



Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

**COLLEGE OF FURTHER
EDUCATION & TRAINING**

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ESOL and Migrant Learner Action Plan 2024 - 2026





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Glossary of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition	Description
AISS	Active Inclusion Support Service	Promotes the engagement of underrepresented groups of learners with FET and ensures supports are in place as early as possible in the learning journey.
CERFL	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages	The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard for describing language ability. It describes language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language.
CELTA	Certificate in English Language Teaching	Initial teacher training qualification for teaching English as a foreign or second language. Provided by Cambridge English Language Assessment
CLIL	Content and Language integrated learning	Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an umbrella term describing both learning another (content) subject such as healthcare or engineering through the medium of a foreign language and learning a foreign language by studying a content-based subject.
DELTA	Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages	DELTA is an English language teaching (ELT) qualification for experienced Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science	It funds and creates policy for the higher and further education and research sectors and oversees the work of the state agencies and public institutions operating in these areas
EFL	English as a Foreign Language	Learning English in a non-English Speaking country
ESL	English as a Second Language	Learning English in a country where English is the official or dominant language.
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages	Learning English as a second or additional language to achieve functional competence in personal, social and work-related settings.
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland	Representative body for the 16 Education and Training Boards
EU	European Union	Union of countries working together to promote peace and develop a unified European economy and monetary union, while breaking down barriers and combatting discrimination
EQF	European Qualifications Framework	The EQF is a common European reference framework that links countries' qualifications systems together, acting as a translation device to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe. It has two principal aims: to promote citizens' mobility between countries and to facilitate their lifelong learning.
FCE	First Certificate in English	General English qualification at B2 level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages awarded by Cambridge University.
FET	Further Education and Training	Post-compulsory education and training programmes provided up to Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation	The EU's primary law regulating how private citizens' data is controlled and processed by companies and organisations – came into force on 25th May 2018.
IAT	Initial Assessment Tool	A tool used to assess a learner's suitability for a particular course at point of entry.

Glossary of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition	Description
IHREC	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is Ireland's national human rights and equality institution. An independent public body that accounts to the Oireachtas, the IHREC's mandate was established under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 (IHREC Act 2014).
ILO	Intended Learning Outcomes	Statement outlining what a learner will achieve upon successful completion of a particular unit or topic of study
IRGS	Information Recruitment and Guidance Service	Information, Recruitment and Guidance Service which provides learners and potential learners with the support, information and guidance to enable them to make decisions regarding education, training and career choices
MIPLOs	Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes	Minimum knowledge, skills and competency a learner must obtain and demonstrate in order to successfully achieve a QQI accredited award.
NARIC Ireland	National Academic Recognition Information Centre Ireland	NARIC Ireland provides advice on the academic recognition of a foreign qualification by comparing it, where possible, to a major award at a certain level on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications	10 level system used for the development, recognition and awarding of qualifications in Ireland.
PL&D	Professional Learning and Development	An ongoing process of professional skills development, upskilling and reskilling
PLSS	Programme and Learner Support System	Management information System designed to provide an integrated approach to the collection of key data on Further Education and Training programme outputs, outcomes and performance across the 16 Education and Training Boards.
PSD	Public Sector Duty	The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty ('the Duty') places a statutory obligation on public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of those to whom they provide services and staff when carrying out their daily work.
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland	Independent state agency promoting, maintaining and developing the Irish National Framework of Qualifications.
RRP	Refugee Resettlement Programme	Programme providing up to 20 hours of tuition per week to newly arrived Programme Refugees over 52 weeks
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna/Further Education and Skills Service	SOLAS manages, co-ordinates and supports the delivery of Further Education and Training programmes and services by Education and Training Boards.
TESOL COP	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Community of Practice	TESOL Communities of Practice (COP) is the ETB's professional learning community, where TESOL members develop and share their expertise on English language teaching and learning
UDL	Universal Design for Learning	Universal design for learning (UDL) is a teaching approach that works to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners and eliminates unnecessary hurdles in the learning process. This means developing a flexible learning environment in which information is presented in multiple ways, students engage in learning in a variety of ways, and are provided options when demonstrating their learning.

