



AN ROINN DLÍ AGUS CIRT AGUS COMHIONANNAIS
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY



The Migrant Integration Strategy

A Blueprint for the Future

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Foreword by Frances Fitzgerald T.D., Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality

Ireland's population has become increasingly diverse over the past two decades. It is timely for us to focus on integration and to consider what is needed to enable Irish society to enjoy the benefits of diversity. We will all need to play our part. Effective integration requires ongoing engagement by migrants, public services, businesses and communities.

The Migrant Integration Strategy sets out the Government's commitment to the promotion of migrant integration as a key part of Ireland's renewal and as an underpinning principle of Irish society. The Strategy provides a framework for a range of actions to support migrants to participate fully in Irish life. The actions proposed are designed to support the integration process. They are also intended to identify and address any remaining barriers to integration. The Strategy offers a flexible structure which allows for additional actions and initiatives to be added where new issues emerge over its lifetime.

The Strategy is the first step towards realising the long-term vision of Ireland as a society in which migrants and those of migrant origin play active roles in communities, workplaces and politics. It sees the guiding principles for Ireland of the future as those of solidarity and opportunity for all, underpinned by

respect for diversity.

Irish society has responded positively to the changes that have occurred as a result of greater migration. Nonetheless, societal change can bring challenges. If we are to achieve the long-term vision of Ireland as a society which harnesses the benefits of integration, we will need to address such challenges proactively. One of the priorities for the Migrant Integration Strategy will be to identify such challenges and to begin the process of addressing them.

Ireland has the opportunity to get integration right, to build on what has been done so far and to plan for the future. The Migrant Integration Strategy will provide the means for us to begin this process.

Frances Fitzgerald T.D.

Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality



Foreword by David Stanton T.D., Minister of State with special responsibility for Equality, Integration and Immigration

Our recent celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Rising have reminded us of the ambition in the Proclamation that Ireland should cherish all the children of the nation equally. Ireland has become a diverse country, its children drawn from all across the world. The nation's children now include citizens born outside Ireland and those of migrant origin.

We have to ensure that existing systems are responsive to their needs. We have to ensure that migrants can access information and services and that barriers to their integration are identified and removed. The Migrant Integration Strategy sets a blueprint for action on integration over the period to the end of 2020. It includes actions to make public services more responsive to the needs of migrants. It also includes positive action initiatives to address areas where migrants find it difficult to avail of opportunities on an equal basis with other members of Irish society.

Communities play a crucial role in making those living within them feel at home. We have to mobilise communities to promote integration. We have to engage sporting organisations, faith-based groups, cultural organisations, community groups more actively in the integration process.

I am particularly pleased to announce the establishment of the Communities Integration Fund as part of the Migrant Integration Strategy. That Programme will provide funding and support for communities across Ireland to play a greater role in promoting integration. The initiative is intended to harness the goodwill and expertise in communities across Ireland to include migrants in the fabric of our communities. Communities will be the better for it.

David Stanton T.D.

*Minister of State at the Department of Justice and
Equality with special responsibility for Equality,
Immigration and Integration*

Migrant Integration Strategy: Summary of Key Actions

The Migrant Integration Strategy foresees actions applicable to all Government Departments and those intended to address particular issues.

Actions applicable to all Government Departments

The actions applicable to all Government Departments include the provision of:

- information to migrants in language-appropriate formats;
- ongoing intercultural awareness training for all front-line staff,
- signage in public offices indicating where interpretation is available;
- clear information on how to make a complaint about racist behaviour by staff or another customer.

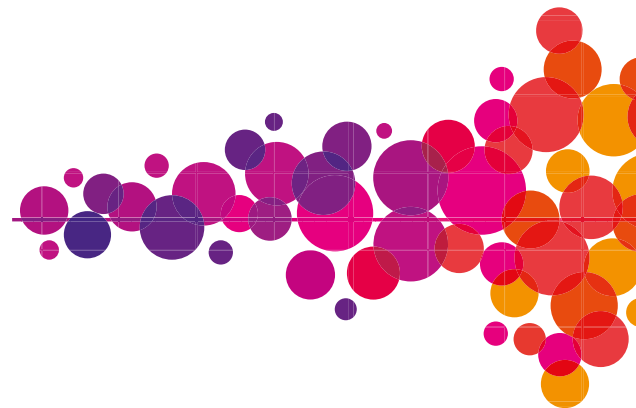
The Strategy also foresees that integration issues will continue to be mainstreamed into strategic statements and annual reports and into the general work of Departments.

Specific Actions

Specific actions are set out which are intended to address particular issues. The organisation responsible for implementing such actions has also been identified. They include:

- the inclusion of a target of 1% for the employment of EEA migrants and people from minority ethnic communities in the civil service (in most cases civil service employment is not open to non-EEA nationals). This issue is important in terms of beginning the process of making the civil service representative of the broader population.
- Schools outside the established education system will be encouraged to network with the aim of providing information on child protection and health and safety regulations to them and of developing relationships with them.
- the establishment by local authorities of networks aimed at reaching out to hard-to-reach migrant groups so to help them to engage with Government Departments and to provide information on their needs.

- the development of the second National Intercultural Health Strategy.
- the establishment of a Communities Integration Fund intended to support organisations in local communities (sports organisations, faith organisations etc.) to undertake actions to promote the integration of migrants into their communities.
- the monitoring of current school enrolment policies over time to assess their impact on the enrolment of migrant students.
- the inclusion of a language component in education and training programmes for unemployed migrants with poor English proficiency.
- initiatives to ensure that migrant needs in relation to skills acquisition and labour market activation are addressed.
- initiatives to encourage the business sector to play a role in promoting integration.
- the establishment of a working group to examine data gaps in relation to migrant needs and experience.



Introduction

Ireland has become an increasingly diverse country over the past two decades. Census 2011 indicates that 12% of the population is of migrant origin. The migrant population is itself highly diverse in terms of nationality, ethnicity and religious belief, or absence thereof. The migrant population includes people of different ages, genders and sexual orientation. There are considerable differences between migrants in terms of their situation in Ireland, including whether or not they have the right to work here, and the manner in which they have come to Ireland. The population's profile includes the Irish-born children and grandchildren of migrants. The family situation of the migrant population is also diverse. Some migrants have come with their families to Ireland. Others have formed families since their arrival. Yet others are single. Some migrants have made their home in Ireland. Others plan to remain in Ireland on a short-term basis. Correspondingly, migrants have differing needs and opportunities depending on their circumstances.

It is expected that inward migration will continue over the next decades and that Ireland will remain culturally diverse into the future. Second and third generation migrants can be expected to play an increasingly greater role in Irish society in the decades ahead.

