

December 2023



Leitrin Migrant Integration Strategy and Action Plan



2023-2027



Leitrin
DEVELOPMENT
company



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This project funded the development of a 5-year Migrant Integration Strategy for Co. Leitrim. The study was commissioned by Leitrim Development Company (on behalf of a project steering group with Leitrim County Council and representatives of migrant groups and the local community) undertaken by MCA Consulting.

FOREWORD

I am honoured to introduce the *Leitrim Migrant Integration Strategy 2023-2027*, a document that reflects our commitment to fostering an inclusive and welcoming community for all in County Leitrim.

This strategy will guide our response to the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly diverse population in County Leitrim. It is built on the strong foundation of integration work carried out by a range of agencies and community groups since the arrival of the first programme refugees to Leitrim over two decades ago.

The publication is the culmination of an extensive consultation process with key agency stakeholders, and with members and groups from the growing migrant population of County Leitrim.

Informed by the *National Migration Integration Strategy: A Blueprint for the Future*, the ambition of this strategy is that everyone in County Leitrim feels a sense of belonging and can contribute fully to its social, economic, and cultural life.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who engaged with us in the preparation of this document. A particular word of thanks to Bernie Donoghue, Social Inclusion Manager with Leitrim Development Company, for co-ordinating the consultation process.

Sincere thanks to the members of the working group, Leitrim County Council, and Leitrim International Community group. I want to also express my appreciation to those agencies and groups who have committed to actions set out within the Strategy.

Leitrim Development Company, along with our partner Leitrim County Council, are fully committed to ensuring the implementation of this Strategy over the next five years. We look forward to continued collaboration with other agencies, public bodies and community groups to ensure the support and inclusion of all migrants who have chosen to make County Leitrim their home.

Chris Gonley

Chief Executive Officer

Leitrim Development Company



Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council

The ambition for Leitrim is for a County that is connected, inclusive and sustainable, where a collaborative approach contributes to shared prosperity and wellbeing, and a County that is known as a great place to live, visit, work, invest and grow.

This ambition fully embraces our new communities. We welcome the collaborative approach between Leitrim Development Company and Leitrim County Council in developing this strategy.

Leitrim County Council fully commits to implementing the actions identified in the strategy to promote the engagement of our new communities with the broader community.

We have identified the need to ensure that the necessary supports are in place to meet the needs of new communities and Ukrainian refugees, including access to healthcare, education, employment and language training. People live their lives in their local communities which is why having a locally focused integration strategy is so important.

I welcome the fact that the strategy commits to implementing annual priority actions based on this initial action plan and that Leitrim County Council's Integration Team, in partnership with the wider Leitrim Integration Community Forum will take a lead in co-ordinating the delivery of this strategy.

Joseph Gilhooly

Interim Chief Executive

Leitrim County Council

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Section 1: Introduction to the Co. Leitrim Migrant Integration Strategy

1.1 Introduction

Situated in the Northwest of Ireland, Leitrim occupies a unique regional position. The South of the county touches the Midlands, bordering Roscommon, Longford and Cavan. The North of the county touches the Atlantic coastline, bordering Donegal, Sligo, and Fermanagh in Northern Ireland. The county has been traditionally characterised by underdevelopment and outmigration, but with a relatively unspoilt environment and a rich cultural and historical heritage, Leitrim is a county with a high quality-of-life and great potential for growth.

Despite being the smallest county by population, Leitrim has experienced a 10% increase in population since 2016, one of the largest increases in the State. This growth has been largely fuelled by inward migration into the county, and around a third of this growth has come from people born outside of Ireland. According to the last Census of 2022ⁱ, around 10% of the population of Leitrim have non-Irish citizenship. Furthermore, many with Irish citizenship come from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (according to the 2022 Census, around 7% of Irish Citizens identify as a non-white Irish ethnicity). In the county town of Carrick-on-Shannon for example, just 64% of the population identified their ethnicity as White Irish in Census 2022. Additionally, the large numbers of (approximately 1400) Ukrainian citizens seeking international protection have only further increased the non-Irish population of the county since the last Census. Within this context, it is essential that there is a vision and a strategy for Leitrim in how it accommodates, values and embraces the increasing national, ethnic and cultural diversity of the county.

The vision for the Leitrim Migrant Integration Strategy, which is derived from the National Migrant Integration Strategyⁱⁱ, is as follows:

‘Migrants are facilitated to play a full and active role in the County. Integration and cohesion are core principles of life in the County. Institutions and organisations in the county work together to promote intercultural integration, embrace the advantages of a rights-based approach to diversity and integration and build a society of equals at local level.’

1.2 How the Leitrim Integration Strategy was developed

This strategy has been developed using a range of methods including:

- A **review of existing published material** on migrant integration nationally and at a European level.
- A demographic analysis of the **breakdown of the migrant population** in Co. Leitrim from the CSO Census 2016ⁱⁱⁱ data and updated with the available data from Census 2022^{iv} at time of publishing.
- A comprehensive **survey of service providers** in County Leitrim. This included 20 in-depth questions on both an online platform and hard copy questionnaires. 25 service provider respondents gave quantitative and detailed qualitative data.
- A comprehensive **survey of migrants** in County Leitrim. This comprised of 20 in-depth questions on both an online platform and hard copy questionnaires. 101 members of the migrant community completed the survey over a 3-month period in Spring 2023.
- Consultations (interviews) with key stakeholders working on migrant integration issues locally through telephone conversations and through online conferencing software such as zoom.

Extensive consultation with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers through a series of focus groups. These took place with the assistance of staff of Leitrim Development Company and members of the migrant community during February and March 2023.

- A series of **consultation meetings** were held at locations across the county, 62 people attended these meetings, over 95% of which were from the migrant community. These were supplemented by a number of additional meetings/interviews with a cross-section of migrants. A further 101 migrants were consulted as a result of these more targeted consultations online using a survey.

Table 1: Consultations with Migrant Communities

Migrant Community	No. in Attendance
Latin American Community	6
African Community	5
Ukrainian Community	29
Asylum Seekers	12
Russian / German Community	3
Syrian Community/Kurdish/Jordanian Palestinian	7
Cross section of other Nationalities (online survey)	101
No. of migrants that directly engaged in consultation process in Spring 2023	163

- An **online survey for service providers and key stakeholders** which ran for 7 weeks. An invitation to participate in the survey was sent to all relevant agencies and council staff. A total of 25 respondents completed the questionnaire. A number of sections or business units of the same organisation completed the survey.

Table 2: Stakeholder Survey Respondents

Service Providers and Key Stakeholders
Ardvarney National School
Breffni Family Resource Centre
Department of Social Protection
DVAS (Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan)
Foróige Youth & Family Support Services
Health Service Executive
Leckaun National School
Leitrim County Council
Leitrim County Council Arts Office
Leitrim Development Company
Leitrim Sports Partnership
Leitrim Volunteer Centre
Lough Allen College
Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB
Parent Hub Sligo Leitrim West Cavan
Sligo Cancer support centre
Sligo Family Resource Centre
Sligo Social Services
Sligo/Leitrim home youth liaison service
St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village

- **Additional Consultations included:**
A planning and consultation meeting with the strategy subcommittee.

1.3 What is integration?

1.3.1 Defining Integration

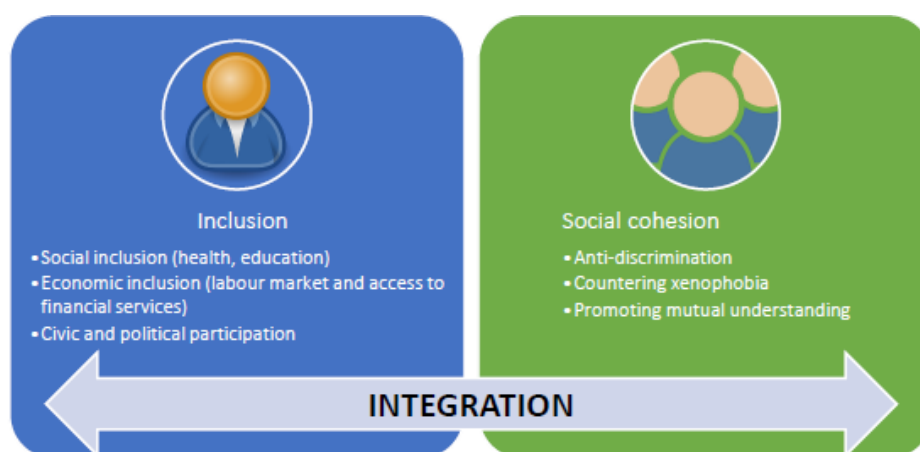
Integration is defined in Irish policy as the “ability to participate to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity”.^v The 2017 Migrant Integration Strategy vision is that “migrants are facilitated 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”.^{vi}

Migrant integration has gained prominence on the global agenda with the advent of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda’s call to “leave no one behind”—including migrants.^{vii} The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership.^{viii} One of these is Goal 10 - “Reduce inequality within and among countries”. Within this are 10 sub-goals, three of which are particularly relevant to this strategy.¹

Concepts closely related to integration include social inclusion and social cohesion. Social inclusion refers to migrants’ inclusion and participation into host communities. Social cohesion refers to concepts such as anti-discrimination, countering xenophobia and promoting mutual understanding.^{ix}

In a recent IOM paper^x Integration is defined as the two-way process of **mutual adaptation between migrants and host societies** in which migrants are incorporated into the social, economic, cultural and political life of the receiving community. As such, integration entails a set of **joint responsibilities for migrants and host communities**, and, in this broad understanding, incorporates other related notions such as social inclusion and social cohesion. Integration is a cross-cutting and multi-sectoral issue that pertains to policy areas that address the economic, social, legal, cultural, and civic spheres and impacts all aspects of migrants’ lives and their communities.

