

Integrated Strategy for the Coordination  
of Services to the Immigrant Communities  
in County Clare 2009-2012

STRATEGY STATEMENT



RÁITEAS STRAITÉISE

Straitéis Chomhtháite um Sheirbhísí a  
Chomhordú do Phobail na nInimirceach  
i gContae an Chláir 2009-2012

## Réamhrá

Tá comhordú seirbhísí poiblí agus pobalbhunaithe ina dhúshlán do gach soláthraí seirbhíse reachtúil agus neamhreachtúil. Le blianta beaga anuas cuireadh béim láidir ar ghníomhaireachtaí áitiúla ag obair i mbealach níos comhoibrithí chun torthaí níos fearr a bhaint amach do thomhaltóirí na seirbhísí poiblí. Tá gníomhaireachtaí tar éis a dtiomantas don bhealach oibre seo a léiriú trí chomhpháirtíocht shóisialta, Bhoird Forbartha Contae/Cathrach áitiúla agus raon leathan tionscnamh idirghníomhaireachta.

Thosaigh taighde agus forbairt an doiciméid straitéise seo in 2007, ag am ina raibh leibhéal arda imirce isteach in Éirinn. Bailíodh an taighde a mbaineadh úsáid as chun an doiciméad a chur le chéile ó staidéir áitiúla arna gcoimisiúnú in 2007, agus rinne sé cur síos ar na heispéiris a bhí ag baill de phobal na n-inimirceach agus ar na dúshláin a bhí os a gcomhair. Ag an am sin bhraith na gníomhaireachtaí áitiúla sa Chontae, i seirbhísí pobail agus poiblí araon, méadú i líon na ndaoine ó phobal na n-inimirceach a bhí ag baint leasa as na seirbhísí. Fuair soláthraithe seirbhíse chomh maith go raibh sé ag éirí níos casta seirbhísí príomhshrutha a sheachadadh don spriocghrúpa seo ar roinnt cúiseanna, mar: deacrachtaí teanga; tuiscint ar chúlraí cultúrtha; dearcaí/spreagthaí/ionchais; noirm chultúrtha; agus an t-eolas a bhí ag na himircigh ar sheirbhísí.

Leagann an doiciméad Straitéise Comhtháite seo amach roinnt gníomhartha chun tacú le tomhaltóirí ó phobail na n-inimirceach rochtain níos fearr a fháil ar sheirbhísí agus imeascadh i saol an phobail i gContae an Chláir. Tá sé d'aidhm ag an doiciméad seo creatlach a sholáthar do ghníomhaireachtaí áitiúla chomh maith chun seirbhísí a fhorbairt agus a phleanáil i mbealach comhordaithe agus comhoibritheach.

Thuairiscigh sonraí Dhaonáireamh 2006 nár rugadh 12,015 den daonra i gContae an Chláir in Éirinn. D'fhéadfaimis glacadh leis go bhfuil laghdú tagtha ar líon na n-inimirceach atá ag teacht go hÉireann ag lorg fostaíochta faoi láthair. Ní mór dúinn leanúint ar aghaidh leis an bpleanáil, áfach, agus riachtanais na ndaoine atá fágtha agus a dteastaíonn uathu páirt ghníomhach a ghlacadh i saol an phobail anseo a thabhairt faoi deara.

Is í an chéad chéim i gclár oibre comóna a bhunú í an Straitéis Comhtháite seo chun gníomhartha praiticiúla a ghlacadh d'fhonn tacú le hinimircigh sa phobal, agus beidh tionchar dearfach aige seo ar shaoránaigh uile Chontae an Chláir chomh maith.

Sa saol athraitheach seo tá a fhios againn gur gá oibriú níos dlúithe le chéile agus tacú leis na baill go léir den phobal i dtreo is go mbeimid in ann maireachtaí, dul in oiriúint agus glacadh leis na hathruithe agus na dúshláin atá amach romhainn.

***Jacqui Deevy, Cathaoirleach an Ghrúpa Stiúrtha Idirghníomhaireachta  
Straitéis Chomhtháite um Sheirbhísí a Chomhordú do Phobail na nInimirceach i gContae  
an Chláir***

## Foreword

The coordination of public and community based services is a challenge for all statutory and non statutory service providers. In recent years there has been a strong emphasis placed on local agencies working in a more collaborative way to achieve better outcomes for the consumers of public services. Agencies have successfully demonstrated their commitment to this way of working through social partnership, local City/ County Development Boards, and a broad range of inter-agency initiatives.

The research and development of this strategy document commenced in 2007, at a time when Ireland was experiencing high levels of inward migration. The research informing the document was gathered from local studies commissioned in 2007, and it documented the experiences and challenges faced by members of the immigrant community. At that time local agencies in the County both in community and public services were experiencing an increased uptake of services by the immigrant communities. Service providers were also finding that the delivery of mainstream services to this target group was increasingly complex for a number of reasons such as: language difficulties; understanding of cultural backgrounds; attitudes/motivations/expectations; cultural norms; and immigrants' knowledge of services.

This Integrated Strategy document sets out a number of actions to support consumers from the immigrant communities to better access services and to integrate into community life in County Clare. The document also seeks to provide a framework for local agencies to develop and plan services in a coordinated and collaborative way.

The 2006 census data reported that 12,015 of the population of County Clare are non Irish born. We can expect that the numbers of immigrants coming to Ireland seeking employment may be reducing at present. However, we must continue to plan and take account of the needs of those who remain and want to participate actively in community life.

This Integrated Strategy is a first step in setting a common agenda for taking practical actions to support immigrants in the community which in turn will also impact positively on all citizens in County Clare.

In our changing circumstances we are conscious of the need to work more closely together and to support all members of the community to survive, adapt and embrace the changes and challenges ahead.

*Jacqui Deevy, Chairperson Inter-Agency Steering Group  
Integrated Strategy for the Coordination of Services to the Immigrant Communities in County Clare*

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## 1.0 Réamhrá agus Cúlra *Introduction and Background*

This strategy document sets out an integrated plan for the coordination of services to the immigrant communities in County Clare. The document identifies over sixty actions on five key themes focusing on:

- Communication and Language
- Education
- Health
- Work and Training
- Community Participation and Social Support

The key principles informing the strategy are:

- A partnership approach between local agencies to improve the coordination of services to the immigrant community in County Clare;
- A commitment to supporting the inclusion of new communities and recognising their needs in the planning and development of services;
- A clear focus and direction towards improving opportunities for individuals and families;
- Action based on identified need in partnership with members of the immigrant community.