The integration process is moving beyond the initial phase of focussing on the needs of those newly arrived in Ireland. It is moving into the second phase where many migrants have lived in Ireland for some time but may continue to have needs particular to their migrant status. For the host population, in this phase, cultural diversity is no longer a novelty but rather a permanent reality. Some within the population may look more negatively at cultural diversity during this phase, particularly if they perceive resources and opportunities to be scarce or more limited than heretofore.

Progress so far

The actions taken by successive governments over the past two decades, as well as by the business sector, civil society organisations and local communities, have achieved positive outcomes for migrants in key areas. More than 100,000 persons from over 170 countries have become Irish citizens since citizenship ceremonies were introduced in 2011.

Social inclusion measures have ensured that migrants do not experience significantly higher risks of poverty because of their migrant status. In 2012, the differentials in the at risk of poverty rates for citizens

and third country nationals were narrowest in Ireland of all EU Member States. Similarly, the differentials in the consistent poverty rates are also narrow. In 2014, for example, the consistent poverty rate for Irish nationals was 8% and 8.8% for non-Irish nationals.

Integration plans have been devised for key sectors. The National Intercultural Health Strategy (2007-2012) provided a framework for action by the health service to respond to increasing cultural diversity. Similarly, the Intercultural Education Strategy (2010-2015) has focused on enabling students to experience an education respectful of diversity while assisting education providers to ensure that integration becomes the norm within an intercultural learning environment. The draft Culture 2025 Framework Policy/ Éire Ildánach highlights, amongst its key values, the importance of cultural diversity, informed by the many traditions now in Ireland and the inherent right of everyone to participate in the cultural life of the nation. Further, it provides for a focus on social integration in the context of Ireland's shift to a multicultural society with diverse cultural influences. The Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP) highlights the range of actions being taken by Ireland to advance the rights of migrant women internationally.

Equally, many businesses recognise the importance of managing workplace diversity successfully. 44 companies in Ireland encompassing 103,000 employees have signed up to the Diversity Charter to demonstrate their commitment to diversity. 50 companies will have signed up to the Charter by January 2017. Many more companies have developed expertise in managing workplace diversity well.

Continuing challenges and risks

However, certain issues still create barriers to integration. These include language acquisition, particularly for those recently arrived in Ireland. Similarly, unemployment rates are considerably higher for specific migrant groups, particularly Africans. Migrants often cluster in towns or in areas of the main cities where accommodation is cheaper or more easily available. They may have reduced interaction with the host population as a consequence. There continue to be data gaps on key issues which make it difficult to assess the experiences of migrants in key areas. It is difficult, for instance, to assess the degree to which migrants experience racist incidents.

Irish society faces considerable risks if integration is not supported by the Government, by communities and by individuals. The risks include the following:

- Loss to Irish society of the contribution which migrants can make in all spheres of life;
- Reduced opportunities for migrants and their families;
- Segregation and ghettoization of specific migrant groups, with the potential for social exclusion and economic disadvantage;
- Fragmentation of shared societal norms;
- Racism and discrimination against migrants and their families;
- Promotion of anti-integration agendas among persons of Irish heritage and among migrants.

In addition, public services may come under pressure if faced with increased and unanticipated demands or if demands diverge from those with which they are familiar. This may lead to corresponding pressures on communities if they are unable to access the services that they need.

Radicalisation has been a particular issue for other European societies where ideologies that seek to undermine the state have prompted some young people, particularly second-generation Muslim immigrants, to undertake terrorist actions. The risk of radicalisation leading to terrorist activity is a risk for all societies. The challenge will be to reach out to young people at risk of radicalisation to encourage them to participate constructively in Irish society.

Brexit is anticipated to have implications for migration patterns to Ireland. Migrants living in the UK may seek to move to Ireland. Those who would formerly have chosen to seek residence or asylum in the UK may decide instead to seek to live in Ireland. This may alter the number and profile of migrants in Ireland.

Aim of the Migrant Integration Strategy

The Migrant Integration Strategy has been developed as the Government's response to the challenge of promoting integration in a context of increased diversity. Its vision is to enable migrants or persons of migrant origin to participate on an equal basis with those of Irish heritage. Its primary objective is to ensure that barriers to full participation in Irish society by migrants or their Irish-born children are identified and addressed.

The aim of the Strategy is to work towards the creation of a society that is equipped to support integration both collectively and individually. It is a four-year strategy which is intended as a crucial step towards a long-term vision in which integration is a strongly embedded principle in Irish life. The long-term vision is that Ireland thirty years from now will be a society in which migrants and those of migrant origin play an active role in communities, workplaces and politics. It sees the guiding principles for Ireland of the future as those of solidarity and shared identity as members of Irish society.

Achieving the long-term vision will involve change for Irish society. It will require a change of perspective from one in which cultural diversity is viewed as optional or temporary to one in which such diversity is recognised as integral to Irish identity. It will require those of Irish heritage to expand their notion of Irishness to include migrants and those of migrant origin. Equally, migrants who make their homes in Ireland on a long-term basis will be expected to engage actively and to assume shared civic responsibilities for promoting the well-being of our society.

The Migrant Integration Strategy is intended to work towards the long-term vision in which integration is embedded in communities, workplaces and broader society.

What is planned

The Strategy's aim is to communicate the key message that successful integration is the responsibility of Irish society as a whole and will require action by Government, public bodies, service providers, businesses, NGOs but also by local communities. It seeks to encourage local communities to take action to promote integration.

The Strategy proposes to use networks as a means by which migrant and non-migrant groups and organisations can get to know one another and by which migrants can raise areas of concern.

Ireland has developed an approach to integration that involves both mainstream services and targeted initiatives. This Strategy focuses on ensuring that mainstream services are responsive to the needs of the diversity of migrants. It recognises that mainstream services may need to adapt over time to ensure that migrant needs are met on the same basis as those of non-migrants. Research will be undertaken to see how services can be planned and / or adapted to respond more effectively to integration challenges.

The Strategy also proposes a number of targeted initiatives:

- to increase migrant participation in specific areas (such as in entrepreneurship or public sector employment);
- to address particular migrant needs (such as in education and health); and
- to address challenges (such as on data gaps).

The Strategy provides a framework for action on integration by Government and diverse sectors and organisations. It is intended to harness the benefits of integration and to address potential risks that may arise if integration is not undertaken effectively.

The Strategy is directed at Government Departments, public bodies, the business sector, community, voluntary, faith-based, cultural and sporting organisations as well as at families and individuals. It will run from January 2017 until December 2020. Its implementation will be monitored by a Strategy committee under the auspices of the Department of Justice and Equality.

The Strategy recognises that this is a period of change and that the integration challenges which will need to be addressed are likely to evolve in the years to December 2020. It has been designed to evolve in response to new challenges and emerging issues that may arise over its lifetime. A set of actions are set out for implementation. The process also allows for additional actions to be added or for existing actions to be adapted to respond to changing circumstances.

Vision

The vision of this Strategy is that migrants are facilitated to play a full role in Irish society, that integration is a core principle of Irish life and that Irish society and institutions work together to promote integration.