Figure 1: Elements of Integration^{xi}



¹ Three relevant goals to this strategy are: **10.2** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status; **10.3** Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard; **10.7:** Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies

1.3.2 Integration Policy at European Level

The European Union (EU) identifies^{xii} immigration as a permanent feature of European society, recognising that if the flow of immigrants is orderly and well-managed, Member States can reap many benefits. These include stronger economies, greater social cohesion, an increased feeling of security, and cultural diversity. Taken together and across all Member States, these benefits advance the European process and strengthen the Union's position in the world.

1.3.3 Integration Policy at National Level

The National Migrant Integration Strategy^{xiii} published in February 2017 details the Government's approach to the issue of migrant integration for the period from 2017 to 2020. It envisages a whole-of-Government approach involving actions by all Departments. It is targeted at all migrants, (including refugees), who are legally residing in the State and those who have become naturalised Irish citizens, but who were born outside Ireland.

The National Strategy contains 76 actions under a variety of themes including citizenship and residency, access to public services and social inclusion, education, employment and pathways to work, health, integration in the community, political participation, promoting intercultural awareness and combating racism and xenophobia, volunteering and sport. The 76 actions are being delivered by government departments, local authorities, public bodies, local communities, the business sector, sporting and arts organisations and NGOs.

Actions applicable to all government departments and agencies 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; and
- Clear information on how to make a complaint about racist behaviour by staff or another customer

The vision of the National Strategy 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.

In the programme for Government, a commitment was made to end the system of Direct Provision and replace it with a new International Protection accommodation model centred on a not-for-profit approach. As part of the process, the Minister for Children, Disability, Equality, Integration and Youth (DCEDIT) Mr. Roderic O’Gorman TD, published A White Paper to End Direct Provision and to Establish a New International Protection Support Service.^{xiv}

Grounded in the principles of human rights, the White Paper provides an ambitious and comprehensive new model of accommodation and other supports in health, housing, education, and employment for applicants in Ireland’s International Protection System. A Cornerstone of this new model is a focus on supporting the principle of ‘integration from day one’ with the overarching aim of empowering applicants to live independently in the community. To achieve this goal, applicants will require access to a network of assistance and supports. This will be delivered through the expansion of the model of inter-agency working groups and resettlement and intercultural workers currently in place for the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP).

In an expansion of this system, a new national network of Local Authority Integration Teams (LAIT’s) located in each local authority, will be established to co-ordinate the provision of integration supports to new arrivals, within the following cohorts.

1. Applicants for International Protection (IP Applicants)
2. Those with Refugee, Subsidiary Protection, or Permission to Remain status.
3. Programme Refugees
4. Beneficiaries of Temporary Accommodation (BOTP)


National Equality Legislation

Equality legislation^{xv} prohibits discrimination on nine grounds: race, gender, civil status, family status, age, 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. There are different kinds of discrimination. They all involve comparison with how other people are treated. The Equal Status Acts (2000-2018) protects nine categories of people: generally, and ten groups of people in relation to accommodation.² Not all differences of treatment are seen as discrimination under the Equal Status Acts.

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 imposes a statutory obligation on public bodies in performing their functions to have regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination.
- promote equality of opportunity and treatment for staff and persons to whom it provides services.
- protect the human rights of staff and services users.

² Gender ground, civil status ground, family status ground, age ground, race ground, religion ground, disability ground, sexual orientation ground and membership of the Traveller community ground (9) and housing assistance ground (10).



Since 2014, the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty is part of the legislative framework governing human rights and equality in Ireland. The 2014 Act requires a public body, having regard to its functions, purpose, size and resources available to it, to: 1. Assess - an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body; 2. Address - set out the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues; 3. Report - report on developments and achievements in its annual report.

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) was established in 2014 as an independent statutory body that accounts directly to the Oireachtas. Its purpose is to promote and protect human rights and equality in Ireland and build a culture of respect for human rights, equality and intercultural understanding in the State.

1.3.4 Integration Policy at County Level


Leitrim Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), a committee of Leitrim County Council and established in 2014, has responsibility for the development and implementation of a six-year Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for Co. Leitrim. The committee is made up of representatives from the County Council, local development companies, public bodies and representatives of social, economic, environmental and community interests. The LCDC is a sub-committee of the Leitrim County Council but is independent in the discharge of its functions. The 19-member LCDC committee is made up of nine Statutory Members and ten Non-Statutory Members.

Goal 1 of the 2023-2029 LECP (2024) is that “Leitrim will continue to develop as an inclusive, healthy and equitable county that supports wellbeing and is celebrated as a great place to live”.^{xvi} One of the specific actions³ within this goal is “developing initiatives to promote the integration of our new communities”, of which the implementation of this Migrant Integration Strategy is the key performance indicator.

Leitrim Refugee Resettlement Programme

In 1998 the Irish Government commenced participation in the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) Refugee Resettlement Programme and agreed to annually admit up to ten persons who were categorised by UNHCR as vulnerable together with members of their families. In practice, this transpired to admitting approximately 40 persons per year. In 2005 the Government increased the Quota from 40 to 200 persons per annum. In general resettlement refugees have the same rights and privileges as convention refugees. Resettlement is an instrument of protection normally employed by the UNHCR where refugee's safety, health or fundamental human rights are at risk in the country where they initially sought refuge. The decision to resettle refugees is taken only when other options such as voluntary repatriation and local integration are not an option. In 2005 and 2006, around 100 Kurdish refugees in Ireland were resettled to Carrick on Shannon. Over two decades with the assistance of a range of agencies and the local community, Kurdish people have become integrated into the community in Leitrim: there are Kurdish-owned businesses in Carrick-on-Shannon, Nowruz celebrations are held to mark the Kurdish New Year, and the number of Kurds has grown as members of the original families have started families of their own.^{xvii}

³ LCC, LSP, LDC, PPN, Rosebank, Traveller Group as Enabling Agencies



In 2017, 60 individuals arrived under the Refugee Resettlement Programme from Syria. This consisted of 9 families settled in Carrick on Shannon and 6 families settled in Drumshanbo. A local committee with representatives from all the relevant agencies was established and led by Leitrim County Council.

Leitrim International Community Group (LICG)

LICG was founded in 2015 with the assistance of Leitrim Development Company Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and it covers the geographical area of South Leitrim. It has members from over 27 countries from around the world and from every continent. The group is run by a voluntary committee made up of different nationalities who have come to live in Leitrim.

The aim of the group is to bring Irish and people of other cultures together in a shared respectful environment and to act as a collective representative voice for migrants in Leitrim. Everyone is welcome to join the group and the group has a high profile with over 76 members on a WhatsApp group, a Facebook page and a website page. The mission of LICG is to raise awareness of different cultures in Leitrim, to bring all cultures together in a shared space, to reduce racism and make presentations in community settings to learn about different cultures.

LICG run integration events annually and usually have between 40-60 people in attendance. Events have included Newroz, Holi, Nigerian Independence Day and a Festival of Nations celebrating food, song and dance. They have also run anti-racism workshops in conjunction with Leitrim Development Company. LICG participated on a PEACE funded project implemented by Leitrim Development Company with training on cultural awareness, community development and peace building. The group have also hosted films depicting history from different countries.