Introduction

We are pleased to present the updated College of FET ESOL and Migrant Learner Action Plan for 2024–2026. Building on the successes and lessons learned from our initial framework, this updated plan reaffirms our commitment to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and supportive educational environment for all learners, particularly those from migrant and ESOL backgrounds.

Over the past few years, the College of FET has made significant strides in enhancing the educational experiences and outcomes for ESOL and migrant learners. The achievements and progress made under the first framework, detailed in Appendix 1, have laid a solid foundation for the initiatives outlined in this updated plan. We have seen improvements in areas such as curriculum development, learner support services, and community engagement, which have collectively contributed to better integration and success rates for our learners.

However, we recognise that challenges remain, and new opportunities have emerged. The landscape of migration and integration in Ireland continues to evolve, and it is imperative that our strategies and actions evolve accordingly. Appendix 2 provides a comprehensive Public Sector Duty Assessment, highlighting the specific challenges faced by migrants in Ireland. These insights have informed the development of our new action plan, ensuring that it is responsive to the current needs and barriers experienced by our learners.

The 2024–2026 Action Plan focuses on five key priority areas:

- **Fostering an Inclusive and Safe Learning Environment**
- **Enhancing Access to Education and Training**
- **Supporting Employment Integration**
- **Community Engagement**
- **Tracking Progress and Outcomes.**

Each priority area includes targeted actions designed to address the unique needs of ESOL and migrant learners, ensuring that they have the resources, support, and opportunities necessary to thrive.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with our inter-agency Steering Group educational institutions, community organisations, and government agencies to implement this action plan effectively. By leveraging our collective expertise and resources, we aim to create a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape in Limerick and Clare, which empowers all learners to achieve their full potential.

Priority 1

Foster an Inclusive and Safe Learning Environment

Promote Anti-Discrimination Policies

- **Develop a new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy:** This policy will include an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion assessment template. The template must be completed before introducing any new or updated policies or procedures to ensure they do not disadvantage any groups across the nine grounds of discrimination or socio-economic backgrounds in accessing our services.
- **Zero-tolerance policy:** Implement and enforce strict anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.
- **Anonymous reporting mechanisms:** Establish secure and anonymous channels for reporting discrimination and harassment.

Professional Learning and Development

- Deliver significant **Professional Learning and Development (PL&D)** in key areas: training will be provided in anti-racism, equality, inclusion, public sector duty, and anti-bias, ensuring that staff are equipped to support a diverse learner population effectively.
- **Learner workshops:** Organise workshops and seminars for learners to raise awareness about discrimination, promote understanding, and build a supportive community.

Diversity and Inclusion Training

- **Staff training:** Provide comprehensive diversity and inclusion training for all staff, focusing on cultural competency, unconscious bias, and inclusive teaching practices.
- **Anti-racism and discrimination training:** Provide training for staff and learners to foster an inclusive and respectful learning environment.
- **Childcare facilities:** Establish links to affordable and accessible childcare options to enable parents to attend classes.
- **Transport assistance:** Provide information on available transport options and offer subsidies if possible to ensure that lack of transport does not hinder access to education.

Information Resource

- Create a dedicated **Information section** on StaffCONNECT: this section will house comprehensive information and guidance resources tailored to the needs of our ESOL and migrant learners. It will serve as a centralised repository for staff to access relevant materials and support.

Community Integration and Anti-Racism Initiatives

- **Collaborate with Community Integration Teams:** The College of FET will work with these teams to access national funding available to support community-based anti-racism initiatives, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment.



Priority 2

Enhance Access to Education and Training

Initial Assessment

- Develop the **portability of initial assessments** within the College of FET: this will enable learners to use language assessment documentation from one provision type as proof of English language level to gain access to Further Education and Training within the College of FET.
- **Further enhance the initial assessment process:** Provide training and support to staff from all provisions to implement the initial assessment process effectively, ensuring consistency and accuracy in assessing learners' needs.