The vision has the following key elements:

- The basic values of Irish society are respected by all.
- Migrants are enabled and expected to participate in economic life – in employment and self-employment.
- Migrants interact with the host community and participate with them in cultural, sporting and other activities while preserving also their own traditions as they wish.
- Migrants have language skills sufficient to enable them to participate in economic life and in the wider society.
- Migrants have a knowledge of Ireland, its history and culture.
- Migrants, and particularly their children, benefit fully from the education system.
- Migrants are enabled to celebrate their national, ethnic, cultural and religious identities, subject to the law.
- Migrants participate in politics and public life as provided for by law.
- Integration policies and measures are mainstreamed in the work of all Government Departments and agencies, local authorities and other public bodies and organisations.
- Positive action measures are undertaken where appropriate to address the specific needs of migrant groups.
- Migrants and migrant representative groups, contribute to policy and service development.
- Migrants get support to access and navigate public services.

Definition of Integration

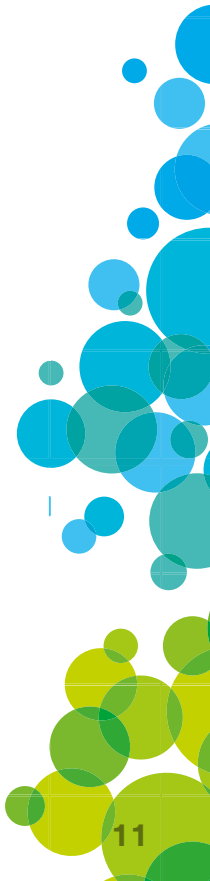
Integration is defined in current Irish policy as the 'ability to participate to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity'¹.

The Migrant Integration Strategy encompasses migrants and those of migrant background and envisages integration to encompass participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the State.

Integration recognises the right of migrants to give expression to their own culture in a manner that does not conflict with the basic values of Irish society as reflected in Ireland's Constitution and in law.

As a two-way process, integration involves change for Irish society and institutions so that the benefits of greater diversity can be fully realised.

¹ *Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (1999) Integration: a Two Way Process. Dublin. This is in conformity with the EU Common Basic Principles on Integration.*



Policy and Legislative Context

The Migrant Integration Strategy builds on existing policy on integration and is situated within the context of the legislative safeguards that are in place to protect the rights of migrants. Ireland's integration policy is intercultural in nature, seeking to promote the engagement of migrants, to address their specific needs and to ensure respect for their distinct identities. The policy approach has been to combine access to mainstream services for migrants with targeted positive action programmes to address specific needs.

Policy Context

Towards 2016, the social partnership strategy for the period to the end of 2015, set the framework for policy on integration from 2006. It committed the Government to the development of a framework to address the broader issue of integration policy and to the establishment of appropriate co-ordinating mechanisms to implement such a strategy. Migration Nation was accordingly published in 2008 as the Ministerial statement on migration. The Office of the Minister for Integration (later the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration) was also established to coordinate action on integration.

Existing Integration Initiatives

Migration Nation – A Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management. (2008)

This document, which was published in 2008 by the Office of the Minister for Integration represented the first Ministerial statement on the issue of integration and was intended to be the starting point for the development of an overall integration strategy.

The Statement sets out the key principles which would inform and underpin State policy on integration as follows:

1. A partnership approach between Government and non-Governmental organisations.
2. A strong link between integration policy and wider state social inclusion measures, strategies and initiatives.
3. A clear public policy focus that avoids the creation of parallel societies, communities and urban ghettos, i.e. mainstream public services are expected, by Government, to be designed and delivered in ways that include immigrants, as an integral part of the community they serve.

4. A commitment to effective local delivery mechanisms that align services to migrants with those for indigenous communities.
5. A focus on the role of local authorities, sporting bodies, faith-based groups and political parties in building integrated communities and the plans to target funding in these areas.

The principle of mainstreaming has been established policy since 2008.

Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration

The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration, a division of the Department of Justice and Equality, has a mandate to develop, lead and co-ordinate migrant integration policy across Government Departments, agencies and services. Its functions include the promotion of the integration of legal migrants into Irish society, the management of the resettlement of refugees admitted as part of the United Nations Resettlement Programme and the administration of funding from national and EU sources to promote integration.

Sectoral Strategies

As a result of recommendations contained in an earlier document – the National Action Plan against Racism (2005 -2008) – national strategies were developed in many areas. These strategies encompassing issues in specific areas of service delivery continue to be implemented on a national basis. They cover areas such as:

- An Action Strategy to Support Integrated Workplaces;
- An Garda Síochána's Diversity Strategy and

Implementation Plan 2009 to 2012 (following an extensive consultation process, work on a new strategy is advanced);

- Cultural Diversity and the Arts;
- An Intercultural Education Strategy 2010 to 2015;
- National Intercultural Health Strategy 2007 to 2012 (a second strategy will be developed in 2016 that will take account of the changing landscape in intercultural health).

In addition, almost all local authorities have drawn up and implemented strategies taking into account local conditions and circumstances. Many of these were supported by funding from the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration.

History of Integration Policy Development

The emergence of Ireland as a country of net immigration in the period since the late 1990s led to an increased focus on integration policy, including actions to combat racism and xenophobia and to promote interculturalism.

Key policy papers for this purpose included:

- **Integration - A Two Way Process (1999)**

A document entitled “Integration: A Two Way Process” was published in 1999 and was a report to the then Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. This report was compiled by an Inter-Departmental Working Group. The primary focus of the Report was the integration of refugees in Ireland

in the period from 1994 onwards.

- **Planning for Diversity - The National Action Plan Against Racism (2005 - 2008)**

The National Action Plan Against Racism 2005 – 2008 was the first major framework document on the issue of racism and was developed arising from a commitment made by Government at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance in Durban in 2001 and reaffirmed in Sustaining Progress, the Social Partnership Agreement 2003 – 2005.

The Plan provided strategic direction to combating racism and to promoting a more inclusive, intercultural society in Ireland. It supported the development of a number of national and local strategies which continue to be implemented.

- **The National Economic and Social Council's study of Migration Policy (2006)**

In September 2006, the National Economic and Social Council published a report entitled *Migration Policy*. The Report influenced *Migration Nation: Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management* (referred to above) and continues to inform policy on migrant integration in Ireland.

- **European Common Basic Principles on Integration**

In October 1999, at the European Council meeting in Tampere (Finland), the leaders of the European Union called for a common immigration policy which would include more dynamic policies to ensure the integration of third-country nationals residing

in the European Union. The Justice and Home Affairs Council of 19 November, 2004 agreed eleven principles which are being adopted in one form or another by all the Member States.

Current Irish integration policy has regard to the EU Common Basic Principles on Integration.