The proposal to undertake a local integrated strategy came about in 2006 in response to an identified need at that time by local service providers for a coordinated approach to addressing the needs of immigrants living and working in County Clare. At that time agencies and service providers were experiencing increasing numbers of immigrants accessing services. The 2006 Census of Population confirmed this increase, recording the population of non Irish residents in County Clare as 12,015.

From the 1990's the numbers of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Immigrants coming to live in County Clare increased steadily. This prompted the development of a small number of local services who worked to provide dedicated support to individuals and families. One such service, which established a base in Ennis, was the Irish Refugee Council. In 2006 the Irish Refugee Council decided to close its Ennis office due to a refocusing of its work nationally. The announcement resulted in local agencies coming together to see how best to retain local services and to plan for the future.

The initial response by agencies was the establishment of an Inter-Agency Steering Group in late 2006 involving the following partners:

- Clarecare
- Clare County Council
- Citizens Information Service
- Clare Vocational Education Committee
- Clare Youth Service
- HSE West
- Department of Education and Science
- Ennis Community Development Project
- Ennis Schools Completion Programme
- Ennis West Partners
- FÁS

With support from HSE West, the Steering Group started the process of gathering data to determine the extent of need with a view to developing a coordinated local response.

### **1.1 Strategy Development Process 2007-2009**

The Inter - Agency Steering Group engaged the Centre for Peace and Reconciliation at University of Limerick to undertake research into the needs of Refugees, Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in County Clare. The research completed in September 2007 involved consultations with service users and service providers. The Strategy is a reflection of the findings which emerged from research conducted by the University of Limerick entitled “ *Getting to Know You - A Local Study of the Needs of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Co. Clare*”, and a series of consultation focus groups held with service providers and service users which occurred over a twelve month period.

In parallel to the research of adult needs, the HSE’s Community Development Service undertook research with over 100 children from the immigrant communities in County Clare. The purpose of the research was to explore the perceptions of children regarding their experiences living in Ireland. The research completed by HSE West in June 2007 is entitled “*The Experiences of Young Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Children from Ethnic Minority backgrounds living in County Clare*”.

### Strategy Development Process 2007-2009



### Aguisín 3: Leabharliosta Appendix 3: Bibliography

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Office for Social Inclusion (2007) *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2006-2017*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Watt, P. and McGaughey, F. (eds.) (2006) *How Public Authorities Provide Services to Minority Ethnic Groups*, Dublin: National Consultative Committee on Racism.

- Partnership working
- Learning and support for staff

Adopting a population health approach, the National Intercultural Health Strategy recognises the link between poverty, ethnicity and health.

Utilising the above set of principles, the strategy proposes a number of recommendations around the wide ranging areas of:

1. Access to Services;
2. Data, Information and Research;
3. Human Resource aspects.

### **2.3 HSE West: *Multicultural Health – An Assessment of Health and Personal Social Service Needs Relating to Ethnic Minority Groups within the Mid-West Area 2007***

Commissioned by the Social Inclusion Unit HSE West, the regional assessment of needs relating to ethnic minority communities provides an in-depth statistical profile of the multiplicity of immigrant communities living in the Mid-West area. The assessment goes on to focus its findings around four main themes:

1. Language and communication;
2. Information and outreach;
3. Staff composition and cultural competence;
4. Design and delivery of health services.

Adopting a cross departmental approach, a Multicultural Health Forum for the Mid-West was established to devise an implementation mechanism in order to progress the recommendations to the next phase.

Using a community development, advocacy and health alliances approach, the needs assessment provided the essential foundation from which to commence a collaborative regional planning process.

### **2.4 National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2006-2017**

The strategic approach of this document towards combating poverty and associated social exclusion embodies recognition of the complex multifaceted nature of poverty. It calls for a coordinated response on a multi-agency service level basis to formulate a strategic response to the complex issue of poverty and social exclusion.

### **2.5 National Action Plan against Racism: Planning for Diversity 2005 – 2008**

This document from Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform provides an over arching template guiding the implementation of a range of Government initiatives. The overall aim of the plan is to provide strategic guidance to combat racism and develop a more inclusive intercultural society in Ireland.

One of the five primary objectives underpinning the National Action Plan Against Racism is stated as: “Accommodating diversity in service provision, including a focus on common outcomes, education, health, social services and childcare, accommodation, and the administration of justice”.

### **3.0 Próifil na nInimirceach** *Profile of Immigrants*

The HSE’s ‘An Assessment of Health and Personal Social Service Needs relating to Minority Groups within the Mid-West Area’ (2007) outlines the following national and regional data in respect of immigrants. The 2006 Census of Population recorded the population of the state as 4,239,848. This figure compares with 3,917,203 in 2002, representing an increase of 322,645 persons or 8.2 per cent over a four year period. Non-Irish nationals who were resident in the State increased from 224,000 to 420,000 (+87%) over the same period. In overall terms, non-Irish nationals made up 10% of the usually resident population that indicated a nationality on census night in April 2006.

The Mid-West area, comprising the counties of Clare, Limerick and Tipperary North Riding represents a population of 360,651 (8.5% of the population of the state, Census 2006 Preliminary Report, CSO). The most recent and fastest growing immigration flow into the Mid-West Region comes from EU New Member States with 11,931 persons. This is apart from the 8,769 immigrants of Irish (other), UK and other nationalities. Polish nationals represent 5,348, while the number of Lithuanian nationals was 1,282. In overall terms, non-Irish nationals in the Mid-West made up approximately 9% of the usually resident population that indicated a nationality on census night in April 2006.

#### **3.1 Profile of Immigrants in County Clare**

The 2006 Census data reports the overall population of County Clare as 108,760 of which 12,015 are categorised as non-Irish. Within the immigrant community, UK nationals are both the longest-standing and largest group (3,742). European immigrants (including the ‘old’ and ‘new’ EU accession states) represent the next largest group (4,197), though their membership is more diverse. Africans represent a small but significant minority (984). Other immigrants include people from the US and Asia at 582 and 667. The numbers of asylum seekers living in direct provision centres in Clare is over 300. This includes families, single males and single females (HSE West, 2007). Table 1 below outlines a breakdown of the 2006 Census data.