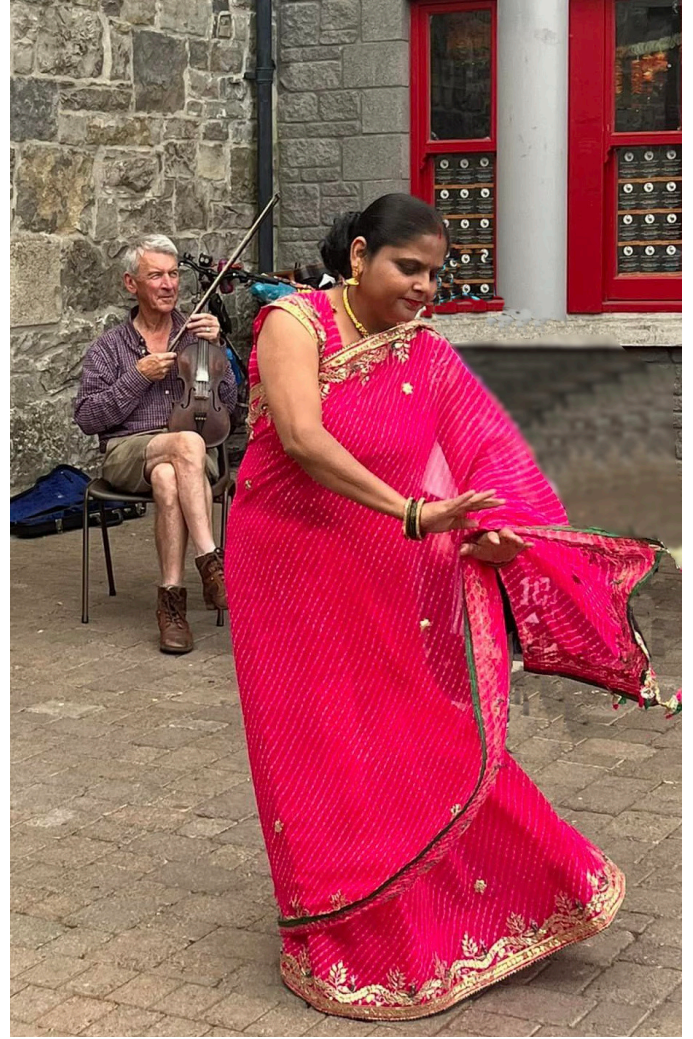
The group has been successful in accessing funding from Leitrim Development Company SICAP Programme and annual funding from the Community Integration Fund in recent years.

Leitrim Intercultural Forum

Leitrim Intercultural Forum was established in 2010 in response to the increased ethnic diversity in the County. The aim of Leitrim Intercultural Forum is to provide a welcoming and supportive space for people of all nationalities to make connections, have a good quality of life, engage in social activities, and the sharing of skills and experience that reflect the diversity of group members

Objectives of Leitrim Intercultural Forum include: Visibility and outreach activities promoting integration; Education, awareness raising and experience sharing; Good governance and accessing resources and funding for activities. The group has carried out a range of intercultural activities and integration supports including; intercultural family day events, arts workshops, music workshops and St Patricks Day Floats. In recent years, activities have been based mainly in the North Leitrim area.

Leitrim Intercultural Forum response to the Ukrainian community is currently their core of activities. The group are actively trying to support their integration by engaging them in English language learning activities and creative classes.





Section 2: Socio-Economic Diversity Data in Co. Leitrim

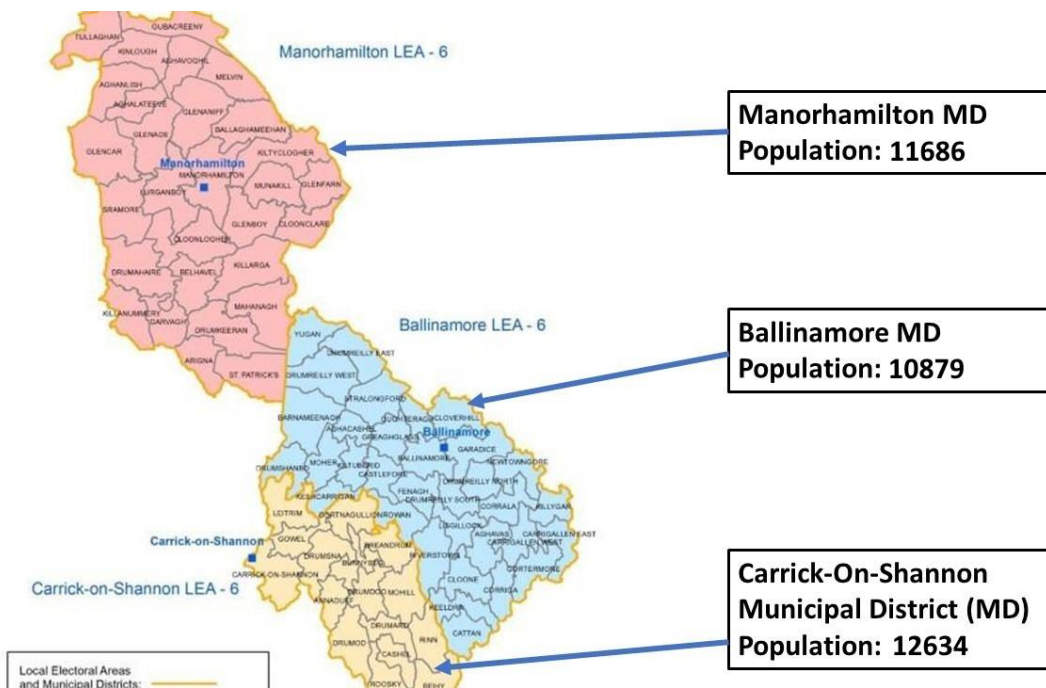
2.1 Diversity in Co. Leitrim

Co. Leitrim is a Local Authority area whose population of 35,199 (2022) represents 0.68% of the State population. Its population has grown by 21.6% over the period 2006 to 2022, greater than the State rate of 21.4%. Much of the growth in the population of the county over the period 2006 to 2022 can be attributed to migrants arriving in the county. Between 2016 and 2022 for example, Leitrim had the largest growth in population attributable to net migration, rather than natural increase, in the State.⁴

Between 1991 and 2016 the population of the county grew by 39.2% compared to 46.04% for the State as a whole. The population had declined 6.6% during the previous decade from 1981. Between 2016 and 2022, the population of Leitrim has grown by a further 9%, compared to the 8% growth in the state as whole.

Approximately 89.3% of Leitrim population live in rural communities while 10.7% are defined as living in urban areas. This is the highest proportion of rural dwellers per county by a significant margin. The county is divided into 3 Municipal Districts (MDs) or Local Electoral Areas (LEAS)⁵. See Figure 1 for details.

Figure 2: Municipal Districts of County Leitrim (Census 2022)



Carrick-On-Shannon MD recorded the largest growth in the population, an increase of 16.7% over the period 2002 to 2016, and a further 11.3% growth from 2016 to 2022. Manorhamilton MD experienced

⁴ This includes both domestic migration (i.e. from other counties within Ireland) and from outside Ireland.

⁵ MDs and LEAs are used interchangeably in this sociodemographic analysis, as they refer to the same areas in Co. Leitrim.

a 14.2% increase from 2002 to 2016, and a further 8% growth from 2016 to 2022. Finally, Ballinamore MD grew by just 5.4% between 2002 and 2016, but has grown by 10.3% from 2016 to 2022.

2.2 Birthplace

The population of County Leitrim in 2022 includes 7,189 (19.6% of population) (2016 Census 5,814 people or 18.33% of population) who were born outside of Ireland, slightly lower than the state figure of 20.7%. The majority of people living in Leitrim born outside Ireland are from the UK (10.1%), but there are also large sizeable numbers from other EU27 countries (3.1%) and from the rest of the world (3.8%). Carrick-on-Shannon LEA has the highest proportion of people born outside Ireland (20.2%), where there is a large proportion of people born in Poland (3.5%) (See Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: Proportion born outside Ireland. LEA, County and State (Census 2022)

	Carrick	Manorhamilton	Ballinamore	Co. Leitrim	State
Born Outside Ireland	20.2%	19.8%	19.6%	19.6%	20.2%

Table 4: Place of Birth. LEA, County and State (Census 2022)

Place of Birth	Carrick	Manorhamilton	Ballinamore	Co. Leitrim	State
Ireland	79.8%	80.2%	81.2%	80.4%	79.8%
United Kingdom	8.4%	12.3%	9.9%	10.1%	
Poland	3.5%	1.2%	2.0%	2.3%	
India	0.6%	0.5%	0.1%	0.4%	
Other EU272020*	3.9%	2.6%	2.6%	3.1%	
Rest of World	4.0%	3.2%	4.1%	3.8%	

*Excluding Ireland & Poland

2.3 Nationality

In the Census of 2022 in Leitrim, non-Irish citizens accounted for approximately 11% of the county's population, similar to the national average of 12%. Among the non-Irish residents, the largest group were UK citizens (1,308 people/3.8%) followed by Polish citizens (698/2.0%), Other EU27 countries (2.8%) and rest of the world (1.8%). Carrick-on-Shannon LEA has the highest proportion of non-Irish nationals in Co. Leitrim.