Legislative Context

Policy action to promote integration has been underpinned since 1998 by a series of legislative provisions aimed at combating discrimination, including in relation to race.

Equality legislation

Equality legislation is in place which prohibits discrimination on nine specified grounds: gender, civil status, family status, age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and membership of the Traveller community. The race ground encompasses nationality and ethnicity. The legislation is designed to promote equality, prohibit discrimination – direct, indirect and by association – and victimisation, and allow positive measures to ensure full equality across the nine grounds. The Employment Equality Acts 1998–2011 outlaw discrimination at work including recruitment and promotion; equal pay; working conditions; training or experience; dismissal and harassment including sexual harassment.

The Equal Status Acts 2000–2012 outlaw discrimination outside the workplace, in particular in the provision of goods and services, disposal of property and certain aspects of education.

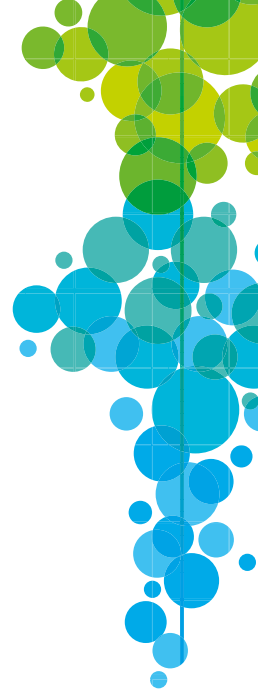
Equality legislation also provides for remedies for those who have suffered discrimination. The Workplace Relations Commission investigates

or mediates claims of unlawful discrimination under equality legislation. Our equality legislation is constantly kept under review and amended as necessary.

IHREC and positive duty

The equality legislation provides for a national equality body to promote compliance with the legislation. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) was established as an independent statutory body on 1st November 2014 following the merger of the Human Rights Commission and the Equality Authority. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is tasked with providing information and advice to persons who feel that they have been discriminated against on any of the nine grounds, whether in the areas of employment equality or equal status.

The Commission supports public bodies to place equality and human rights considerations at the heart of decision making. A significant innovation in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 is the introduction of a positive duty on public bodies to have due regard to human rights and equality in their work and to conduct their business in a manner that is consistent with individual human rights. The Commission assists public bodies in complying with the positive duty, including by producing guidelines and codes of practice. This means the systematic integration of an equality and human right perspective into everyday work, including changes to organisational cultures so that such a perspective is an integral part of the organisation. One of IHREC's specific functions is to encourage good practice in intercultural relations, and to promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity in the State.



How the Strategy was developed

The Cabinet Committee on Social Policy, at its meeting on 24 February 2014, endorsed the proposal of the then Minister for Justice and Equality to reconstitute a Cross-Departmental Group on Integration with a view to preparing an updated migrant integration strategy.

On 28 March 2014, the then Minister for Justice and Equality announced that there would be a review of Ireland's approach to the integration of migrants to ensure that the policy remained fully in keeping with the commitment in the Programme for Government to promote policies which contribute to integration.

The mandate of the reconstituted Cross-Departmental Group on Integration was to:

- review the activities being undertaken by Government Departments and agencies directed to promoting the integration of non-Irish nationals;
- prepare a draft overarching Migrant Integration Strategy taking account of the policies and actions already being implemented;
- undertake consultation with key stakeholders.

The Cross-Departmental Group was chaired at

a senior level by the Department of Justice and Equality and included representation from a wide range of Government Departments and Bodies which have a significant role in integration. A list of the Departments/Bodies represented is provided in Appendix 1.

Work of the Group

The Cross-Departmental Group met on 24 March 2014 in order to agree a work plan that would include the methodology for public engagement and input into the work of the Group.

The Group agreed that a series of thematic meetings would be held with each meeting addressing a specific topic. The topics discussed were:

- Promoting Intercultural Awareness and Combating Racism and Xenophobia;
- Education;
- Access to Public Services and Social Inclusion;
- Employment and Pathways to Work;
- Active Citizenship.

Public participation in the review process

An important part of the work of the Cross-Departmental Group was to engage in a meaningful way with the large number of non-governmental groups working with migrants and with members of the public. In order to do this, a two-fold approach was undertaken by the Group. The first step was to place a call in the media inviting submissions from interested parties who wished to contribute to the work of the Group. The closing date for contributions was 9 May 2014 and more than 80 submissions were received from a wide range of individuals, organisations and groups providing services to migrants.

The second phase of the consultation process was a series of face-to-face meetings with some of those who had contributed material.

Five consultation sessions were held, with each session lasting one day and involving a series of sub-meetings with members of the public. A total of 27 separate groups, one individual and a group of seven individuals met with the Cross-Departmental Group during these sessions. This segment of the consultative process facilitated the highlighting of, and in-depth discussions on, issues of particular concern. They also afforded contributors present at these sessions the opportunity to inform the Cross-Departmental Group of their personal experiences or those of the groups that they represent. These meetings were held on 23 June 2014, 7 July 2014, 28 July 2014, 8 September 2014 and 1 December 2014. A list of the Groups and individuals who provided material for consideration by the Cross-Departmental Group is outlined in Appendix 2.

Suggestions in the written contributions were collated and circulated to the relevant Departments and associated agencies for consideration.

The consultation process has informed the development of the Migrant Integration Strategy.

Finalisation of Strategy

The draft Strategy has been revised during the course of 2016 to take account of issues raised by organisations during the consultation process and to allow for additional actions to be added.

Who is covered by the Strategy?

The Strategy is intended to cover EEA and non-EEA nationals, including economic migrants, refugees and those with legal status to remain in Ireland. They will have differing needs depending on their situation.

The diversity of migrant needs has implications for the integration-related issues potentially facing Government Departments and for the services provided by Departments, agencies and other service providers.

EU/EEA Nationals

This group, who possess the right to travel and work within the EU/EEA, can face integration issues such as the need for well-developed English language skills in order to participate fully in the life of the State. They may also face issues of segregation and isolation.

Nationals of countries outside the EU/ EEA

Nationals of countries outside the EU / EEA may arrive in the State through a number of mechanisms - through the employment permit route or as refugees or as applicants for refugee status.

Those who arrive through the employment permit route will have secured a job before they arrive here. In terms of the process of integration, the stability offered by employment, and the possibility that it offers

to engage with others in the community, can enhance the integration process. This group may also bring high skills and qualifications.

The types of supports that will be in demand will be determined by the requirements of the individuals concerned but it is possible to identify generic or common forms of assistance that may be essential. In addition, the status of different groupings within this category needs to be considered.

One group are migrants who have lived here for some time. These persons may have more advanced language skills and may therefore be in a better position to avail of opportunities presented by, for example, employment or education. However, some, such as certain older migrants, in particular, may feel inhibited from interacting with the local community because of language difficulties or differing social customs.

Persons recognised as refugees and persons given permission to remain on other grounds also need support to facilitate their successful integration.