*Table 1: Persons usually resident in Co. Clare-Male and Female*

County of Residence	Co. Clare	Male	Female
Total	108,760	54,950	53,810
Total Irish	96,745	48,567	48,178
Irish	95,269	47,857	47,412
Irish Other	1,476	710	766
UK	3,742	1,880	1,862
EU15 excluding Ireland and UK	1,204	573	631
New EU15 to EU25 accession States	2,421	1,530	891
Other European Nationality	572	328	244
Africa	984	505	479
America (United States)	582	273	309
Asia	667	350	317
Other Nationalities	603	325	278
Multi Nationality	62	26	36
No Nationality	35	18	17
No Nationality Stated	1,143	575	568

(Source: CSOc 12 July 2007: Table 35A, 35B and 35C)

While it is difficult to accurately establish the exact number of immigrants residing in County Clare, a recently commissioned report, *Getting to Know You - A Local Study of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Co. Clare* (Ní Shé, Lodge, Adshead, 2007) did find that there is evidence of specific immigrant patterning in County Clare. A broad outline of these patterns is described below:

1. *Young migrant workers from the 10 EU Accession States (2004) (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia).*

Members of this group are typically under 35, hold work visas and are usually highly qualified, well educated and possess good English language skills. They are also relatively mobile with loose networks of friends/acquaintances. They tend to share accommodation in private rented houses.

2. *Older migrant workers from the 10 EU Accession States.*

The members of this group tend to be aged 40+. They are generally employed as trade or craft workers, often in the construction industry, typically entering the country on work permits. They also tend to share houses in the private rental market. However, in contrast to the younger migrant workers, they tend to have poorer English skills and lower educational attainment, possibly putting them at greater risk for difficulty in accessing services successfully.

### 3. Africans

The majority of the African community would have entered Ireland as asylum seekers, with a significant percentage going on to receive refugee status. Africans tend to have good English skills and high levels of educational attainment. They tend to live in single familial occupancy in the private rental market.

### 4. Roma (primarily Czech and Slovak)

Members of this group have been settling in Ennis for at least six years, primarily through the asylum process and more recently as members of the EU states. Typically members of this group have poor English language skills and low educational attainment resulting in greater difficulty accessing work, health and accommodation.

### 5. Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The asylum seeker population in Clare comprises those in direct provision accommodation in Clare Lodge (Ennis) and Knockalisheen (Meelick, County Clare). The numbers living at the Knockalisheen centre are reported as 260 residents which includes families, single males and single females. Clare Lodge accommodates 55 single males (HSE West January 2007). Currently there is no breakdown of the nationalities of refugees and asylum seekers residing in County Clare, however, Ennis CDP has estimated that there are in the region of 1,300 refugees and asylum seekers living in Ennis (Ennis CDP *Annual Report* p. 5.)

The following section provides an insight into the experiences of a number of immigrants who participated in the research.

## 4.0 Staidéar Taighde Áitiúil – Príomhthorthaí Foghlama *Local Research Study – Key Learning and Findings*

The five thematic areas of the strategy are:

- Health
- Education
- Work and Training
- Language / Communication and Community Participation and Social Supports

These themes were all components of the University of Limerick study entitled “*Getting to Know You – A Local Study of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers on County Clare*” which provided an in-depth examination of each area. Over 130 members of immigrant communities in the County participated in the research either through questionnaires or focus group consultations. Participants represented over 40 nationalities. The research findings comprise data gathered from responses from 134 questionnaires (52 individual interviews and 82 responses from a self-administered questionnaire). 13 structured focus groups were attended by service providers and members of the immigrant community on the themes of: Housing and Accommodation, Health and Welfare, Education and Social Integration. Key findings from the research are outlined below:

## 4.1 Health

There is a clear and uniform view, from health professionals and immigrants alike, that immigration status affects health status.

The HSE National Intercultural Health Strategy 2007 – 2012 recognises the HSE’s role in a multi-ethnic Irish society.

*The Irish health system has a valuable role to play in implementing an intercultural approach towards planning and delivery of care and support services in an equal, accessible and effective way, acknowledging and valuing the diversity of all service users” (HSE National Intercultural Health Strategy 2007-2012, p. 7).*

The main issues identified through the University of Limerick research in the area of health are:

1. Immigrant legal status affects health. Asylum seekers are especially likely to experience stress, and migrant workers are prone to life styles which may expose them to health risks.
2. Health workers experience a range of problems in addressing the health needs of immigrants: these include language barriers; the challenges of tracking and maintaining records; lack of knowledge about home state health conditions; and cultural unfamiliarity.
3. In general, immigrants’ perceptions about the quality of the health care they receive in Ireland are favourable.

## 4.2 Education

The structure of the Irish education system poses specific challenges for immigrant students. Ireland has a centralised national curriculum, allowing guidelines and content to be disseminated nationally and to be taken up within the individual school. Publications in recent years such as “*Intercultural education in the primary school: guidelines for schools*” (2004) by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment has resulted in the acknowledgement by the education sector that the Irish classroom is no longer a homogenous one.

According to the Department of Education, the principal difficulties for immigrants are (a) the admission of pupils into overcrowded schools and (b) language support services (Mac Éinrí, P. in Watt & McGaughey (2006) p.122))

The main issues identified through the University of Limerick research in the area of education in County Clare are:

1. Immigrant children are especially clustered in a few Clare primary schools.
2. Roma children are especially likely to become educationally disadvantaged because of language barriers, absenteeism and early school-leaving.

3. Eastern European children are more likely to be hampered by language problems and their progress and motivation can be adversely affected by inappropriate class placement.
4. Of the various immigrant groups, English-speaking Africans appear to make relatively good progress at school.
5. More English language teaching resources are needed.
6. In general, amongst immigrants, parent perceptions of teachers and their children's educational experiences are positive.
7. In further education, asylum seekers are especially likely to lack motivation because of uncertainties about their future.