Table 5: Citizenship. LEA, Co. Leitrim (Census 2022)

Citizenship	Carrick	Manorhamilton	Ballinamore	Co. Leitrim
Ireland	85.1%	88.6%	87.3%	86.9%
United Kingdom	3.0%	4.0%	4.5%	3.8%
Poland	3.0%	1.1%	1.8%	2.0%
India	0.4%	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%
Other EU272020*	3.5%	2.3%	2.5%	2.8%
Rest of World	1.8%	1.5%	2.0%	1.8%
Not stated	3.3%	2.0%	1.9%	2.4%

*Excluding Ireland & Poland

Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of non-Irish nationals who are resident in the main settlements of Co. Leitrim.⁶ Carrigallen village has the highest percentage of non-Irish nationals with 28.68%. Carrick-on-Shannon (the largest urban settlement in Leitrim) has the 2nd highest proportion of non-Irish nationals, (23%) closely followed by Roosky (20.7%). This is substantially higher than the county figure of 11.2% and the national figure of 11.6%. In general, the highest concentrations of non-Irish nationals are in the small towns of the county and in the large village urban areas like Drumod and Carrigallen. It is also the case that within towns, there can be concentrations of particular nationalities. Figure 3 provides a breakdown of the ten most common nationalities of non-Irish citizens in county Leitrim.

Figure 3: Percentage of Non-Irish Citizens in Settlements in Co. Leitrim (Census 2016)

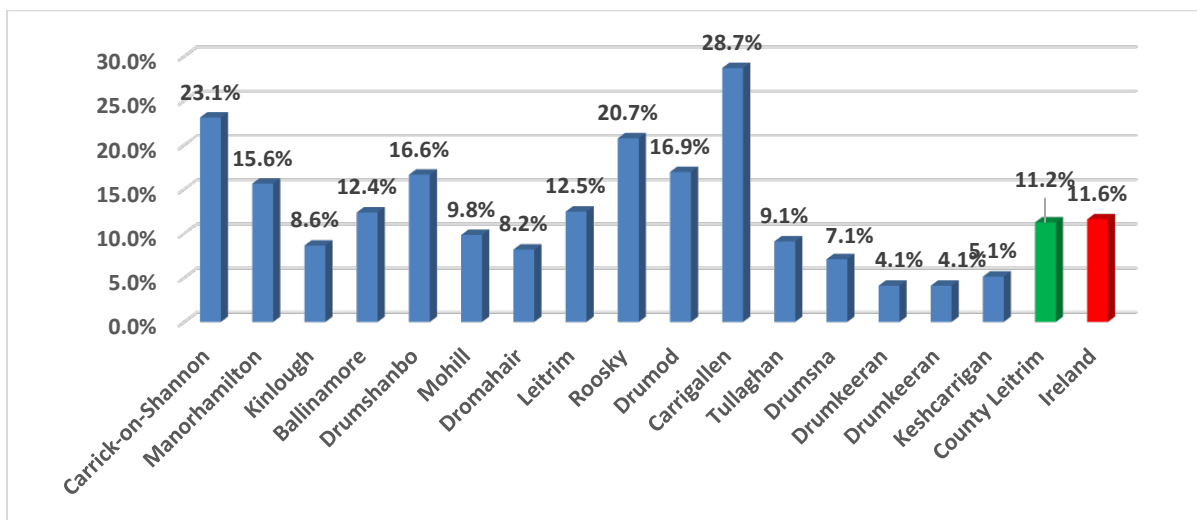
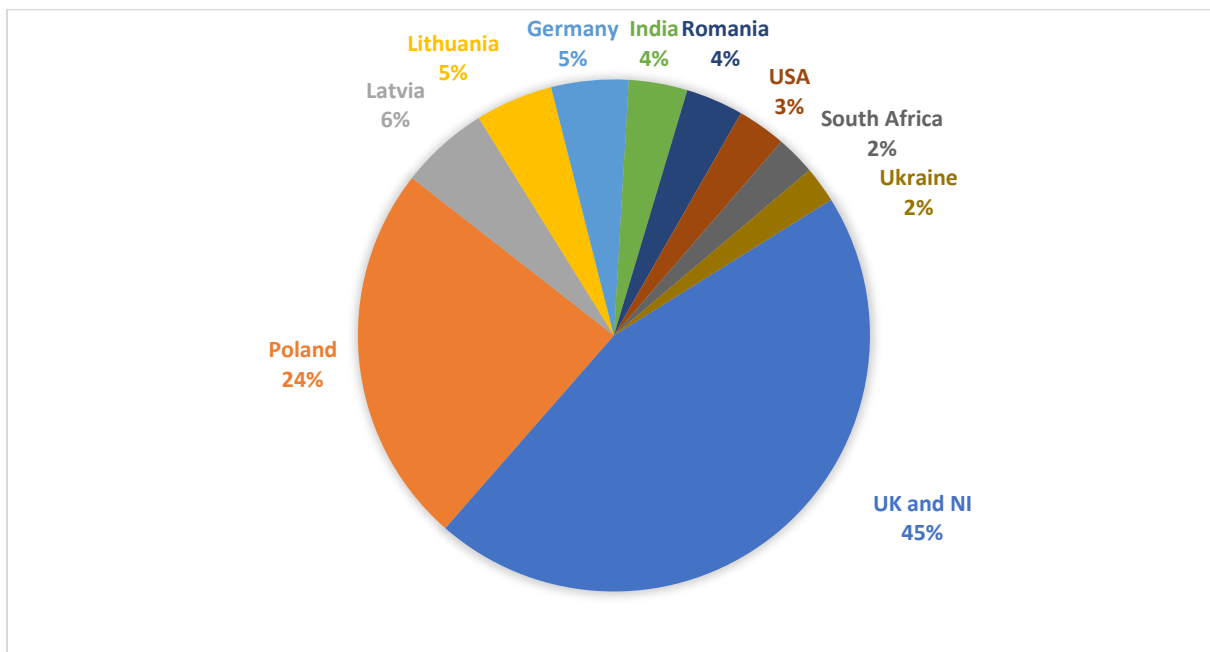


Figure 4: Nationalities of Non-Irish Citizens in Co. Leitrim (Census 2022)



⁶ Citizenship data for town and village settlements is, at time of writing, unavailable from the 2022 Census

2.4 Ethnic and Cultural Background

Within the 2022 Census respondents were asked identify their ethnic or cultural backgrounds (see Table 6 for details). White Irish make up the vast majority of ethnic identities in Leitrim in 2022 (28384/ 81.8%). And while the number of those identifying as White Irish has increased by 5.5% since 2016, this represents a lesser increase than the overall population change. Non-white ethnicities, albeit starting from a low base, have all seen the largest increases, with Black or Black Irish showing the largest increase since 2016 (+76%).

Table 6: Ethnic and Cultural Background in Co. Leitrim (Census 2016 - 2022)

Ethnicity	2016	2022	% Change
White Irish	26913	28384	+5.47%
White Irish Traveller	203	180	-11.33%
Other White	3155	3617	+14.64%
Black or Black Irish	96	169	+76.04%
Asian or Asian Irish	305	465	+52.46%
Other	333	523	+57.06%
Not stated	710	1381	+94.51%
Total	31715	34719	+9.47%

Co. Leitrim records 'white Irish' levels (81.8%) greater than the state (76.6%) (See table 7). The most significant difference between Leitrim and the State is in lower proportions of Black or Black Irish and Asian or Asian Irish in County Leitrim. Across the Municipal Districts there is significant variation, most notably Carrick-on-Shannon has the lowest proportion of White Irish and highest proportions of Asian or Asian Irish and Other. Ballinamore LEA has the highest proportion of Black or Black Irish in the county (1%).