A transition Task Force was established last year which put in place important supports to facilitate people granted protection status or leave to remain to integrate into the community. These included the production of a comprehensive information guide to living independently and the availability of information sessions nationwide for those granted status.

Second Generation Migrants

It will be important for future social cohesion, stability and inclusion that this group grow up to become part of the essential fabric of Irish society and feel fully integrated in every way possible. This will require equality of opportunity with other Irish people generally and a sensitivity on the part of Government Departments, agencies and other public bodies to the needs of this group.

Statistics on the Non-Irish population

As will be seen in the table, census data indicates that the number of non-Irish persons increased by 87.2% between 2002 and 2006 and by 29.7% between 2006 and 2011. The proportion of the population which is non-Irish rose from 5.6% in 2002 to 10% in 2006 and 12% in 2011. The results for the past three censuses in tabular format are as follows:

	Total Population	Total Non-Irish National Population	Percentage change of non-Irish nationals
2002	3,917,203	224,261 (5.6% of total)	
2006	4,239,848	419,733 (10% of total) Male 223,717; Female 196,016	87.2% increase
2011	4,588,252 ²	544,357 (12% of total) Male 271,864; Female 272,493	29.7% increase

In the period from 2006 to 2011, the number of Polish nationals grew by 97.7 per cent to 122,585 making them the largest non-Irish group in the State. The next largest group were UK nationals decreasing by 0.3 per cent over the same period. The UK national group numbered 112,259 persons.

2 For the first time, Census 2011 distinguished being present and being usually resident on census night. Of the total population recorded, 62,971 were usually resident outside Ireland, so total Population usually resident and present in the State on Census night was 4,525,281.

What the Strategy proposes to do

Promoting integration will require action not alone by all Government Departments but also by public bodies, business networks, local communities and NGOs. The needs of migrants and effective responses to those needs are likely to evolve over the period of the Strategy. The following approach is proposed:

- Implementation of a series of actions that have been identified on the basis of the consultation process and Government policy;
- Development of a coordinating mechanism with the remit to oversee implementation of the actions already identified and to assess whether further action is required.

Implementation Structure

It is proposed that a Strategy committee will be established under Mr David Stanton T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality with responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration, to oversee implementation of the Strategy. It will include representatives of Government Departments, key public bodies, local authorities and of NGOs.

The committee will review implementation of all actions. It will agree indicators for monitoring progress.

The committee will also have the task of assessing whether or not further action is required on specific issues. In addition, it will make recommendations on actions needed to be added to the Strategy or changed to respond to changing needs.

Actions to be undertaken

1. General Actions			
	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
1	Integration issues will be mainstreamed in the work of all appropriate Government Departments and agencies ³ and addressed in their Strategy Statements, Annual Reports and other documents.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
2	Government Departments and agencies will ensure appropriate, regular engagement with NGOs representing migrant groups.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
3	Drawing on existing resources to the extent possible, factual material will be made available to enable migrants to learn about Ireland, its history, culture and so on. This material will be in a suitable format and in a range of languages as appropriate.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017 - 2020
4	Decisions on grants to community and sports organisations will include a criterion on promoting integration activities.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
5	Periodic evaluations measuring the outcomes of funding initiatives will be carried out.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017 - 2020

3 This includes, but is not limited to, the Department of Justice and Equality, the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the Department of Health, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Department of Social Protection.

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
6	The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration will make funding available to local and national groups to carry out integration initiatives, including once-off initiatives, with particular emphasis on local and regional effects. Activities may include, for example, measures to increase mutual understanding between the host community and migrants, actions to introduce migrants to Irish society and enable them to adapt to it, or measures to encourage migrant participation in civil and cultural life.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017 - 2020
7	The Department of Justice and Equality will use EU funding to support migrants to access the labour market and to promote integration activities.	Department of Justice and Equality	2017 - 2020
8	A working group will be established to identify and address data gaps.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017

2. Access to Citizenship/Long Term Residency

9	Statistics on applications for citizenship disaggregated by age, gender and nationality will be published annually.	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS)	Annually
10	The fees for naturalisation will be kept under regular review to ensure that costs are reasonable and do not deter applicants who are qualified.	INIS	Annually

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
11	A statutory scheme for Long Term Residency will be introduced.	INIS	2017
12	The introduction of civics and language tests for those seeking citizenship will be examined.	INIS	2017
13	Statistics on applications for Long-Term Residency will be published.	INIS	Annually
14	Arrangements to enable registration of non-EEA migrants aged under 16 years will be finalised as a matter of urgency.	INIS	2018

3. Access to Public Services and Social Inclusion

15	Information will be provided in language-appropriate formats and in a manner easily accessible by migrants.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
16	Government Departments and State Agencies will ensure that staff are trained to inform migrants accurately of their entitlements.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
17	Initiatives will be undertaken aimed at increasing the number of migrant representatives in local authority fora, like Public Participation Networks (PPNs), and other representative fora.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government; Local Authorities	2017 - 2020
18	Mechanisms for providing adequate interpreting facilities will be explored in order to facilitate equality of access to services.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
19	The availability of interpreting will be prominently displayed in a range of languages in relevant public offices.	Government Departments and Agencies	Ongoing
20	Progress on reducing poverty and social exclusion among migrants will be monitored in line with the national social target for poverty reduction.	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020
21	<p>Department of Social Protection (DSP) will continue to take measures to ensure that the habitual residence condition (HRC) legislation is applied correctly and consistently. These measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing and regularly updating guidelines for decision makers within DSP; • Publishing these guidelines on the website; • Provision of training in HRC for relevant decision makers; • Ongoing provision of advice to decision-makers, as needed. 	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020
22	The Migrant Consultative Forum will continue to offer the opportunity for NGOs whose primary focus is dealing with migrants, to engage on migrant-related aspects of social protection services on an ongoing basis over the lifetime of the Strategy.	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
23	The Department of Social Protection will continue to provide up-to-date information and training to staff on entitlements for all clients in relation to its schemes and services. In line with core values of the Department, awareness and respect for equality and diversity (including relevant legislation) is an integral component of all training activity. Provision of generic training across the public service via the shared learning and development curriculum (currently being developed under Action 9 of the Civil Service Renewal Plan) will address specific provision of anti-racism and cultural awareness training where a need is identified.	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020
24	The Department of Social Protection will continue to provide translation/interpretive/sign language services as required and the provision of information in alternative formats where feasible on request.	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020
25	Research will be undertaken to assess how mainstream services are meeting migrant needs.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant integration	2017 - 2018

4. Education

26	The Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2016 will be enacted.	Department of Education and Skills	2017
27	Proactive efforts will be made to attract migrants into teaching positions, including raising awareness of the Irish language aptitude test and adaptation period for primary teaching.	Department of Education and Skills	2017 - 2020
28	The extension of the Free Fees initiative for Third Level Education to the children of migrants will be explored.	Department of Education and Skills	2017 - 2018