### **4.3 Communication and Language**

For all immigrants, language acquisition is the principal means through which social integration may take place. Obviously, language difficulties arise in a variety of contexts, but still it is possible to think of three key experiences where language skills and/or acquisition are particularly important in relation to ethnic minorities:

- For children entering and progressing through the schools system;
- For adults in order to facilitate effective social and economic integration;
- For many 'frontline' service providers interacting with people from immigrant communities.

The main issues identified through the University of Limerick research in the area of communication and language in County Clare are:

1. Parental support is a critical factor in children's success at learning English, and it is perceived that among certain immigrant groups this support is weak.
2. Schools should consider drawing more upon Gaelscoileanna experiences for English language teaching.
3. Schools should explore successful models of best practice for teaching English as a second language.
4. Demand for English language classes is very high among working migrants.
5. Language is an important factor in effecting social integration.
6. Service providers need greater translation support.

### **4.4 Work and Training**

There were different immigrant experiences reported about working in County Clare as a migrant on a work visa, or a work permit, or as a refugee. At the time of the research (2007) the

main immigrant population clusters, with 30% or more non-Irish workers, were generally areas with high levels of tourism — Spanish Point, Kilkee, Kilrush, and Lahinch.

At the time of the survey also a significant amount of construction work was underway across the region (in Ennis and in Moneypoint) which employed Eastern European workers. Sub-contracted work teams were reportedly very common. Whilst the research team's attempts to consult with employers were unsuccessful, a significant picture emerged as to the experiences of workers.

The main issues identified through the University of Limerick research in the area of work and training in County Clare are:

1. Migrant workers on work visas tend to have the most positive work experience. This is because these migrants are, for the most part, often younger, relatively well-qualified and voluntarily mobile workers.
2. For migrant workers on work permits, the immigrant experience of work is more variable. In County Clare, there are substantial clusters within this group of migrants working in the hospitality, construction and nursing sectors. Their 'dependent working status' makes this group of workers less autonomous and more vulnerable.
3. A significant number of refugees from the focus groups, typically African and/or Muslim, believe that they are being discriminated against in relation to obtaining or maintaining work.
4. Where difficulties with employers are reported, these tend to stem from a basic perception that there is an inability and/or unwillingness on behalf of the employer to acknowledge cultural differences.
5. Some of the difficulties that respondents experienced in employment may stem from a basic lack of understanding on their part about formal and (perhaps more importantly) informal conventions in the Irish workplace.

#### **4.5 Community Participation and Social Supports**

There are different paths to social integration, and historically immigrants often continue to feel affinities from sharing a common homeland while simultaneously building fresh links with the communities into which they arrive and live.

The research provided evidence about other ways in which new immigrants in County Clare can succeed or fail to make connections with local people, and more generally, begin to perceive themselves as full members of the Clare community.

The main issues identified through the University of Limerick research in the areas of community participation and social integration in County Clare are:

1. The survey and focus group evidence suggests that immigrants enjoy stable social

relationships with local people and that they are especially likely to form friendships as a consequence of their children's experiences at school.

2. Immigrants who make impressive progress towards social integration also rely heavily on networks constituted by their compatriots in Ireland.
3. Some immigrants have experienced racial discrimination.
4. People living in direct provision accommodation were also research participants who raised their own specific issues regarding their unique experiences living as Asylum Seekers in County Clare. These issues include:
  - Direct provision accommodation supplied by the State provides basic shelter and board but does not represent suitable long term accommodation for the families who live there.
  - Provision of additional resources and reforms could make life at centres less stressful.
  - Provision of recreational facilities for children is a priority.
  - Mental health issues need to be addressed appropriately taking into account particular individual needs.
  - The circumstances in which people enter the country and the experience of living in direct provision over a long period of time can exacerbate mental health issues.

#### **4.6 Children's and Young People's Experiences of Living in Ireland**

*The H.S.E West study of The experiences of young Asylum Seekers/Refugees and children from ethnic minority backgrounds living in Co. Clare 2007* engaged with over 100 children from immigrant communities in County Clare. This research aimed to explore children's and young people's perceptions of their lives in Ireland. An appropriate methodology was essential when interacting with the children as their ages varied considerably (7 years to 18 years old) which warranted a multitude of approaches to match their ability to verbalise their experiences. An arts based approach was chosen to communicate with children under 15 years old and with children who had poor English language skills. Findings gathered from the research process can be grouped thematically under the following headings:

##### **1. The inter-country transition impact on Immigrant children**

- The majority of children responded positively when describing life in their native countries.
- A small minority of children displayed images of war and civil unrest which they associated with life in their native countries.
- There were subtle differences between children from African countries and their Eastern European peers. Children from Eastern European countries displayed more negative pictures of their journey to Ireland and reported more feelings of distress on leaving their native country.

## 2. Children's reports on their educational experiences

- Children from Eastern European countries reported significantly more difficulties adapting to the English language in school than African children.
- Children from Czech and Slovak backgrounds reported primary friendships with children from their native countries. They also reported that they spoke Czech or Slovak at home with their family and in the school playgrounds with their peers. Their parents (as reported by their children) had limited English language skills and the children regularly translated for their parents
- The majority of teenagers expressed satisfaction with their experiences of attending a school in Ireland.
- Translation was raised as an issue for teenagers regarding science and maths subjects.
- Teenagers expressed concerns about not being placed in age appropriate classes, solely on the basis of their poor English language skills.
- Being immersed totally in English language classes on arrival in school in Ireland frustrated some teenage students as they reported boredom at not being able to access the mainstream curriculum.

## 3. How children perceive they are integrating into Irish society

- A minority of children under 12 years old raised the issue of racial bullying in school. These groups were significantly of African backgrounds.
- A minority of teenagers raised the issue of racially based bullying in school.
- African children reported more friendships with Irish children than their Eastern European peers.
- Female teenagers from an African background reported the highest levels of participation in team/club based activities outside school.
- Children and teenagers living in direct provision accommodation provided by the State had the lowest rates of accessing recreational facilities and also were the least informed about what recreational facilities were in the community. All recreational activities were accessed through the service provided by the Clare Youth Service or the under 12's homework club.
- Participation rates in team/club sports or activities scored significantly low for all age categories with solo sports such as swimming, running or playing computers being reportedly more popular.