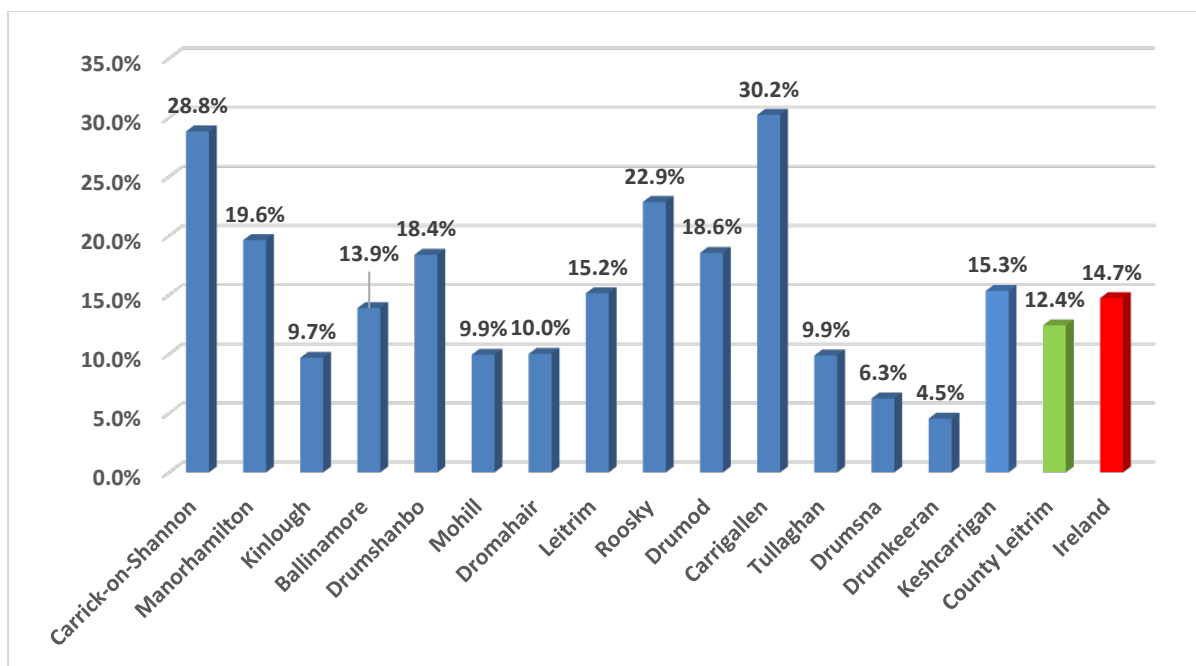
Table 7: Ethnicity by LEA, County and State (Census 2022)

Ethnicity	Carrick	Manorhamilton	Ballinamore	Co. Leitrim	State
White Irish	77.8%	84.3%	83.6%	81.8%	76.6%
White Irish Traveller	1.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.5%	0.6%
Other White	11.6%	9.1%	10.5%	10.4%	9.9%
Black or Black Irish	0.3%	0.2%	1.0%	0.5%	1.5%
Asian or Asian Irish	1.9%	1.4%	0.6%	1.3%	3.3%
Other	2.1%	1.2%	1.2%	1.5%	1.7%
Not stated	5.1%	3.5%	3.1%	4.0%	6.2%

There is also significant variation visible between different towns and villages within the county.⁷ There are 3,889 'non-white Irish' individuals in County Leitrim (12.4% of the normally resident population less "Not Stated"). Carrigallen and Carrick-on-Shannon have the highest proportions of 'non-white Irish', with Drumkeeran and Drumsna the lowest. See Figure 4 below.

⁷Citizenship data for town and village settlements is, at time of writing, unavailable from the 2022 Census

Figure 5: Proportion of Non-White Irish in Towns and Villages (Census 2016)



2.5 Ability to speak English

Table 8 details of the percentage of Co. Leitrim residents who do not have English as a first language, and their level of ability in speaking English. Similar to proportions in the State, 2% of non-native speakers (65 in Leitrim, 14828 in the State) responded 'Not at all' in their ability to speak English, and this proportion is highest in the Carrick-on-Shannon LEA. The combined proportions of those who responded 'Very Well' and 'Well' are broadly similar across LEAs, and broadly similar between County Leitrim and the State.

Table 8: Ability to Speak English. LEA, County and State (Census 2022)

Ability	Carrick	Manorhamilton	Ballinamore	Leitrim	State
Very Well	53.1%	61.7%	52.3%	55.2%	57.2%
Well	29.8%	21.6%	29.8%	27.6%	25.9%
Not well	10.9%	10.5%	12.2%	11.1%	10.7%
Not at all	2.1%	1.5%	1.7%	1.8%	2.0%
Not stated	4.2%	4.8%	3.9%	4.3%	4.1%

Table 9 details of the most popular first languages of migrants who do not have English as a first language. Polish is most spoken foreign language, spoken by 27.6% of those who do not have English as a first language in Leitrim. There are however a host of other languages spoken by over 60% of those who do not have English as a first language in Leitrim.

Table 9: Speakers of foreign language. LEA & County (Census 2022)

Language	Carrick	Manorhamilton	Ballinamore	Co. Leitrim
Spanish	60	65	45	170 (4.8%)
French	80	99	78	257(7.2%)
Polish	538	180	270	988 (27.7%)
Other (incl. not stated)	1024	602	530	2156 (60.4%)
Total	1702	946	923	3571

2.6 Religion

Although the vast majority of people in Leitrim identify as Roman Catholic, Leitrim has a highly diverse religious profile, with some religions declining in numbers, and others showing huge growth. Islam, Orthodox Christian, Unspecified Christian, Hindu, Pagan/Pantheist, and Other Religions, have all increased in Leitrim, with Islam and Orthodox more than doubling from 2011 to 2022. Those who have no religion and those who did not state their religion have also increased significantly since 2011. Religions that have declined are Roman Catholics, Church of Ireland, England, Anglican, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Buddhists, Methodists, Lutherans, and Atheists. (See Table 10 below)

Table 10: Religion in Co. Leitrim, 2011 to 2022 (Census 2011, 2016, 2022)

Religion	2011	2016	2022	Change	% Change
Roman Catholic	27394	26666	26917	-477	-1.7%
Church of Ire/Eng., Anglican, Episc.	1189	1102	1033	-156	-13.1%
Islam	165	268	344	179	+108.5%
Orthodox (Greek, Coptic, Russian)	133	148	416	283	+212.8%
Christian (Not Specified)	179	114	214	35	+19.6%
Presbyterian	94	80	82	-12	-12.8%
Hindu	43	49	56	13	+30.2%
Buddhist	67	65	49	-18	-26.9%
Jehovah's Witness	48	29	41	-7	-14.6%
Methodist, Wesleyan	78	71	62	-16	-20.5%
Pagan, Pantheist	47	51	54	7	+14.9%
Lutheran	42	28	19	-23	-54.8%
Atheist	13	58	10	-3	-23.1%
Total Other ⁸	195	285	280	85	+43.6%
No religion	1696	2397	4051	2355	+138.9%

Leitrim and its three LEAs have significantly higher proportions of Catholics than the State average, with Ballinamore having the highest proportions, almost a full 10% higher than the State. Other Religion is approximately 2.5% less than the State average each LEA. No Religion is highest in the Manorhamilton LEA, but still 1% lower than the national average (See Table 11).

⁸ Other is defined here as a religion that never had more than 40 members in Leitrim in any of the three censuses (2011, 2016, 2022). This includes Apostolic or Pentecostal, Evangelical, Protestant, Baptist, Lapsed-Catholic, Agnostic, Spiritualist, Born Again Christian, and Other Stated Religion (as defined by the Census). Except for the category ‘Protestant’, each of these increased their numbers in Co. Leitrim from 2011 to 2022.

Table 11: Religion in Leitrim, LEAs, County and State (Census 2022)

Religion	Carrick	Manorhamilton	Ballinamore	Leitrim	State
Catholic	75.9%	72.8%	78.2%	76.5%	68.8%
Other religion ⁹	7.9%	7.3%	7.8%	7.6%	9.9%
No religion	10.5%	13.8%	10.2%	11.5%	14.7%
Not stated	5.7%	3.8%	3.8%	4.5%	6.7%

2.7 Migration flows into Ireland

The number of net immigrants (net arrivals into the State) from Census 2016 to Census April 2022 is estimated to have increased by 219,787 persons or 7.5 immigrants per 1,000 people increase. This figure is expected to surge further in 2023, particularly with the increase in Ukrainian refugees in response to the current Ukraine crisis and war. In County Leitrim the number of net migrants from Census 2016 to Census April 2022 is estimated to have increased by 2,385 persons or 12.0 per 1,000 increase. The number of emigrants (leaving the state) increased significantly in the year to April 2023, from 56,100 to 64,000 (14.1%). This gave a net immigration increase of 77,700, significantly higher than pre-pandemic level of 33,700 in 2019. The natural increase of the population in County Leitrim in Census 2022 from Census 2016 was 770 persons or 4.0 per 1,000 increase.

The combined effect of natural increase and positive net migration resulted in an overall increase in the population of 3,155 since Census 2016, with 75.6% of the increase attributable to migrants. Nationally, non-Irish nationals from outside the EU continued to display strong migration flows, accounting for 25.0% of total immigrants and 24.1% of total emigrants.

