hotel, WCVA's Matt Brown said: 'Like the Urdd, who won last year's Organisation of the Year, the Welsh Refugee Council exemplifies all that is good about the sector. In addition to creating direct services for asylum seekers and refugees, it has given a voice to those that are most marginalised in our society and has been an embodiment of Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary.'

'The Welsh Refugee Council, like all of our other seven winners, have achieved so much over the past year and is well respected and admired by others in the

sector for changing lives for the better. We're thrilled, at WCVA, to be able to honour these eight worthy winners.'

Organised by WCVA (Wales Council for Voluntary Action), it is the only dedicated awards ceremony to celebrate the entire voluntary sector in Wales, recognising and celebrating the fantastic contribution charities, community groups, not-for-profits and volunteers make to Wales by highlighting and championing the positive difference we can make to each other's lives.

The Welsh Charity Awards celebrate just some of the amazing stories of the difference that charities and volunteers from across Wales are making. For the full list of finalists, please visit [the Welsh Charity Awards website](#).

FULL LIST OF WINNERS

Volunteer of the Year (volunteers aged 26 or over)

Sponsored by The Open University in Wales

Nicola Harteveld

Nicola founded Megan's Starr Foundation after her daughter, Megan, committed suicide. She now volunteers 40 hours a week to raise awareness of bullying and to promote good mental health among disadvantaged young people in Pembrokeshire, organising 300+ hours of training to date.

Young Volunteer of the Year (volunteers aged 25 and under)

Sponsored by Utility Aid

Sara Madi

Sara, a 21-year-old asylum seeker, has become a vital volunteer at the African Community Centre as leader of the Women Breaking Borders young women's group, Arabic interpreter, and kick-starting counselling training with Trinity Saint David University for BME young people.

Income generator of the year

Sponsored by Tantrwm

Tŷ Hafan

The cost-of-living crisis led to a 50% drop in donations for Tŷ Hafan, which kick-started a 60-hour public fundraiser using the 'Appeal Champion model', sharing end-of-life care stories like Rose's that helped raise £344,649 (the most ever for the charity).

Champion of diversity award

Sponsored by Hugh James

Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales

Pioneering WEN Wales collaborates extensively to champion gender equality and its recent successes include securing gender quotas in Senedd reform and obtaining funding for domestic abuse survivors who have no access to public funds.

Best use of Welsh language award

Sponsored by Nico

Alzheimer's Society Cymru Dementia Support Telephone Service

Alzheimer's Society Cymru has bolstered its Welsh Language services by supporting 281 Welsh speaking service users through its telephone service in 2022/23, funding Welsh speaking Dementia Advisers to travel to areas without fluent staff and refining its translated materials.

Trailblazer award

Sponsored by salesforce.org

Community Volunteers Wales

The Pantri, initiated by Community Volunteers Wales in February 2023, is an innovative community food pantry that diverts 400kgs of food from landfill by empowering its members to make sustainable and affordable choices through a £2 food basket subscription.

Health and wellbeing award

Sponsored by Improvement Cymru

Wye Gymnastics & Galaxy Cheerleading

Wye Gymnastics & Galaxy Cheerleading uses sport to create positive change, offering inclusive gymnastics and cheerleading opportunities in Monmouthshire and Newport, as well as other diverse initiatives, to successfully transform the health and wellbeing of participants.

Organisation of the year

Sponsored by The SCG Group

Welsh Refugee Council

The Welsh Refugee Council has tirelessly supported and advocated on behalf of asylum seekers and refugees, starting a Ukrainian project benefiting over 1,700 Ukrainians, finding homes for over 200 refugees at risk of homelessness, and many more vital services and initiatives.

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For more information, please contact

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1. The Winners' reception takes place at The Parkgate Hotel in Cardiff on Wednesday 11 October from 6.30pm, with the ceremony announcing the winners on social media.
2. Television presenter Sian Lloyd will host the ceremony, which showcases powerful stories from the voluntary sector, and the remarkable impact so many individuals, groups and organisations have made across Wales.
3. Attending the awards will be:
 - Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip
 - Helen Stephenson, Charity Commission for England & Wales CEO
 - Dr Neil Wooding CBE, WCVA Chair
 - Ruth Marks, WCVA Chief Executive
 - Tom Jones, WCVA Vice President
4. An official photographer will attend the reception and photographs circulated on 12 October 2023.
5. If you no longer wish to receive emails from our press list, please reply using the word STOP to carys@carysmair.com