## 4. How children view their accommodation situations in Ireland

- The majority of children reported that they had their own bedroom or shared with one other sibling. There were no reports from the children of overcrowding and housing conditions were said to be of a high standard in their opinion.
- Children living in the direct provision accommodation centre reported remarkably different perceptions of their living conditions than children living in the community setting.
- Children seeking asylum, who were living in direct provision accommodation, reported the following as the most difficult aspects of living in the centre:
  - cramped living spaces;
  - lack of suitable play areas for children both inside and around the centre;
  - lack of choice regarding what foods they would like to eat;
  - lack of interaction with children from the community;

- an overdependence on centre management for day to day amenities due to lack of personal income to provide for their own personal needs;
- anxiety regarding the community living outside the centre due to lack of familiarity with other communities;
- stress at being forced to live with people from certain nationalities with whom you may not have good relationships;
- fear of what the future brings, as the asylum process can be lengthy and you feel you cannot plan your life until you know if you will get status to remain or be deported;
- lack of after school support for teenagers attending schools in Limerick City.

A minority of children (under 12 years old) reported distress from trauma they suffered as a result of witnessing extreme violence in their native countries primarily as a result of genocide and civil war. These children reported that they had received no additional psychological supports on their arrival in Ireland.

A number of recommendations were contained within the research document in order to develop an inter-agency response to some of the issues raised by the children.

## **5.0 Ó Thaighde go Gníomhartha Straitéiseacha**

### *From Research to Strategic Actions*

Following completion of the research phase, a number of workshops targeting local service providers and stakeholders were held by the Inter-Agency Steering Group in October and November 2007. The aim of this process was to provide stakeholders, and service providers who participated in the research phase, with the opportunity to reflect on the learning and explore practical actions in response to the identified needs. Feedback from the thematic workshops was constructive with representation from a broad range of disciplines (See Appendix 2).

Through a process of discussion and negotiation, actions were developed, with agencies identifying their potential roles as a partner or lead partner to implement the action. Throughout 2008 actions were further developed, refined and redrafted. For certain themes, groups of stakeholders were convened to examine the actions proposed. In other themes, individual agencies were consulted further on actions. By December 2008 the draft strategy was finalised.

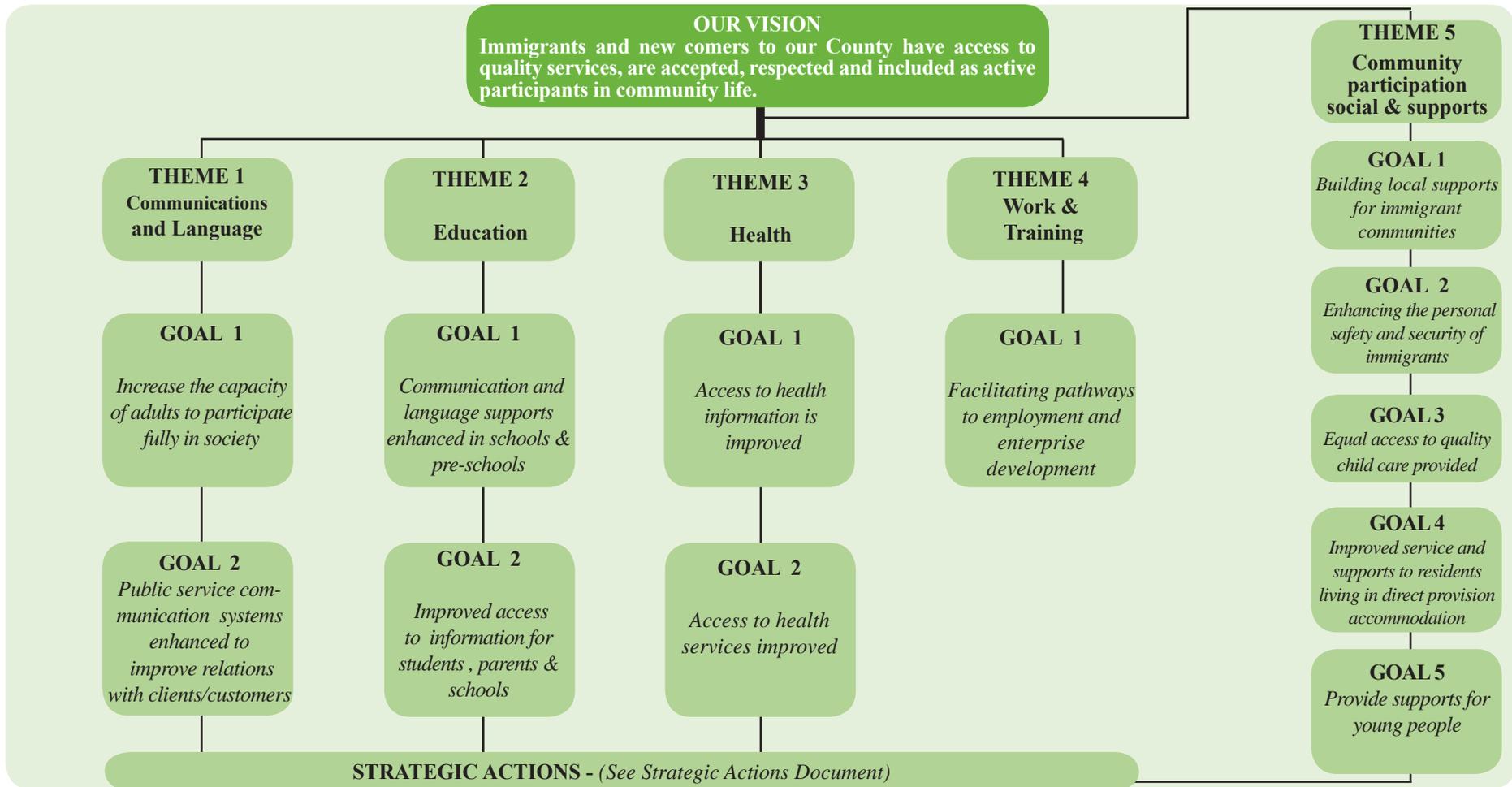
### **5.1 Re-connecting with the Community**

Whilst cross-sectoral and inter-agency working is a core value underpinning the strategy, it was essential that the key message contained within each action reflected the needs coming from the communities.