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
29	The numbers of non-English speaking migrant children in schools will be monitored annually and details published.	Department of Education and Skills	Annually
30	Current school enrolment policies will be monitored over time to assess their effect on migrant students.	Department of Education and Skills	Annually
31	The effectiveness of training for teachers on managing diversity and tackling racism will be reviewed.	Department of Education and Skills	2018 - 2019
32	The provision of ESOL classes to cater for the language needs of adults from ethnic minorities will be reviewed following the development of ESOL policy guidelines.	Department of Education and Skills/ Education and Training Boards	2018 - 2019
33	The adequacy of language supports in schools to cater for the language needs of children from ethnic minorities will be kept under review.	Department of Education and Skills	2017 - 2020
34	Schools will be encouraged to support migrant parents' participation in the school life of their children	Department of Education and Skills	Ongoing
35	The use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages for recognition of English language proficiency will be extended so that people can assess their progress.	SOLAS and Training Providers	2017 - 2020
36	The fostering and development of positive attitudes towards diversity and celebrating difference will continue to form part of the school curriculum.	Department of Education and Skills	2017 - 2020
37	Follow-on ESOL programmes will be delivered to enable migrants to acquire more intensive language skills to assist their integration into the workplace.	Department of Education and Skills	2017 - 2020

5. Employment and Pathways to Work

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
38	The Central Statistics Office will continue to publish disaggregated data on unemployment.	Central Statistics Office	Quarterly
39	The Further Education and Training Authority (SOLAS) will through its funding and reporting requirements, require the Education and Training Boards to ensure that their Further Education and Training courses provision meet the specific needs of migrants e.g. language acquisition, knowledge of the Irish working environment, interview skills, c.v. preparation etc. This provision will be either directly on their principal courses or through part-time modular provision parallel to the learners' participation on their principal courses as appropriate.	SOLAS and Education and Training Boards	2017
40	Education or training programmes specifically catering for unemployed migrants whose language skills require development will contain a language component.	SOLAS and Education and Training Boards	2017 - 2020
41	Appropriate levels of quality engagement with migrants who are registered jobseekers will be ensured. The promotion of the availability of employment services to 'voluntary engagers'/'walk-in' immigrants not on the Live Register, if such person is entitled to work here, in the new Pathways to Work strategy will be undertaken.	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
42	An analysis will be undertaken to assess the extent to which the level of joblessness among jobseekers of African origin exceeds that of other groups and determine what action, if any, is required to address any evidence that people of African origin face higher barriers to exit unemployment.	Department of Social Protection	2017 - 2020
43	The Quality and Qualifications Ireland's system for the recognition of vocational skills accredited in other countries will be promoted more widely.	Quality and Qualifications Ireland	2017 - 2020
44	Proactive outreach and support measures will be undertaken by all public sector employers to increase the number of persons from an immigrant background working at all levels in the civil service and wider public service. There will be a particular focus on increasing the numbers of people from immigrant backgrounds working in front-line services. This work will have regard to public service employment principles of merit and transparency, and to restrictions regarding non-EEA nationals working in the Irish Public Service.	Public Appointments Service	2017 - 2020

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
45	<p>To make the Civil Service fully representative of Irish society we will aim to have 1% of the workforce from ethnic minorities and will -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · put in place arrangements to identify the number of civil servants from ethnic minorities; · broaden our outreach in schools and ethnic communities to raise awareness, educate about the role of the Civil Service and showcase the career opportunities available; · review the composition of our applicant pool so that we can understand where applicants to the civil service come from and develop targeted measures to encourage those areas of society that are not applying. 	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	2017 - 2020
46	<p>Further activities will be undertaken to raise awareness of State board opportunities among key groups within society that are currently under-represented on State boards, working with Departments and the relevant State bodies in this regard.</p>	Public Appointments Service	2017 - 2020
47	<p>Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) will continue to undertake targeted initiatives to engage with migrant prospective entrepreneurs in line with local need. The LEO Centre of Excellence in Enterprise Ireland will promote best practice activities in this area amongst all LEOs nationally.</p>	Enterprise Ireland/Local Enterprise Offices	2017 - 2020

6. Health

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
48	A second National Intercultural Health Strategy will be developed by the end of Q2 2017.	Health Service Executive	2017
49	An appropriate model will be developed for the provision of interpreting services to users within the health area who are not proficient in English.	Health Service Executive	2017 - 2020
50	The recording of ethnicity as part of ethnic equality monitoring across the health service will be promoted as a means of identifying unique needs of migrants and developing interventions to address these needs.	Health Service Executive	2017 - 2020

7. Integration in the Community

51	A Communities Integration Fund will be developed to support actions by local communities throughout Ireland to promote the integration of migrants and refugees.	Department of Justice and Equality	2017 - 2020
52	Integration strategies will be updated.	Local Authorities	2017 - 2020
53	A Migrant Integration Forum will be established in every local authority area, ideally through existing Public Participation Network (PPN) structures, and will meet regularly.	Local Authorities	2017 - 2020
54	An Integration Network will be established where migrant groups can engage with the Government and public bodies on issues of concern and on barriers to integration.	Dublin City Council	2017

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
55	<p>In carrying out the reform programme on youth work funding, there will be an added focus on ensuring that young people from ethnic or religious minorities, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have access to youth services in which they will feel safe and protected and which will assist and enhance their integration.</p> <p>The National Youth Council of Ireland through funding provided by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs will continue to promote implementation of the recently published toolkit “8 steps to Inclusive Youth Work” which is available to all youth workers. The toolkit is broken up into 8 easy-to-follow steps, to help youth workers to identify how good, inclusive practice is evident and measurable in their organisation’s youth work.</p>	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	2017 - 2020
56	Encourage businesses to focus on integration.	OPMI	2017 - 2018
57	Invite speakers to present on integration to existing business sector relationships/engagements	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation	2017 - 2020

8. Political participation

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
58	Migrants will be encouraged to participate in local and national politics to the extent that these areas are legally open to them.	Political parties NGOs	2017 - 2020
59	Migrants will be supported and encouraged to register to vote and to exercise their franchise.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	2017 - 2020
60	Multi-lingual materials on voter registration and on elections will be made accessible and available.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government; Local Authorities	2017 - 2020

9. Promoting Intercultural Awareness and Combating Racism and Xenophobia

61	Intercultural awareness training will be provided by all Government Departments and Agencies and it will be reviewed at intervals to ensure that it is adequate and up to date. Front-line staff will receive on-going cultural awareness training appropriate to their role and operational requirements.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 – 2020
62	Local Authorities will take action to have migrant representation on all Joint-Policing Committees.	Local Authorities	2017 - 2020
63	An Garda Síochána will continue to implement a victim-centred policy and good investigative practices in racial and other similar crimes to encourage victims to report offences in line with recommendations of the Garda Inspectorate in this regard.	An Garda Síochána	2017 - 2020