2.8 Numbers of Ukrainian beneficiaries of temporary protection

The number of new Ukrainian nationals arriving in Leitrim as beneficiaries of temporary protection (BOTPs) has been significantly higher per head of population than the State average. Based on the latest data available of PPSN allocations up to October 2023, Leitrim has the second highest number of Ukrainian nationals per head of population in the State.^{xviii} A total of 1898 Ukrainians, or 5.4% of the population have come to reside in Leitrim. Other counties home to similar proportions of Ukrainian migrants are Kerry (5.7%), Donegal (4.2%), Clare (3.9%) and Sligo (3.4%). The overall average for the State is 1.8%.

The three Leitrim LEAs have some of the highest proportion of Ukrainian nationals in the State (166 LEAs total). The Ballinamore LEA has the 5th highest number of Ukrainian migrants at 6.79% of the total population, Carrick-on-Shannon the 8th highest at 6.06% of the total population, and Manorhamilton the 27th highest number at 3.36% of the population.

2.8 Numbers of International Protection Applicants

The number of International Protection Applicants (IPAs) in IPAS accommodation in Co. Leitrim fluctuates on an ongoing basis. The county has one dedicated IPAS accommodation centre, Carraig Accommodation Centre, a complex of 25 individual houses in Ballinamore town. The centre opened in 2019 and has a total capacity of 130.

⁹ Defined as a named religion other than Catholic. More detailed categories are currently unavailable by LEA.

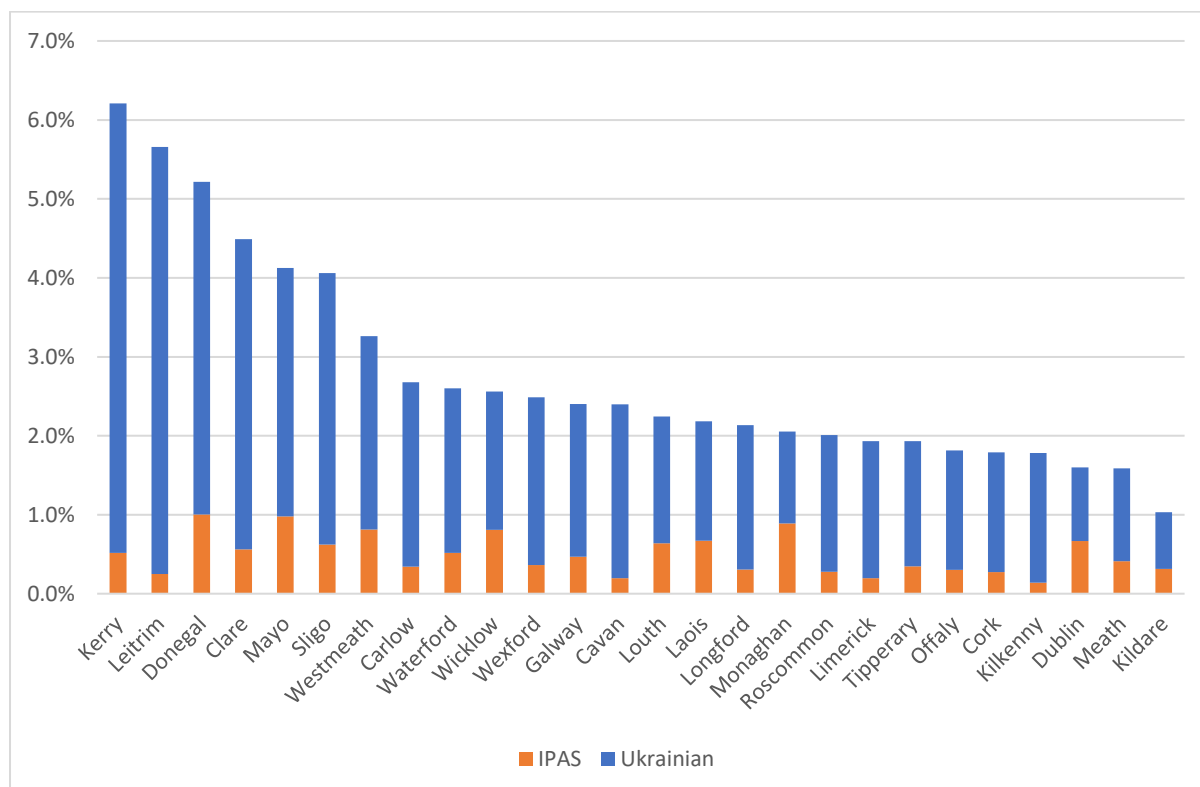
See Table 12 for a comparison of numbers in IPAS accommodation and emergency accommodation centres in counties ranked by the highest percentage per capita. County Leitrim has the fourth lowest percentage of those in direct provision per population in Ireland, and the lowest in terms of absolute numbers at 87.

If the number of Ukrainian migrants and the total number of IPAS occupants in each county are combined, Leitrim has the second highest proportion of these new arrivals per head of population in the State (See Figure 5 below).

Table 12: Occupancy of IPAS accommodation as proportion of population^{xix}

County	IPAs	% IPAs	County	IPAs	% IPAs
Donegal	1669	1.00%	Meath	905	0.41%
Mayo	1344	0.98%	Wexford	594	0.36%
Monaghan	577	0.89%	Tipperary	580	0.35%
Westmeath	779	0.81%	Carlow	211	0.34%
Wicklow	1259	0.81%	Kildare	774	0.31%
Laois	616	0.67%	Longford	143	0.31%
Dublin	9665	0.67%	Offaly	249	0.30%
Louth	886	0.64%	Roscommon	194	0.28%
Sligo	435	0.62%	Cork	1600	0.28%
Clare	715	0.56%	Leitrim	87	0.25%
Kerry	804	0.52%	Limerick	407	0.20%
Waterford	655	0.52%	Cavan	160	0.20%
Galway	1290	0.47%	Kilkenny	147	0.14%

Figure 6: Number of Ukrainian Migrants and IPAS Occupants as a proportion of population^{xx}



Section 3: Consultations: Migrant Integration in Co. Leitrim

3.1 Issues identified in the consultation process

The main issues that emerged from the consultation process are identified in Table 13.

Table 13: Issues arising from the Consultations

1. Language and Communication
<p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language classes and volunteer tutors, social opportunities in communities to help people learn to communicate. Identify gaps in English language provision. • Make English skills acquisition easier to navigate and encourage gaps in provision to be filled. • Contact hours to learn English too short for most migrants. Learn English while embedded in work and other local community-based organisations. • There is a need to support different types and levels of English language skills provision <p>Interpreters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Interpreters for language problems accessing work and services and also for new families. <p>Access to communication and technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More access to wifi and PC's for those that only have smart phones. • Induction pack for new migrants to access services online in their own language initially. <p>Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of major barriers for accessing work, earning income, interviews, CV preparation etc. • Time to learn appropriately to access employment • More awareness on laws and customs of Ireland, as some migrants from other EU countries assume their laws are compatible with ours, when there are differences.
2. Improving access to Healthcare, Transport and other Public Services
<p>Healthcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare can be difficult to access - e.g. improve transport and capacity of services • Improving weekend healthcare which is currently difficult to access • Improving access to GP. Many GPs are not taking on extra patients at all. • Improve access to mental health services for people with Trauma, PTSD e.g. out of war-torn countries. Also consequential mental health issues from lack of work, routine, social connections etc. while resident in Ireland. <p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport to key facilities on a regular basis • Transport to the bigger towns more frequently due to rural nature of county. <p>Housing and Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to affordable housing for migrants leaving IPAS centres. • Appropriate housing for large families • Ease high levels of rent for those who leave IPAS accommodation. • Encourage and incentivise landlords to accept more migrants • More access to affordable housing in general with an ease on large deposit constraints • Address the surplus of vacant houses in the county issue. Migrants are willing to renovate derelict houses to live in. • Improve support and information on housing for those granted International Protection. • Improve liaison with service providers before placing migrants in locations to ensure adequate capacity for GP access etc. • Improve wi-fi and internet availability in accommodation.

- Evenly distribute migrants throughout County to locations where services are accessible.

Training for service providers

- Continue to deliver training for front-line staff on diversity, inclusion and integration and the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty in order to enhance the intercultural competencies of staff.

One stop shop

- Establish an Integration Co-ordinator role to co-ordinate all services.
- Develop a capacity-building project for new migrants
- Increase the visibility of the PPN with migrant communities. Encourage more migrant groups to form representative structures and then to join the PPN.
- Encourage the representation of migrant communities on local council and other structures

Domestic violence services

- Assist migrants living in circumstances of domestic violence and coercive control.

Asylum process

- Speed up applications for asylum.
- Provide opportunities for those granted asylum to leave accommodation centre and work towards dependency and self-sufficiency.