In January 2009, the Steering Group consulted with members of the immigrant communities to provide feedback on the data gathered and the actions proposed in the strategy. A total of eight focus groups were held across the County. Over 70 people from various immigrant communities attended and were given the opportunity to comment and review each proposed action before the document was finalised by the Inter-Agency Steering Group.

## 6.0 STRAITÉIS CHOMHTHÁITE UM SHEIRBHÍSÍ A CHOMHORDÚ DO PHOBAIL NA nINIMIRCEACH i gCONTAE AN CHLÁIR

### INTEGRATED STRATEGY FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF SERVICES TO IMMIGRANTS IN COUNTY CLARE



## 7.0 Forfheidhmiú na Straitéise agus Monatóireacht agus Measúnú a dhéanamh uirthi:

### *Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategy:*

This strategy document sets out a common set of goals and actions that have been developed over the past two years through extensive consultation with the immigrant community and other stakeholders (i.e. community and voluntary organisations, local agencies and service providers). The actions set out in the strategy are informed by the evidence gathered in the research and consultation phases.

The success of the strategy is dependent on the continued commitment of all agencies to move from planning to action, resulting in positive change. At the final stage of writing this document it must be acknowledged that the economic landscape both nationally and locally has significantly changed since undertaking the development of the strategy in 2006. Public, private and community sectors are currently trying to respond and plan in an environment that is uncertain. Collective action and commitment from all agencies is needed now more than ever before. While the profile of the population has changed to some degree as a result of the economic downturn, many immigrants will continue to live in Ireland. Service providers and agencies have a responsibility to continue to ensure that services for all the community are delivered in an efficient, integrated, accessible, and cost effective way.

A full Operational Plan for the strategy will be developed to guide the implementation process.

Key elements of this plan will involve:

1. The Strategy will seek endorsement by the Clare County Development Board Social Inclusion Measures Implementation Group (SIM Implementation Group) and the Clare County Development Board.
2. The overall implementation of the strategy will be the responsibility of an Inter-Agency Steering group. This role of the group will be to:
  - Prepare an Operational Plan for implementation;
  - Oversee implementation of the strategy;
  - Oversee monitoring of the strategy;
  - Liaise with lead partners to ensure that the strategy is meeting targets and timescales set;
  - Convene at least two annual meeting with lead partners to ensure that actions are progressing;
  - Develop consultative mechanisms to ensure the strategy is responsive to emerging needs of the immigrant community and identify changes as required;
  - Report to SIM Implementation Group of the CDB on overall progress of the Strategy.
  - Report on any barriers to implementation to the SIM Implementation Group of the CDB

3. Responsibility for driving the implementation of actions will rest with the nominated Lead Partners. The Lead Partner will:
  - Liaise with partner agencies involved in the proposed action;
  - Develop an Operational Plan to achieve the action setting out timescale, performance indicators, resource requirements, funding available or funding to be sourced;
  - Undertake action in partnership with nominated agencies;
  - Report to Inter-Agency Steering Group on progress.

### Monitoring the Strategy

- An Inter-Agency Steering Group will oversee the monitoring of the strategy.
- Each Lead Partner will report to the Steering Group on a six monthly basis. Reports will be compiled into the monitoring report for the Steering Group.
- The Steering Group will review and consider the overall achievement of goals and actions.
- Monitoring report will be provided to the SIM Implementation Group for review.
- An Annual Planning and Review session for Lead Partner and Partners will be held to monitor progress and allow for the Strategy to be updated as required.

### Evaluation

Lead Partners will be supported to ensure that the work on actions is recorded and documented to support the future evaluation of actions.

An internal evaluation of the Strategy will be undertaken at the end of year two with a view to informing the next phase post 2012.

An external evaluation of the Strategy will be provided at the end of year three. Funding for this evaluation will need to be sourced.

## **Aguisín 1: Grúpa Stiúrtha Idirghníomhaireachta um Sheirbhísí a Chomhordú do Phobail na nInimirceach i gContae an Chláir**

### **Appendix 1: Inter-Agency Steering Group for the Coordination of Services to the Immigrant Communities in County Clare**

#### ***List of Members***

HSE West, Jacqui Deevy (Chairperson of Steering Group)  
Clarecare, Anne Loftus  
Clare County Council, Nicola Cullinan and Etain Mc Coeey  
Citizens Information Service, Paul Woulfe  
Clare Immigrant Support Centre, Orla Ní Eíilí  
Clare Vocational Education Committee, Karl Quinn  
Clare Youth Service, Edel Mc Donough and Toni Knowles  
Department of Education and Science, Patricia Sheehan  
Ennis Community Development Project, Colette Bradley  
Ennis Schools Completion Programme, Áine Meehan  
Ennis West Partners, Dolores Nevin  
FÁS, Nancy Howley  
HSE West - Áine Mellett, Jan Godfrey, Maurice Hoare, Sinéad Collopy,  
Susan Kelleher.

## Appendix 2: Research and Consultation Events

### Research – Questionnaire Respondents

Research Group	Number of Participants	Nationality
Asylum Seekers	56	Respondents included but were not limited to Ukrainian, Nigerian, Ghanaian, Sudanese, Russian, Somali, Cuban, Guatemalan, Cameroon, Bangladeshi, Sierra Leone, South African, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Georgia.
Immigrants	82	29 were completed by Polish nationals. Other nationalities represented in this survey included Brazilians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Russians, Portuguese, Slovaks, Kosovans, Nigerians, Croatians, and Bangladeshis, as well as one citizen each from France, El Salvador, Tanzania, Sudan, the Netherlands, Morocco, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey
Focus Group <b>Ennis</b>	6	Burundi, Ghana, Nigeria (4)
Focus Group <b>Ennis VEC Students</b>	12	Moroccan (1) Bangladesh (2), Paraguay (1), French (1) Lithuania (1), German (2), Croatia (1), Latvia (1), Russia (1), Slovakia (1)
Focus Group <b>Ennistymon</b>	7	Polish (5), Canada (1), German (1)
Focus Group <b>Scariff</b>	5	English (1), USA (1), Polish (1), Pakistan (2)
Focus Group <b>Kilrush</b>	15	Polish (15)
Focus Group <b>Knockalisheen Residents</b>	11	Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Somalia, Central African Republic, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Sudan