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
64	Local Authorities will develop and publish their policy on the early removal of racist graffiti in their respective areas.	Local Authorities	2017
65	The current legislation with regard to racially motivated crime will be reviewed with a view to strengthening the law against hate crime, including in the area of online hate speech.	Department of Justice and Equality	2017
66	The issue of the under-reporting of racially-motivated crime will continue to be addressed including through the development of greater contact with marginalised communities.	An Garda Síochána	2017 - 2020
67	Public offices will display information on how to make a complaint of racist behaviour by a member of staff or other customer.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
68	All relevant public sector bodies will explore additional ways of working in cooperation with communities affected by stigmatisation and develop appropriate relationships with minority communities to avoid the danger of external groups having negative influences on marginalised communities.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration; An Garda Síochána;	2017 - 2020
69	Arts and culture programmes and policy will assist in the promotion of the arts and culture of diverse communities across Ireland.	Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	2017 - 2020

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
70	Schools outside the established education system will be encouraged to network with the aim of providing information on child protection and health and safety regulations to them and of developing relationships with them.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017 - 2018
71	Measures to combat racism and xenophobia will feature among the actions funded by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017 - 2020

10. Volunteering

72	Volunteering will be promoted among the less well represented groups.	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	2017 - 2020
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11. Sport

73	The potential of sport in the integration of migrants will be further explored through encouraging active participation, volunteering and involvement in governance.	Sport Ireland/Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2017 - 2020
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12. Implementation and Follow-Up

	Action	Responsible Body	Timeframe
74	<p>To support the process of implementing recommendations arising from this review, a monitoring and coordination Committee will be established. This Committee will encompass a broad membership, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representatives of each relevant Government Department; • representatives of the relevant State Agencies, including the Health Service Executive; • representatives of the NGO sector. 	Department of Justice and Equality	2017 - 2020
75	The integration plan implementation process will be strengthened through the collation, analysis and development, where necessary, of relevant indicators which can be used to monitor the integration process.	Government Departments and Agencies	2017 - 2020
76	Progress on the implementation of these actions will be reviewed at the end of 2018 and a report prepared for Government.	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	2018

Appendix 1 – List of Departments/Bodies on Cross-Departmental Group

The membership of the Group includes senior officials from:

- The Department of the Taoiseach
- The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- The Department of Justice and Equality
- The Department of Education and Skills
- The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (*previously the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government*)
- The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- The Department of Health
- The Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- The Department of Social Protection
- The Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (*previously the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht*)
- The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
- The Department of Defence
- The Central Statistics Office
- An Garda Síochána
- The Health Service Executive
- The County and City Managers Association

Appendix 2 – List of Contributors to the Call for Submissions

- Age Action
- Aidan Rowe
- AkiDwa
- Alistair Smith
- Andrew Sexton
- Anne Tannam
- Baha'i Information Office
- Balbriggan Integration Forum
- Black Irish Integration Forum
- Cairde
- Carlow Integration Forum
- Catherine Ann Cullen
- Centre for Creative Practices
- Children's Rights Alliance
- Afro-Irish Organisation
- Citizens Information Board
- Clonakilty Friends of Asylum Seekers
- Cormac McKay
- Crosscare
- Cultúr Migrants Centre
- Daniel Aviotis
- Daniel Ryan
- DICE Network
- Doras Luimni
- Antain Mac Lochlainn
- Clíodhna Murphy
- Ronit Lentin
- Wendy Cox
- Sam O'Brien-Olinger
- Eimear Gallagher
- Enrique
- ESRI
- Estelle Birdy
- Faith in Action Group Ballineaspig Parish
- Fiona Bolger
- Football Association of Ireland
- Forum Polonia
- Galway County Community and Voluntary forum
- Holocaust Education Trust Ireland (HETI)
- Irish Business Employers Confederation
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions
- Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Ireland India Council
- Irish Refugee Council
- James Sinnott
- John Condon
- John Loesberg
- Joseph Nyirenda
- Joseph Wood
- Killarney Immigrant Support Group (KASI)
- Kilkenny Integration Forum
- Liam de Feu
- Mark Conroy
- Mark Lacey and Wando Avila
- Mayo Intercultural Action
- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI)
- Irish Immigrant Support Centre (NASC)
- National Youth Council of Ireland
- New Communities Partnership
- Newbridge Asylum Seekers Support Group
- Paula Geraghty
- Pavee Point
- Peadar O'Donoghue
- Polish Educational Society of Ireland
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland

- Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)
- Richard McAleavey
- S. Morrin
- SOS – European Support Network and Social Think Tank
- SOLAS
- SPIRASI
- Sport Against Racism in Ireland (SARI)
- The Integration Centre
- Tralee International Resource Centre
- UNHCR
- Vicky Donnelly
- Women's Integrated network (WIN)
- YMCA Cork
- Zoé Lawlor

Appendix 3: Issues Identified in the Consultation Process

A number of recurring themes emerged in the wide-ranging consultation process which included a call for submissions. Many of these issues are cross-Departmental in nature, demonstrating the need for a cross-Departmental approach to the development, implementation and maintenance of future integration policy.

The contributions from the consultation process can be summarised as follows:

Language training and acquisition

Contributors identified language acquisition as a key issue for integration. The importance of ensuring adequate support facilities in schools to assist children in benefitting and developing appropriately from education opportunities was highlighted. They also stated that there is a need to invest more resources in language training for adults with a view to improving employment and social interaction prospects. Priorities included the certification of participants' achievements and formal progression which could be benchmarked against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Education

Contributors highlighted the importance of ensuring that school enrolment policies do not put migrant pupils at a disadvantage. Training for teachers on managing diversity needs to be kept under regular review. Participants in the consultation process suggested that language support at secondary school level, where non-Irish national students struggle the most, is somewhat limited.

Some contributors noted that non-English speaking students tend to be concentrated in certain schools. Residential patterns, while important, alone do not fully explain this pattern: primary schools in close proximity to each other have a different share of migrant pupils. The effect of parental choice in school selection may be a factor in the development of such patterns. This needs to be closely monitored.

Access to Public Services and Social Inclusion

Information

Participants in the public discussions called for information from Government Departments and agencies, including the Health Service Executive, to be provided in language-appropriate forms.

Making public service information accessible to migrants arises at a number of levels and is impacting on their capacity to access public services. These include the availability of key information for newly arrived migrants and in languages other than English.

Interpreting

The availability of interpreting to enable migrants to access public services also emerged as a key issue. Participants in the public consultation process noted the need for the provision of suitably qualified high-

level interpreting facilities across all public services.

Social Protection

The main issue raised by contributors in this section was the application of the habitual residence condition and the need for its application to be consistent.