Curriculum Diversification

- **Inclusive curriculum:** Ensure the curriculum includes diverse perspectives, especially focusing on the histories and contributions of African, Asian, Roma, and other minority groups.
- **Cultural studies programmes:** Develop courses or modules specifically addressing the histories, cultures, and contributions of minority ethnic groups.
- Further develop and deliver the **Working Life in Ireland** course. This course will be offered regularly to new communities, providing essential information and skills to help them integrate and succeed in Ireland.
- **Representation of minority voices:** Include materials and perspectives from minority ethnic groups, LGBT+ people, people with disabilities, and other marginalised groups to foster a more inclusive learning environment.

Progression Pathways

- **Articulated progression pathways** from ESOL provision to mainstream FET: clear and defined pathways will be created to guide ESOL learners into mainstream Further Education and Training (FET) programmes, ensuring seamless transitions and continued educational advancement.

Targeted Learner Supports

- **Learning Support:** Provide tutoring and academic support tailored to the needs of minority ethnic learners.
- **Mental health and trauma support:** Offer counselling services to address personal trauma and mental health issues.
- **Peer support groups:** Create peer support groups for minority learners to share experiences and provide mutual support.

Recognise and Validate Existing Qualifications

- **Enhance RPL for ESOL and migrant learners:** Information on the Recognition of Prior Learning will be improved, including details on the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees. This will help validate and recognise the prior learning and qualifications of ESOL and migrant learners.
- **Awareness campaigns:** Promote the availability and benefits of RPL among migrant communities to encourage participation and validation of their skills.
- **Offer Bridging courses:** Provide courses that help bridge any gaps between international qualifications and local standards.



Priority 3

Support for Employment Integration

Provide Career Guidance and Employment Support

- **Career counselling services:** Offer tailored career guidance to help individuals understand the local job market, prepare CVs, and practise interview skills.
- **Job placement programmes:** Develop partnerships with local businesses to create internship and apprenticeship opportunities for migrants and refugees.

Address Specific Barriers to Employment

- **Language proficiency programmes:** Ensure that language courses are designed to meet the specific needs of the labour market.
- **Soft skills training:** Include training on workplace culture, communication, and other soft skills necessary for successful employment.
- **Workplace training:** Collaborate with employers to provide training on diversity and anti-discrimination practices.
- **Support networks:** Establish support networks for minority learners transitioning into the workforce to share experiences and resources.

Migrant Jobs Fairs

- Develop an annual schedule of migrant jobs fairs: in cooperation with the Enterprise Engagement Support Service and the Information, Recruitment, and Guidance Support Service, these fairs will provide valuable opportunities for migrant learners to connect with potential employers.

Entrepreneurship Support

- Establish links with Local Enterprise Offices: support migrant learners interested in entrepreneurship and micro-business establishment by connecting them with resources and guidance from Local Enterprise Offices and promote the new National Enterprise Hub.

Priority 4

Community Engagement and Outreach

Migrant Education Steering Group

- **Coordination and Collaboration:** Facilitate partnerships among educational institutions, government bodies, and community organisations to streamline and enhance ESOL and support services for migrant learners, including sharing resources, best practices, and data.
- **Policy and Programme Development:** Develop and advocate for policies and programmes to address the needs of ESOL and migrant learners by identifying educational barriers and creating initiatives to improve access, inclusion, and educational outcomes.
- Under the Collaboration Funding and the existing ESOL and Migrant Steering group, a **Comprehensive Information Resource** will be created to support ESOL and migrant learners with relevant and up-to-date information.
- Counter Far-Right and Anti-Immigrant Sentiment through **awareness and education**. Educate the College of FET community about the dangers of far-right ideologies and promote critical thinking.
- **Public awareness campaigns:** Launch campaigns to raise awareness about the contributions and challenges of minority communities.