Enhance access to services

- Improve communication of available services and appropriate information
- Information point (like Citizens Information) but specifically for migrants
- Access to all information in the specific language of migrants.
- Develop an information pack for migrants on life in County Leitrim and Ireland
- Online services are limited, so requirement for more assistance offline.
- Have advocates to represent migrants of a broad range of issues
- Appropriate and specific training of staff to meet the needs of Migrants.
- More support in providing jobs and social benefits to single parents.
- Develop bespoke services for specific cultural / national groups of migrants. (Census data and table from service providers survey on underserved groups of Migrants.)
- Address the issue of migrants believing that they are registered for services by being registered for voting.
- Support for families who are here on short term basis.
- Simplify the rules and means of engagement with services to negate exclusion
- Have weekend opening hours for services suitable for working migrants

Additional financial supports

- A tapering off of Social Welfare and Benefits, for those entering the workforce.
- Assistance on Medical Expenses.

3. Enhancing Education and Training Opportunities

- Assist migrants to explore quality work placements designation and what this means for migrants
- Assist migrants navigate local education and training options available to them
- Identify community transport options and solutions for migrants accessing education and training
- Host an annual Intercultural Day in County Leitrim
- Personalised mentor-like supports to upskill
- Support for asylum seekers' children to access education.
- Educate those migrants who may have deficits of knowledge on how to use particular services in Co. Leitrim.

4. Improving access to employment / self employment

- Remove discrimination in the workplace which is still evident particularly for those whose skin is different colour.
- Encourage the development of migrant-led entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurial businesses
- Discuss how to build a bank of business mentors to support emerging migrant entrepreneurs / social entrepreneurs and to offer some internships
- Improve access to job / work or volunteer if not allow to pay
- Work with all existing CE schemes to assist them to become more integration focused
- Employment improves morale, self-worth and self-esteem
- Remove barriers from accessing employment
- More migrants in Public Sector jobs
- Preparation for employment – language / CV preparation / accessing suitable job vacancies / preparing for interview / rights & entitlements & employment law and norms etc. / tailored employment supports
- Encourage new migrant entrepreneurs to join their local chamber
- Job Opportunities targeted at Young Migrants
- More recognition for overseas qualifications.
- More support in providing jobs and social benefits to single parents.
- Skin colour can still be an issue for accessing job opportunities
- Positive reports about employers and workplaces from Latvian community
- Positive report about Local Enterprise Office from Polish Community
- Some migrants will work in jobs that Irish people are reluctant too.
- Working migrants add value to an economy and pay taxes.
- There is tourism dividend with families and friends of migrants travelling to Ireland to visit.

5. Inclusion in the community

- Raise awareness and educate Irish public on the reality of migration in Ireland
- Research causal factors for discrimination and tension
- Identify best way to address discrimination and racism.
- Orientation / Induction Of new migrants into Irish society. Improve access to information and appropriate induction for when migrants arrive – what they can and cannot do – A local to speak to when they need to know information.
- Create multicultural events in towns and villages.
- Introduction of new food cultures for migrants and locals.
- More structured opportunities to meet local people.
- Improve application processing and waiting times for granting asylum
- Promote the engagement of migrants in sports and arts development activities
- Work with the Sports Partnerships to inform on guidelines on how clubs can become more integrated
- Work with migrants to support their personal effectiveness to help build their confidence to participate in community development activities
- Examine how Community Groups can recruit new volunteers from the migrant community
- Continue to encourage integration and inclusion in cultural programming events and Activities such as through the museum.
- Work with the Irish Equality and Human Rights Commission (IEHRC) to ensure the delivery of training programmes on racism, discrimination and rights
- Promote the engagement of migrants on youth-based organisations
- Introduction of new music cultures from migrants

- More involvement of migrants in the decision-making process within the social order
- More amenities for Migrants.
- More support from local Community Groups to facilitate integration
- Develop ongoing needs assessments with migrants to continuously improve integration, services etc.
- More empowerment to live independently and autonomous
- To identify factors of aversity to engage with services, e.g. fear and to propose tactics to resolve these issues.
- To ease tensions concerning conflicting religious beliefs.
- Cultural diversity training
- Skin colour can still be an issue for integration in society.
- Expand culture of merit as factor in sports team selections
- Initiatives to continually support migrants' identity of origin while living in the county.
- The findings indicate that cultures with high relatedness with Irish culture have more positive experiences to their integration experiences.

Issues specific to International Protection Applicants not included above include:

- Food choices for some cultures in rural towns and villages in the County / price of food / quality / timing of access.
- Getting primary school places
- Lack of spaces for children to play
- Loss of skills and motivation through enforced inactivity
- Restriction on movement (Linked to limited financial resources and/or the location of accommodation in isolated locations with no access to public transport)
- Conditions and rules in some direct provision accommodation such as signing in and out, and level of security they have to contend with.
- Accommodation is in many cases not suitable for families
- Living with the possibility of being moved at any time causes uncertainty
- Lack of occupation, leading to boredom, stress and possible mental health issues, many years with nothing to do with no sense of purpose.
- Deficit in places of worship for some religions
- Fear of complaining
- There is an increasing sense that the new wave of Ukrainian Migrants are being prioritised by government and agencies in some cases at the expense of other migrants entering the County.

3.2 SWOT of Migrant Integration Issues in Co. Leitrim

Table 14 below provides a detailed analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of migrant integration issues in Co. Leitrim.

Table 14: SWOT Analysis of Migrant Integration Issues in Co. Leitrim

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful integration of different Nationalities. • Public sector willing to engage with the migrant community locally. • Many skilled and qualified individuals among the migrant community • Local community is generally welcoming. • A community sector willing to engage with migrant communities. • There are a diverse number of religious faiths and places of worship in the county. • County has a generally low rate of crime/Strong community sector. • Education standard high among many migrants coming to live in the area. • Good quality of life and standard of living • Social Protection good at signposting services • Local schools are welcoming for migrants. • Positive feedback on some employers and workplaces/there are employment opportunities locally. • Well established migrant groups Leitrim International Community group and Leitrim Intercultural Forum • Failte Isteach groups active in 7 areas in the county • SICAP work with new communities • Several dedicated staff in LDC and HSE dealing with migrant issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited information in different languages/limited translation services • Limited language courses to equip migrants access education/employment. • Schools in some areas are at full capacity and unable to enrol migrant children. • One size does not fit all - different services needed for different migrants • Migrant qualifications may not be recognised, necessitating retraining. • Limited signposting and communication of available services particularly for migrants with limited English. • Access to some services is challenging (e.g. GP care and childcare). Service rules and regulations can be complex for migrants. • There is limited awareness of cultural issues and differences among service providers and the wider community. • The national International Protection application process is cumbersome and slow. • EU migrants often unaware of different laws • Lack of induction briefing or information upon arrival to be aware of cultures here. • Lack of interest among some migrants to get involved in community activities. • Integration success is mostly based on high cultural relatedness. Skin colour remains a discriminatory issue in accessing work, services, housing etc.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Migration Integration Strategy/Communities Integration Fund • Learning from good practice elsewhere • Creation of an information portal that migrants can access/The development of one stop shops for information for migrants. • Supporting the younger generation of migrants become more integrated. • Schools at risk of closure can have critical mass filled by migrant children. • Entrepreneurial culture in county -growth in migrant entrepreneurship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The housing crisis deepening in Ireland • Deficit of migrants involved in the decision-making process in the county. • Increases in levels of discrimination and racism in the county as a result of a changes in public opinion about migrants. • Gender-based violence is an issue within the migrant population. • An exclusive focus on migrants without a focus on wider community integration • Negative media coverage

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to host multicultural events. Museum could act as a platform for events and activities for migrants. • Large Stock of derelict houses in the county • Migrants fill labour shortages in the Irish jobs market. • Local Authority Integration Teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued issues in relation to language, access to housing, employment, training, public services, poverty, recognition of qualifications, childcare and transport • ‘Race to the bottom’ fears among some existing labour sectors in county.
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3.3 Recommended action areas

Consultees identified a very wide range of action areas. Many of the actions identified require action at a national level. This section focuses on the actions that have the capacity to be implemented at a county level. Please see Table 15 in the appendix for details of the key action areas for inclusion in the action plan arising from the consultations and also based on the demographic research. These recommendations largely focus on what can be done at local county level. The issue relating to housing is however to an extent a broader national issue not exclusively in the hands of local organisations and agencies. It did feature very strongly in the consultation hence its inclusion.

Section 4: Vision and Goals

Co. Leitrim has adopted an amended version of the National Strategy vision and definition of Integration as a result of the consultation process.

4.1 Vision

The Co Leitrim vision reflects the vision for the National Migrant Integration Strategy, with a few additions to reflect local circumstances.