## Research Focus Groups

Focus Group	Number of Participants	Agencies Represented
Health and welfare	6	HSE services (Public Health Nursing, Mental Health services, Community Development, Mid Western Regional Hospital Ennis)
Adult Education	9	VEC teaching staff
Clarecare	8	Clarecare staff
Housing and Accommodation	6	Ennis Town Council, HSE, Clare Haven Services
Social Integration	14	Ennis CDP, Irish Refugee Council, International Women's Group, Clare County Childcare Committee, Local Development Social Inclusion Programme, Clarecare, North West Clare FRC, Clare Youth Service, HSE
Education – Primary Schools	4	Gaelscoil Mhichíl Ciosog, Ennis Educate Together, Scoil Criost Ri, Holy Family Senior School
Health Service Providers working at Knockalisheen (Direct Provision Accommodation and Centre)	8	HSE staff (Community Welfare Officers, hospital, Child Protection and Family Support, Mental Health, Social Inclusion, Public Health Nursing)

## HSE Children's Research Focus Groups

Date 2007	Focus Group	Number of Participants	Nationality
May 14	Early Teen Group (13-16 years old)	17	Brazil, Czech Republic, Poland, Macedonia, China, Morocco, Slovakia, Lithuania, Nigeria
May 17	Knockalisheen (7-12 years old)	12	African & Middle Eastern (Children requested their specific nationalities not to be reported because of anonymity concerns)
May 18	Young Adults (Focus Group Two 15 – 18 years old)	10	Lithuania, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, China, Ghana
May 21	Young Adults (Focus Group One 16 – 18 years)	13	The Philippines, Dutch/African, Morocco, Slovakia, Lithuania, Germany, Nigeria, Latvia, English/Nigerian
	Knockalisheen (Young Adults Focus Group 15 – 20 years)		Eastern European/Baltic Origin ( Children requested their specific nationalities not to be reported because of anonymity concerns)
May 22 & 23	Young Adults ( Focus Group Three 16-20 years)	13	Czech Republic, Slovakia, Nigeria, Liberia, South Africa, Guinea
June 5/8/11	7-12 years old Focus Groups	38	Albania, Kosovo, Morocco, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Lithuania, Pakistan, Germany, Nigeria, Macedonia Rwanda, Kenya, Poland, Latvia, Hungary, South Africa

## Stakeholder Consultations:

Date	Number of Participants	Agencies Represented
22/10/07	34	HSE, Department of Education and Science, Educate Together, Clare VEC, Clare Education Centre, Clare Immigrant Support Centre, Clarecare, Ennis CDP, Clare Youth Service, Ennis West Partners, An Garda Síochána, Citizen's Information Service, FÁS, Clare County Council, Shannon Development
09/11/07	27	Department of Education and Science, Ennis Educate Together School, VEC, CISC, Clarecare, Ennis CDP, Ennis West Partners, An Garda Síochána, Clare Youth Service, HSE, FÁS, Ennis Chambers of Commerce, Citizens Information Centre
05/12/07	17	HSE, Citizens Information Service, Clare County Childcare Committee, Clare Youth Service, Ennis Community College, Clare Immigrant Support Centre, Ennis Schools Completion programme, Clarecare, An Garda Síochána, Department of Education and Science,
08/02/08	20	HSE, Clare Immigrant Support Centre, Ennis CDP, Clare County Council, Clare VEC, Clare Youth Service, Department of Education and Science, FAS, Clare County Childcare Committee, Clarecare, Ennis CDP, An Garda Síochána, Citizens Information Service, Department of Social and Family Affairs, Clare Education Centre.
28/03/08	8 – HSE Senior Executive Meeting	Health Promotion, Community Welfare, Regional Social Inclusion Unit, Adult Counselling Service, General Managers Office, Child & Family Support Service, Community Development Service

## Feedback Consultation on Strategy Document with Immigrant Communities:

Date	Focus Group	Number of Participants	Nationality
20/01/09	Clare VEC Adult Learners	9	Slovakia, Poland France, Vietnam, Cuba, Germany, Burma
21/01/09	Students Ennis Community College	17	Included Nigeria, Ghana, Lithuania, Latvia
27/01/09	East Clare	5	Poland
28/01/09	Kilrush	10	Poland
29/01/09	Ennis	11	Iran, Nigeria, Mozambique, Burundi, Cuba, Somalia, Ghana/Holland
30/01/09	Knockalisheen Residents	9	Togo, Nigeria, Albania, Ghana, Latvia, Afghanistan
03/02/09	Shannon	5	Irish, English, French, German
04/02/09	Ennistymon	1	German

### Appendix 3: Bibliography

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## **Aguisín 4: Gluais**

### **Appendix 4: Glossary**

#### **Asylum Seeker**

An Asylum-Seeker is a person who has applied for refugee status and is awaiting a decision on their case. A person seeking asylum has very limited rights and does not have the right to work. An asylum seeker is defined, by the UN (Geneva) Convention on Refugees, 1951 as:

*“Any person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of her/his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail her/himself of the protection of that country; or (any person) who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of her/his former habitual residence, is unable, or owing to such fear is unwilling to return to it”*

#### **Anti-racism and intercultural training**

Anti-racism and intercultural training seeks to challenge racism and to contribute to creating the conditions for a positive and inclusive environment for everyone within an organisation.

#### **Capacity building**

This refers to the development of knowledge and skills in individuals, organisations and communities to enable them to participate more fully in social, political and work contexts. It enables individuals and communities to become more powerful in a sustainable way, and more able to influence decisions that affect them as individuals and as communities.

#### **Citizenship**

Citizenship can be a problematic concept, particularly in relation to migrants who may not have legal citizenship of the country in which they are living. It is often seen as a legal status with associated rights (for example voting) and responsibilities (for example paying taxes); however, broader definitions of citizenship recognise it as civil, political and social in nature.

#### **Consultation**

Consultation refers to a process of seeking the views of interested parties on a particular service or policy. Interested parties can include people from minority ethnic backgrounds, staff, NGOs and special bodies. Engagement and participation are sometimes preferred as approaches and terms, as they suggest more ownership and power for minority ethnic groups.