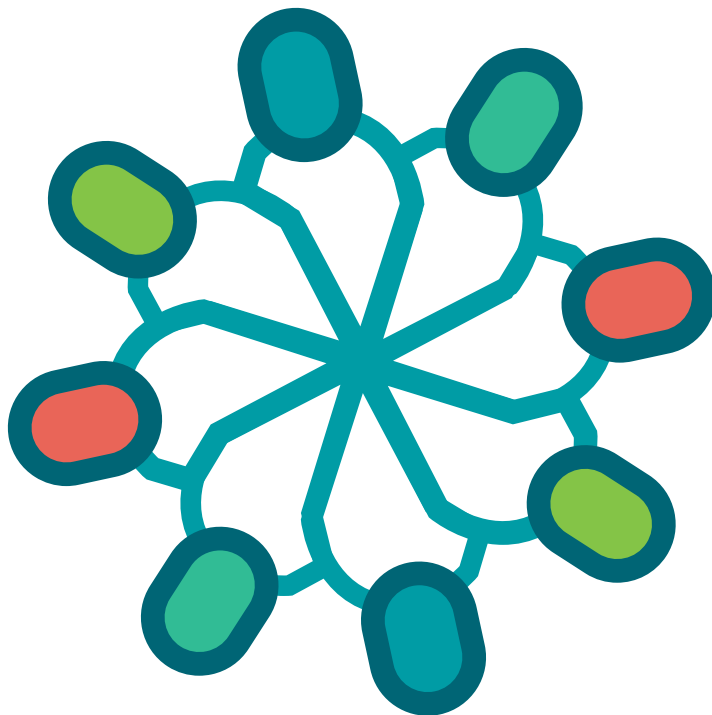
Strengthen Community Linkages

- **Community partnerships:** Collaborate with local community organisations to provide support and resources to learners and their families.
- **Outreach programmes:** Develop outreach programmes to engage with minority communities, inform them about educational opportunities, and encourage participation.
- **Support Families in Direct Provision:** Provide necessary educational resources and materials and advocate for improved living conditions and support services for families in direct provision.

Priority 5

Track Progress and Outcomes

- **Regular assessments:** Conduct regular assessments to monitor the progress of learners from migrant and refugee backgrounds.
- **Feedback mechanisms:** Establish channels for learners to provide feedback on the effectiveness of programmes and support services.



Provision Planning

- **Collaborated with the inter-agency ESOL and Migrant Learner Education Steering group**, meeting six times over the past two years and completing a range of actions. Examples included:
 - Collaborative work with Mary Immaculate College which established a six-week English language programme specifically for academic purposes.
 - Summer and Easter camps which were set up for migrant children living in disadvantaged areas of Limerick City.
 - Worked with UL on the Level 9 Language Coaching Microcredential.
 - Developed and delivered Working Life in Ireland programmes in partnership with SICAP and a local development company.
- **Migrant tailored employability support programmes** were designed and delivered in collaboration with two local agencies, PAUL Partnership and Doras.
- **Site group visits** were arranged for prospective learners to visit our traineeship programmes at the College of FET, Raheen Campus, resulting in a higher number of migrants enrolling in traineeship courses compared to previous years. Travel was organised for international protection applicants to attend apprenticeship showcases.
- **Partnered with Cavan and Monaghan ETB** to validate new curricula at QQI ESOL Levels 1 and 2.
- **Managed the ESOL Community of Practice MS Team** to facilitate the sharing of ESOL best practices and enhance pedagogical approaches, instruction methods, and curriculum design.
- **Implemented Access, Transfer, and Progression policy and procedures** across Limerick and Clare.
- **Facilitated weekly meetings** with ESOL and Guidance Coordinators as part of our Ukraine Response.
- **Proactively managed waiting lists**, ensuring a maximum six-week wait for access to ESOL classes.

Access and Initial Assessment

- **Provided ongoing access to one-on-one educational career guidance** for migrants living in direct provision and those living independently in the greater Limerick and Clare communities.
- **Established migrant-specific drop-in clinics** in Clare, Limerick City, and County Limerick. These clinics, running on an inter-agency basis every Friday from 10am to 2pm at the Clayton Hotel Limerick, provided high-quality information on education, general rights and entitlements, social welfare benefits, and legal information.
- **Piloted and rolled out Ellii.com** as a resource for ESOL tutors and collaborated with Ellii.com to create an Irish version of their placement test for online initial assessments.
- **Implemented standardised procedures for initial assessment** across Limerick and Clare, offering English language assessments and classes with minimal waiting times.
- **Created standardised induction materials** for ESOL learners and tutors.
- **Developed standardised descriptions** for non-accredited ESOL courses.

