



Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00826/23

Julie James MS  
Member of the Senedd for Swansea West

julie.james@senedd.wales

03 July 2023

Dear Julie,

Thank you for your email of 18 April, on behalf of your constituent, Ms Pearl, regarding free public transport for asylum seekers. I apologise for the long delay in providing a response.

Please can you reassure your constituent that we are considering a number of options for a long term, sustainable solution for travel options for both refugees and asylum seekers.

Wales is a Nation of Sanctuary and we will do all we can to provide a warm welcome to all those seeking sanctuary here. We seek to ensure all sanctuary seekers have access to the advice services, information about rights, responsibilities and entitlements, and integration services they need to fully contribute to Welsh community life; and as part of this we have been providing free transport to refugees in Wales through the Welcome Ticket scheme since March 2022.

The current Welcome Ticket, funded through the Bus Emergency scheme, provides free travel on rail and bus for all refugees living in Wales, as well as Ukrainian visa holders, evacuated Afghans and Hong Kong British National Overseas visa holders living in Wales, has been extended to 24 July 2023. We are working closely with partners, including sanctuary seekers, public authorities and the third sector to learn from the experiences of Welcome Ticket and are currently exploring long term options for this scheme to make travel easier and more accessible for both refugees **and** asylum seekers.

I published a statement on 16 June together with industry partners and local authorities setting out further information on our financial support to the bus industry for this financial year. As a direct result of this funding we will be able to avoid mass cancellation of services across Wales. It will provide immediate financial support to bus operators in Wales so that those vital services can continue.

We have also been discussing with Transport for Wales, industry partners and trade unions on how we can best shape a campaign to get people back onto buses. To start that work, we have been looking at market insights to try and determine where any campaign can have the greatest impact and encourage as many people as possible to use the bus.

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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.

This preparatory work will put us in a good position so that once we have finalised a way to put services onto a more stable footing, we can then turn in earnest to a joint effort to promote those services.

I hope that this reassures Ms Pearl that we are actively considering this issue and along with the Minister for Social Justice we look forward to providing an update to the Senedd as soon as we can.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is centered on a light gray rectangular background.

**Lee Waters AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Deputy Minister for Climate Change