## **Diversity**

“Diversity” is often used to mean the wide range of minority ethnic or black / minority ethnic communities. A broader usage of the term is developing and “diversity” is now used to refer to the range of individual differences demonstrated among people. Diversity can include aspects such as class, educational background, accent, mental health and political beliefs as well as traditional aspects of equal opportunities such as sex, age, disability, and race. A diversity approach focuses on mainstreaming and on the business case which values the opportunities and benefits of having diverse people. Diversity is complementary to traditional equality work and not a replacement for it.

## **Ethnic minority**

In the UK, an ethnic group was defined by the House of Lords as a group that regards itself or is regarded by others as a distinct community by virtue of certain characteristics that will help to distinguish the group from the surrounding community. Commission for Racial Equality, [www.cre.gov.uk/duty/grr/glossary.html](http://www.cre.gov.uk/duty/grr/glossary.html)

## **Ethnicity**

Ethnicity is the shared characteristics such as culture, language, religion and traditions that contribute to a person’s or group’s identity. Ethnicity has been described as residing in: - the belief by members of a social group that they are culturally distinctive and different to outsiders - their willingness to find symbolic markers of that difference (food habits, religion, forms of dress, language) and to emphasise their significance - their willingness to organise relationships with outsiders so that a kind of “group boundary” is preserved and reproduced <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

Tovey, H and Share, P (2003) “A sociology of Ireland”, pp.470-471 in Equality Authority (2006) “Traveler Ethnicity”.

## **EU National**

An EU national is a person who is a citizen of an EU member state. All EU citizens have the right to move freely within the European Union, including Romania and Bulgaria who joined on 1st January 2007. A number of EU states have restrictions on who can access their labour market. Ireland imposed restrictions on Romanian and Bulgarian nationals accessing jobs here.

## **Green Card**

A Green Card is a type of work permit issued for selected professional areas and for jobs with a salary of €60,000 and over. It is valid for two years.

## Integration

The concept of integration is a complex one and, while there are many different views as to what constitutes integration, it is still part of an ongoing debate in Ireland. In the most simplistic terms, integration can be a one-way process (in effect assimilation) where minority communities are expected to adapt or change without any expectation of change from the state or majority communities. On the other hand, integration can be a multi-faceted, intercultural process that requires the state, majority and minority ethnic communities to work together to accommodate diversity, without glossing over challenges and barriers such as extremism or racism.

## Interculturalism

Interculturalism is essentially about the interaction between majority and minority cultures to foster understanding and respect. It is about ensuring that cultural diversity is acknowledged and catered for. “Developing a more inclusive and intercultural society is about inclusion by design, not as an add-on or afterthought. It is essentially about creating the conditions for interaction, equality of opportunity, understanding and respect.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, (2005) “Planning for Diversity, the National Action Plan Against Racism”, p.38.

## Irish-born child

“Irish-born child”, sometimes referred to as IBC, usually refers to a child born in Ireland whose parents are not Irish or EEA citizens. Prior to January 2005, Irish-born children were entitled to Irish citizenship. Following the Citizenship Referendum in 2004, legislation was passed so that it was no longer possible for persons born in Ireland to obtain automatic Irish citizenship.

## Leave to Remain

This is a statement of the conditions and the duration on which a non-EEA citizen is permitted to remain in Ireland. It is given at the discretion of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, usually on humanitarian grounds.

## Migrant worker

The term “migrant worker” refers to a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Article 2, United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

## Minority ethnic group(s)

Sometimes also described as ‘Black and minority ethnic group(s)’, this term is meant to describe a group whose ethnicity is distinct from that of the majority of the population. The term “ethnic minority” is sometimes used, but the term ‘minority ethnic’ draws attention to the fact that there are majorities and minorities, all with their own ethnicity – white Irish people are the majority ethnic group. Although this is the NCCRI’s preferred term, one limitation of the term ‘minority ethnic group’ is that it can infer that people from a minority ethnic background are immediately identifiable with, or would wish to be identifiable with, a particular group. Service providers should be aware that this is not always the case.

## Non-EU National

A Non-EU national is a person who is not a citizen of an EU member state. They have fewer rights in EU countries than EU migrant workers.

## Racism

Racism is a specific form of discrimination and exclusion faced by minority ethnic groups. It is based on the false belief that some “races” are inherently superior to others because of different skin colour, nationality, ethnic or cultural background. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination defines racial discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on ‘race’, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on a equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life”.

## Refugee

A refugee is a person who has left his / her country and cannot return due to a well founded fear of persecution on the basis of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion

4. In Ireland, membership of a social group includes “...membership of a trade union... membership of a group of persons whose defining characteristic is their belonging to the female or male sex or having a particular sexual orientation.”<sup>52</sup> (See also asylum seeker and leave to remain).

4

According to the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, to which Ireland is a signatory.

4

Section 1 Refugee Act 1996 (as amended).

## Roma

Roma refers to the international Roma community, which is made up of diverse groups throughout the world. As a minority ethnic group, the Roma do not have an exclusive nation or homeland but share a common ancestry of origin, history and culture. Despite a traditional nomadic culture, today many Roma groups are settled, particularly in the former Eastern European countries where sedentary living was enforced under communist rule. However, there are still Roma who are peripatetic nomads, that is they travel in order to practice their trades and skills where they can.

## Targeting

Targeting is about the development of specific policy and service provision priorities and strategies tailored to meet the needs of minority ethnic groups. Targeting can include, but is not limited to, positive action measures.

## Third-country national

Third Country Nationals may be defined as people from non EU countries who legally entered an EU member state (EU27)

## Work Permit

A Work Permit gives permission for a migrant worker to be employed in a specific job. The employer must show that there are no Irish or EU candidates available to fill the position. A Work Permit is normally issued for two years and can be renewed for three years.

**Dáil**-Parliament, Lower House

**Gaelscoileanna**-Schools run through the medium of Irish

**Gardaí/Gárda Síochána**-Police

**Tánaiste**- Deputy Prime Minister

**Taoiseach**-Prime Minister

## List of Abbreviations

- NPAR - National Action Plan Against Racism
- CSO - Central Statistics Office
- SIM - Social Inclusion Implementation Group Committee of the County Development Board
- CDB - County Development Board
- NCCRI - National Consultative Committee in Racism and Interculturalism
- EU - The European Union
- CISC - Clare Immigrant Support Centre
- HSE - Health Service Executive