Assessment and Accreditation

- **Collaborative work with Mary Immaculate College** resulted in a six-week English language programme for academic purposes, extending to special certificate awards at both level 6 and level 9.
- **Recommended offering Safepass, MH training, and First Aid** as a package.
- **Partnered with Cavan and Monaghan ETB** to evaluate and validate new curricula at QQI ESOL Levels 1 and 2.
- **Organised PL&D sessions** focused on intensive provision and increased certification for ESOL classes to promote better outcomes and value for money.
- **Delivered PL&D workshops** for QQI ESOL levels 1 through 5.
- **Improved alignment with QQI and CEFR levels.**
- **Organised additional ESOL support classes** for Cambridge Exams Preparation.

Curriculum and Materials Development

- **Prepared information and resources** for staff and external agencies, such as a Ukrainian booklet and migrant eligibility criteria for staff and learners.
- **Developed and delivered themed ESOL materials** to support sectors including ESOL hospitality and Green Skills.
- **Worked with Kiel RBZ Wirtschaft and Murcia further education colleges** to review ESOL work by Limerick and Clare ETB.
- **Participated in an Erasmus trip to VHS Vienna** to review language provision.
- **Delivered Fundamentals of Blended & Online Learning Design Badge Workshops** for ESOL practitioners.
- **Delivered Show and TEL sessions** on the use of Ellii.com in the classroom.

Staff Development

- **Prepared information for staff and external agencies**, e.g. Ukrainian booklet and migrant eligibility criteria.
- **Conducted PL&D sessions on language-sensitive teaching** in collaboration with University of Limerick (UL).
- **Delivered PL&D workshops** for QQI ESOL levels 1 through 5.
- **Facilitated the inclusion of ESOL learner voices** at a PL&D event.
- **Organised an ESOL literacy PL&D event** for ESOL tutors.
- **Participated in Trauma-Informed Practice training**
- **Attended the IATEL Conference** to review best practices in ESOL provision.
- **Provided support for TEL (Technology Enhanced Learning) Champions.**

APPENDIX 2

Public Sector Duty Assessment: Race (nationality, skin colour, ethnic identity) and Religion¹

Limerick and Clare ETB has used the following data sources to inform this assessment:

- Research conducted by a range of bodies, including the Central Statistics Office, and the Economic and Social Research Institute; and research and reports from national and local organisations advocating on behalf of the identified groups for the Duty.
- National policy strategies for specific identified groups.
- SOLAS data in regard to FET provision for a number of the identified groups.
- Submissions by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission to the international UN human rights monitoring framework, and
- Data and information collected by Limerick and Clare ETB.

The evidence base, with the assessment, serves as a resource for the implementation of the Duty in Limerick and Clare ETB by providing more detailed information and data to inform the development and review of our strategies, plans, policies and procedures, services, programmes and initiatives.

This evidence base has been updated in 2024 by Limerick and Clare ETB to ensure that the most up-to-date data and information is informing our ongoing work to address equality and human rights concerns across our function areas.

The evidence base is set out according to the identified groups for the Duty, and using the framework of situation, experience, identity.

Situation: Race (nationality, skin colour, ethnic identity) and Religion

- Migrants, refugees, and those seeking international protection face particular barriers to accessing education or training, including: uncertainty or short-term nature of their visa or residential status; lack of recognition of their existing qualifications; and the limited availability of English language classes.²
- Census 2022 data indicate the following: the highest unemployment rate was recorded for Ukrainian citizens (36%), followed by citizens of African countries at 15% and citizens of other Asian countries (excluding India and China) (13%). Among those who could speak English very well, 8% were unemployed (which was the same as the overall census unemployment rate), however, the unemployment rate for those who could not speak English at all was the highest at 22%.³

¹We include Religion in conjunction with data on the Race ground as research indicates that religious discrimination is mainly targeted at minority ethnic groups who are members of minority religions.

²Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (October 2019). Ireland and the Convention on Racial Discrimination, Submission to the United Nations Committee on Racial Discrimination on Ireland's Combined Fifth to Ninth Periodic Report. Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, Dublin.

³CSO Census 2022. Profile 7: employment, occupations, and commuting.

- Many minority ethnic/national groups and particularly those of Black ethnicity, experience more negative outcomes in employment and occupational attainment.⁴
- Difficulties in obtaining recognition of foreign educational qualifications pose a barrier to labour market integration and may lead non-Irish nationals to situations of under-employment and over-qualification.⁵
- Research on the employment situation of the Roma community in Ireland⁶ found the following:
 - Because of the significant barriers Roma experience in accessing employment (discrimination and racism, language barriers, regulatory barriers), many working age Roma are unemployed (just 16% are in employment). Those who do find work are more likely to: be underemployed (e.g. working very few hours or precarious hours); vulnerable to exploitation, such as not getting paid properly or working in unsafe conditions; feel compelled to hide their ethnicity due to fear of racism and discrimination.
 - The Habitual Residency Condition and how it is applied in Ireland was noted as a big challenge to seeking employment. Roma support workers identified a lack of transparency in the process and they cited examples where it was used as a tool to exclude Roma from accessing basic supports.
- Research on Roma in Ireland found the following:
 - 37% of Roma adults have no formal education, and women are twice as likely as men to have had no formal schooling. As a consequence, many Roma adults have low levels of literacy and numeracy in their mother language;
 - 71% of Roma had difficulty reading English;
 - For this community, therefore, literacy and language are compounding barriers in regard to participation in education and training, employment, accessing services, and fully participating in community life.⁷

⁴ IHREC and ESRI (2018) Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market,

⁵ IHREC and ESRI (2018) Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market,

⁶ Pavee Point (2023) Roma in Ireland: Access to Fair and Decent Work. Pavee Point and Maynooth University.

⁷ Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Center (2018). Roma in Ireland- a national needs assessment. Pavee Point and the Department of Justice and Equality.

- A survey on lifelong learning participation⁸, with over 1,000 people, found the following in regard to migrants: their participation in learning was found to be hampered by: personal trauma from experiences in country of origin and/or from living in direct provision (DP); lack of access to childcare; lack of transport/inadequate transport links available locally; lack of recognition of prior learning; disproportionately higher fees for international learners who are living in DP; language and communication barriers preventing people from knowing what is available locally.
- Minority ethnic migrants face specific barriers in accessing FET:
 - Lack of information and knowledge of FET and how to access it,
 - Language barriers,
 - Barriers related to meeting the requirements of the Habitual Residence Condition,
 - Courses may have eligibility requirements which include a minimum length of time on the live register before they are eligible to apply for a course,
 - Lack of recognition of their qualification from other jurisdictions can prevent their access to certain courses⁹, and
 - International Protection Applicants who are less than 6 months awaiting a decision on their application are not eligible to access FET provision, with the exception of ESOL and literacy supports.¹⁰
- Applicants for International Protection cannot access employment or vocational training until they successfully apply for 'Labour Market Access Permission'. This permission cannot be applied for until the applicant has waited "at least 5 months" for a first instance decision. The permit, if granted, is valid for one year unless a negative decision is received in the meantime.¹¹ Currently there is a 120 day delay in issuing these permits.
- In a study of people's experiences of living in direct provision accommodation, 28% said they had difficulty accessing educational materials/resources for their children. When asked what additional supports they most need for themselves/family, financial support was the most cited (71%) followed by educational supports (41%).¹²

⁸Aontas (2023) Lifelong Learning Participation in Ireland: a focus on marginalised and vulnerable groups.

⁹Solas 2017. Barriers to FET with particular reference to long-term unemployed and other vulnerable individuals

¹⁰Education and Training Boards Ireland (undated). Access to Further Education and Training Programmes.

¹¹Department of Justice (April 2021). Information Booklet : labour market access for international protection applicants.

¹²Cid, Sara (2023). Living in International Protection Accommodation: Exploring the experiences of families and children in direct provision. The Irish Refugee Council.