Poverty

Contributions indicated that migrants can face a higher risk of poverty, especially if coming from a situation where they previously experienced low living standards. Contributors stressed the importance from an integration perspective that the poverty rate among migrants should fall in line with the national target to reduce consistent poverty to 2% by 2020.

Health

In general, comments received on health issues were positive in relation to access to health care and the services available to migrants. Most groups had no specific recommendation to make and did not point to specific barriers to access.

In relation to the proposals made on the issue of health, some of these call for specific measures for migrants to be delivered by migrant led services. However, the issues raised were, in many cases, not migrant specific.

Employment and Pathways to Work

Public Sector Employment

The lack of representation of migrant communities in the public sector and the absence of role models in sectors such as education was raised. A number of submissions called for positive action programmes to increase representation. One of the barriers identified in an education context is the Irish language

requirement for primary school teachers.

Access to Employment

Migrant representatives suggested that a lack of networks impede migrants in their ability to gain employment.

Activation Services and Unemployment

It was suggested that labour market activation programmes for unemployed migrants whose language skills require development should contain a language component.

Childcare

Participants suggested that the provision of affordable childcare facilities would assist in the greater integration of female migrants in the workplace.

Qualifications

Discussions with those who participated in the public consultation phase called for the creation of some methodology for the recognition and certification of vocational skills. The recognition of qualifications was raised by migrants as an issue. The current role of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is important in this regard.

Registration

Some contributors considered that non-EU migrants under 16 years should have their immigration permission registered in the State.

Compliance

The requirement on third country nationals to register annually with the Garda National Immigration Bureau was considered to be a burden for compliant migrants who have been in the State for some time.

Long term residence

The lack of a statutory status of long term residence in Ireland was highlighted. As a result, the children of migrant workers in Ireland are often charged international fees for Third Level Education.

Naturalisation

Some commentators felt that citizenship tests should be introduced. Other contributors were opposed to such tests. It was also suggested that clear, detailed criteria for naturalisation should be set out in law.

It was contended that the fees for naturalisation should be kept under regular review to ensure that costs are reasonable and do not deter applicants who are qualified.

NGO Forums

Several contributors commented positively on the existence of NGO forums which provided a very useful avenue for organisations dealing with migrants to meet with representatives of Government Departments. Examples cited included the NGO forum in the Department of Social Protection, and that between the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, the Garda National Immigration Bureau and NGO organisations concerning immigration and naturalisation matters, the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration NGO Forum etc.

Political participation

Many contributors were of the opinion that migrants should be encouraged to participate in local and national politics and that political parties should foster greater participation where possible. Migrants should be made aware of their right to vote where applicable and should be encouraged to register to vote. It is noted that information regarding registering to vote is now distributed at citizenship ceremonies.

Volunteering

A number of submissions considered that migrants should be encouraged to participate in local communities through, for example, greater levels of volunteering.

Statistics from the 'Volunteer Ireland Status Report' (2013) suggest that in 2012, almost 70% (10,850 individuals) of new registrants with Volunteer Centres were non-Irish nationals, and Dublin City Volunteer Centre reports that in 2013 nearly 50% of volunteers newly registered in Dublin came from migrant backgrounds.

Intercultural Awareness and Racism

The importance of promoting intercultural awareness across all Government sectors was highlighted.

Issues concerning the adequacy of training in intercultural awareness for frontline staff delivering public services were raised by a large number of groups.

There were calls for the strengthening of the law on racially motivated crime as well as for improvements in reporting mechanisms. A concern raised was that of the under reporting of racist crime. Contributors reported that incidents were often reported to NGOs rather than to the Gardaí.

Racism

Some contributors highlighted the serious effects that can be experienced by those who may suffer from racism and the important role that the State has to play in combating racism.

Cultural Norms

The importance of cultural norms need to be

recognised and understood by all service delivery providers regardless of whether they are State, NGO or private sector. Service providers should take account of the cultural norms of migrants.

Services

Service specific issues

It was argued that there should be improvements in State service provision to migrants.

One of the issues identified was an apparent lack of familiarity on the part of some front-line staff with the entitlements of migrant applicants. While Government Departments have taken steps to ensure that this is not the case, it is important that processes are in place to ensure that such perceptions are addressed and action taken where appropriate.

Some applicants for services perceived themselves to have been subject to racism when availing of these services. It should be noted that members of the Cross-Departmental Group engaged proactively with stakeholders who had expressed concerns in this regard in order that appropriate follow-up could occur without delay.

Equality of access to services

It was argued in the consultation process that it was critical to ensure that there is equality of access to services across the entire range of facilities and entitlements provided by the State and its agencies. Contributors also said that the State has a responsibility to take steps to encourage equality in the provision of services and opportunities by the private sector. Where this is not successful, the State should take appropriate action to rectify any problems that are identified including the enactment of legislation in appropriate circumstances.

Ease of access to information

In order to fully realise equality in the provision of services, service users should be able to access information more easily in language-appropriate formats for service users. Service providers themselves should be familiar with their migrant customer base and particular issues which may arise in the provision of information to those customers. Access to electronic resources may be an area which could be leveraged to assist service users.

The requirement for the provision of language appropriate services

It is important to recognise that migrants attempting to avail of services may need assistance with completing forms and may, on occasion, require the provision of interpreting services in order for them to be able to engage with service providers.

Equality in provision of information

Those consulted stated that Government Departments and agencies must ensure, insofar as is possible, that all service users are equally informed as to their rights and entitlements and that the provision of information needs to take account of the fact that migrants may not have the same level of local knowledge as other service users.

Funding

Contributors raised the need for funding of NGO activities on migrant integration and for dedicated funds for local authorities.

Access to Opportunities

Contributors agreed that those seeking to live and work within the State as legally resident migrants should have access to appropriate developmental opportunities including, but not limited to, work and

labour market activation, education and personal development.

They stated that where barriers exist to participation, measures should be put in place by the State to reduce the negative effects of such barriers. One such barrier mentioned during the public consultation was the difficulty experienced by migrants as a result of poor English language skills.

Proficiency in the English language is important for labour market activation. While there are a number of English language progression accreditation programmes built around the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages⁴, it was stated that there are barriers including availability. Contributors also raised the costs of gaining formal recognition for proficiency in the English language.

It was also stated that Quality and Qualifications Ireland, through NARIC Ireland (*National Academic Recognition Information Centre Ireland*), operates a system for providing advice on the academic recognition of foreign qualifications including further education qualifications by comparing these, where possible, to awards at a certain level on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. It is therefore possible for vocational awards from other countries to be recognised in Ireland and, in this context, greater use should be made of Quality and Qualification Ireland's system for the recognition of vocational skills accredited in other countries.

4 *The Common European Framework of Reference for Language is an international standard for describing language ability. It is used around the world to describe learners' language skills. The Common European Framework of Reference for Language has six levels – from A1 for the most basic beginner to C2 for the very highest level of ability.*