- Ethnic minorities/non-EU nationals are one of the groups found to be at higher risk of experiencing disadvantage across multiple housing dimensions (discrimination in accessing accommodation, quality of accommodation (including for example over-crowding), and risk of becoming homeless).¹³
- Migrant communities in Limerick live mostly in the city in private rented accommodation, therefore, they can be cut off from the support of community development and youth organisations and projects, located mostly in the suburbs in Regeneration areas.¹⁴

Experience: Race (nationality, skin colour, ethnic identity) and Religion

- The highest rates of in-work discrimination (across the protected equality grounds) are reported by Black people (14%), followed by those with a minority religion (11%) and people with Asian ethnicity (10%). The highest rates of reported discrimination while looking for employment, are reported by Black people (16.5%). 7.5% of Asian people reported discrimination when seeking work and 10% of people with a minority religion reported discrimination when seeking work.¹⁵
- Discrimination is high in multiple domains (employment, service provision) for minority ethnic groups (Black, Asian and especially Irish Travellers), and people with minority religions.¹⁶
- The Roma community in Ireland experience very high levels of discrimination: 79% have experienced discrimination in seeking employment, and 93% have experienced discrimination in accessing accommodation.¹⁷
- 20% of the Irish public (in 2023) said they would feel uncomfortable with their child being in the same class as a Roma child (Roma came out 4th lowest of 46 groups).¹⁸

¹³Discrimination and Inequality in Housing in Ireland June 2018 Raffaele Grotti, Helen Russell, Éamonn Fahey, Bertrand Maître.

¹⁴Data from Area Profiles and needs assessments conducted by Limerick and Clare ETB Youth Team, to inform the UBU Youth Scheme: Your Place Your Space.

¹⁵McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Kenny, O., and Russell, H. (2017) Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules. ESRI and IHREC.

¹⁶IHREC and ESRI (2017) Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland.

¹⁷Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre (2018). The National Roma Needs Assessment. Pavee Point and Department of Justice and Equality.

¹⁸Government of Ireland (2023) Survey of People in Ireland's Attitudes Towards Diversity.

- A consultation on the needs of people of African descent, in Ireland,¹⁹ identified the following:
 - Racism and discrimination, at the individual and institutional levels, including in education and employment is a key barrier that needs to be tackled by government. The education system was identified as a key site for promotion of integration and inclusion.
 - Discrimination in seeking employment, is a key barrier for this community.
 - The education curriculum was deemed Eurocentric, excluding a focus on African history and experience.
 - Young Black people would benefit from having visible positive role models, and learning more about their heritage.
- Muslim women are three times more likely to suffer from verbal and physical violence in public spaces than Muslim men.²⁰
- An EU-wide 2022 survey²¹ found the following in regard to the experience of minority ethnic migrants living in Ireland:
 - 50% said they had experienced discrimination on the basis of their skin colour; 6% had experienced discrimination on the basis of their religion; 38% had experienced discrimination on the basis of their ethnic or immigrant background; 8% had experienced discrimination on the basis of their gender; and 10% had experienced discrimination on the basis of their age.
 - 35% had experienced racist harassment in the previous 12 months and 6% had experienced racist violence in the previous 5 years.
 - 29% avoided certain places, including public transport, for fear of experiencing racist abuse/violence.

¹⁹ Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth (2023). International Decade for People of Irish Descent: consultation report.

²⁰ Carr (2016). Islamophobia in Dublin: Experiences and how to respond. The Immigrant Council of Ireland.

²¹ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (2023) Being black in the EU: the experiences of people of African descent- survey of immigrants and descendants of immigrants. FRA.

- Research on attitudes to ethnic diversity in Ireland, found the following²²:
 - Attitudes to some migrants are much more negative than others: 58% of Irish-born people report they would allow many or some immigrants from members of the same ethnic group as most Irish people to come to Ireland, the equivalent figures for Muslim and Roma migrants are 41% and 25% respectively.
 - Just under half of adults born in Ireland believe that some cultures are superior to others, and 45% believe that some races/ethnic groups were born harder working. 17% believe that some races/ethnic groups were born less intelligent. This negative attitude is more common in Ireland than across a ten-country sample of the EU.
- 2023 research on public attitudes towards immigration found that, while overall, a high proportion of the Irish population are positively disposed to immigration, they are less welcoming of refugees and those seeking asylum. The potential cost to support refugees and asylum seekers being the main factor in this regard. Respondents who identified that they find it difficult to 'make ends meet', were the most likely to be less welcoming of refugees and asylum-seekers.²³
- The Direct Provision accommodation system is not in the best interests of children and impedes the lives of families.²⁴
- The recent rise of far-right groups and growing support for anti-immigrant policies highlight that civil rights for minority groups and freedom to live and work without racist abuse and violence cannot be taken for granted.²⁵

²² McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Russell, H., and Fahey, E. (March 2018). Attitudes to Diversity in Ireland

²³ Laurence, J., McGinnity, F., and Murphy, K. (May 2024). Attitudes Towards Immigration and Refugees in Ireland: understanding recent trends and drivers. ESRI and Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth.

²⁴ IHREC (2014) Submission of the Irish Human Rights Commission to the UN Human Rights Committee on the Examination of Ireland's Fourth Periodic Report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

²⁵ O'Connell, Hugh. February 3, 2024. "Poll: Over a third of Irish people would consider voting for anti-immigrant party". Irish Independent, online edition, last accessed Feb 23, 2024.

Identity: Race (nationality, skin colour, ethnic identity) and Religion

- People with a minority ethnic identity have specific customs, traditions, and language. There are specific needs arising from this diversity that need to be considered to ensure they can fully access and participate in supports, services, and wider society.
- The diversity of people with a minority ethnic identity must be considered in terms of the specific needs that arise from this diversity, including for minority ethnic: women, LGBT+ people, disabled people, younger and older people, migrants, and those living in poverty and direct provision.
 - In 2020, there were over 197 different nationalities enrolled in the FET sector: approximately 22% were non-Irish nationals (Among the non-EU learner enrolments, 36.9% were nationals of Asia, 34.2% were nationals of Africa, 16.5% were nationals of the Americas, 11.6% were nationals of Europe and 0.7% were nationals of Oceania). There was a slightly higher proportion of females among non-Irish national learners, than among Irish national learners.²⁶
 - A 2021 ETB Learner Survey (1,496 respondents) indicates a diverse learner cohort, in terms of religion: 67% identified as Catholic, 15.5% had no religion, 3.1% were Muslim, 5.1% were 'other religion' including Christian, Protestant, Orthodox, Buddhist, Jehovah Witness, Hindu, Lutheran, and Baptist.²⁷
 - Lack of availability of key information in languages other than English and, of interpreting to enable migrants to access public services, including education.²⁸
 - Issues concerning the adequacy of training in intercultural awareness for frontline staff delivering public services.²⁹

²⁶ SOLAS (2021) FET In Focus 2021: Non-Irish Nationals in FET.

²⁷ Roe, S. (November 2021). A Study of the role, contribution and impact of Education and Training Board (ETB) Further Education and Training (FET) Services on Active Inclusion in Ireland. Education and Training Boards Ireland.

²⁸ The Migrant Integration Strategy: A Blueprint for the Future. Department of Justice and Equality. 2017

²⁹ The Migrant Integration Strategy: A Blueprint for the Future. Department of Justice and Equality. 2017

- There are issues in relation to the rights of children and parents to freedom of thought, conscience and religion in the state-funded education system in the absence of a diversity of provision of school type within educational catchment to reflect the diversity of religious and non-religious convictions now represented in the State. The rights of minority faith or non-faith children need to be recognised in the curriculum.³⁰

The potential and impact of RPL for enabling inclusion is of particular relevance to migrant learners who may have acquired skills through non-formal learning in their country of origin and now wish to have these recognised and certified in Ireland.

³⁰ IHREC 2014 Submission of the Irish Human Rights Commission to the UN Human Rights Committee on the Examination of Ireland's Fourth Periodic Report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights





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