'Migrants are facilitated to play a full and active role in the County. Integration and cohesion are core principles of life in the County. Institutions and organisations in the county work together to promote intercultural integration, embrace the advantages of a rights-based approach to diversity and integration and build a society of equals at local level.'

The Leitrim Migrant Strategy vision encompasses the following key element for migrants:

- Are enabled and expected to participate in economic, social and cultural life in the county (including in employment and self-employment).
- Interact with host communities and participate with them in cultural, sporting and other activities while preserving also their own traditions as they wish.
- Have language skills sufficient to enable them to participate in economic, social and cultural life and in the wider society.
- Have a knowledge of Ireland, its history and culture.
- Their children, benefit fully from the education system.
- Migrants are enabled to celebrate their national, ethnic, cultural and religious identities, subject to the law.
- Zero tolerance towards racism and discrimination in society in the County.
- Actively participate in civic society and public life as provided for by law.
- Integration policies and measures are mainstreamed in the work of the County Council and other public bodies and organisations working in the County.
- Positive action measures are undertaken where appropriate to address the specific needs of migrant groups.
- Migrants and migrant representative groups, host communities, local community groups, council, public service delivery agents and private businesses actively and collaboratively contribute to policy and service development and transformation in the County.
- Get support to access and navigate public services.

It is based around the following components of integration and cohesion and well as being mindful of the 11 European Common Basic Principles on Integration¹⁸.

- Sense of Belonging - People from different backgrounds have a sense of belonging.
- Trust of Public Bodies - People from different backgrounds have a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and activities to be subject to public scrutiny.
- Migrants are Respected - There is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those host communities who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common.

- Quality of Life Issues - There is recognition of the impact – negative and positive – of issues affecting peoples’ quality of life.
- Positive Relations - There are strong and positive relations between people from different backgrounds.
- There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities - everyone has a role to play.
- Individual’s Contribution - There is a strong sense of an individual’s rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn.
- Equal Life Opportunity - People from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, access to services and treatment.

4.2 Strategic Goals

Based on the research and consultation undertaken, the following six Strategic Goals have been identified.

Goal 1: To enhance language and communication skills for migrants through improved access to appropriate English language training

- The acquisition of English language skills is fundamental to the successful integration of migrant communities into life in the County. Communication with agencies about various services is crucial and empowers people to look after their families’ health and well-being, to satisfy their housing needs, to raise their educational attainment, to find employment and progress their careers, and to take part in the social and cultural life of their communities.
- Public consultations demonstrated the different language needs, from new economic migrants with good English fluency and skills but who find it difficult to have their qualifications recognised, to the large number of Ukrainians mainly women and children, through to older male and female refugees who have limited English speaking and writing skills. Language barriers create a range of issues including a lack of confidence to engage with others leading, in many cases, to a lack of motivation and ability to integrate. Barriers are also created in accessing work as employers feel inhibited through lack of means of training in the absence of spoken English.

This strategy will address these different needs and situations and assist deliverers of English language classes plan, coordinate and promote their classes to those most in need in local settings.

This strategy will seek to identify the availability of translation services in the community to support those with limited English to access and understand services and supports. It should be noted that some migrants that were consulted had no wish to learn English as they had no long term plans to stay in Ireland, rather to return to their own country once was over, this was particularly evidence from some members of the Ukrainian community.


Goal 2: Improve access to Public Services, Healthcare, Housing and Transport

- Key public services such as healthcare, including mental health services are essential for migrants and efforts to co-ordinate and support access is paramount particularly in areas where services are oversubscribed.
- Outreach and information services for those in emergency accommodation and direct provision centres are also imperative for those who are unable to travel to access crucial information.
- Access to transport is integral in connectivity to all public services in the absence of outreach, information on available transport should be included in public service information.
- Currently in Co. Leitrim there is a significant waiting list for social housing, and it is difficult for to secure affordable rented accommodation. Action is required in particular to address the challenges asylum seekers (who have received their refugee/leave to remain status) leaving direct provision face in terms of accessing suitable accommodation.
- Supports are needed for single migrant workers who want their families to join them in Ireland.
- Migrants and other relevant front-line service providers require information of and signposting to the various different accommodation agencies in the county and clear information on the supports available to assist migrants to secure and retain accommodation.
- A mechanism for addressing the challenges of exiting direct provision centres into rented accommodation in the broader community is also required.
- Having an understanding of Irish cultural and norms and Ireland's systems and controls are vital to facilitate the successful integration of migrants into Irish society.
- Access to information and understanding of public services is a significant issue for many migrants in the county. Clear easy to read signposting and information in appropriate formats about the range of services available in the county and how to access them is crucial to the effective integration of migrants.
- In order to support migrants to access services in the county service providers, in particular front line service providers, need to understand fully the barriers they face. These include the language, literacy, cultural and technological barriers that migrants face when trying to access their services. Service providers should develop a range of initiatives that can help improve the accessibility of their services for migrants.

This strategy will seek to build the capacity of migrants to navigate public services through the availability of accessibility information and increased understanding of cultural diversity among public service staff in the county.

Goal 3: To provide opportunities to engage with the broader community

- To raise awareness among the wider general public of the reality and the challenges associated with being a migrant or asylum seeker. This progression would develop respect for the culture and identity of different communities and build a greater understanding of the benefits of diversity (often referred to as the diversity advantage) to the counties social, economic and cultural vitality and vibrancy. It will help to create a more integrated and vibrant place in which to live, work and play.
- Civic and community leaders have a key part to play in addressing myths and misperceptions and in creating opportunities for the creation of a greater sense of belonging for all. Information about, and support to engage in initiatives that can help build community



relations between people from all community backgrounds can build cohesion and integration where everyone feels a sense of belonging. This can reduce isolation and segregation.

- People from different backgrounds need to trust that local and national institutions will act fairly in arbitrating between different interests. This can only be achieved if local people, including migrant communities, feel they have been given opportunities to articulate their voices and express their views openly and that these voices have been listened to and acted upon without fear or favour. Information about on how to actively engage in the Public Participation Network which can assist in building this trust in institutions.
- Active inclusion in the wide variety of activities and structures across the county is also very important. Cultural programming and engagement in arts, sports and environmental initiatives can help achieve greater inclusion. Local organisations should proactively seek the participation of migrants in their activities, events and organisation of such. Migrant youth involvement in youth-based organisations is also imperative. Active participation in community and democratic activities can help to combat discrimination and build positive relations between different communities. It should also continue to support actions that address racism and hate crime where this exists. This includes working with An Garda Síochána to encourage more reporting of hate crime or incidents of racism. Local media can also play their part by covering positive news items involving migrants and how they play a proactive role in our communities.

The strategy will seek to build the capacity of both migrant and host communities of all ages to practically work together to achieve a more integrated society.


Goal 4: Improve access to and availability of Education and Training opportunities for migrants and increase awareness and understanding of cultural diversity in the Education sector.

- Access to education and training opportunities provide significant integration opportunities for migrants of all ages and backgrounds. Good education and training opportunities increases the likelihood of good well-paid jobs, assisting migrants to avoid poverty and improve their health and wellbeing and economic prosperity.
- Ensuring that all young people have equal access to education at all levels is one of the main aspects of a fair and equal society, where life opportunities are the same for all. Promoting a greater awareness of interculturalism in pre-schools, schools, workplaces and across agencies will encourage greater integration and diversity and help dispel myths and eliminate discrimination and racism.
- Information on how to find good work placements and helping people to make choices around second and third level education options and how to access this is a fundamental part of creating an integrated society in the county.

This strategy will seek to promote and celebrate cultural diversity in the education sector through awareness raising opportunities. The strategy will also aim to improve access to and availability of education training appropriate employment related skills developments and supports.

Goal 5: Remove barriers and improve access to Employment and Business Development for Migrants

- Migrants have a wide variety of skills and talents that may not be apparent due to language and cultural barriers. A skills audit of unemployed migrants would be ideal to demand for employment with the suitable skills these migrants possess. Employers should be encouraged to utilise labour market supports such as Jobs Plus to employ migrants.
- Migrants need supports in preparation for employment such as identifying suitable job vacancies, CV preparation, interview training, information on rights, entitlements, obligations



and also transferring / updating qualifications to equivalents recognised in Ireland. There is a need for accessible information on employment pathways and supports for those interested in getting into work for the first time.

- There are opportunities for migrants to build local connections with businesspeople and gain knowhow on how to navigate systems and opportunities is where support is most required.

This strategy will seek to improve access to opportunities for employment, self-employment, retraining and up skilling for migrants and help address the shortage of staff in many Leitrim businesses at present.






Section 5: Action Plan for the Leitrim Migrant Integration Strategy 2023-2027

This Action Plan has been mapped against The National Migrant Integration Strategy (NMIS) to ensure complementarity.

GOAL 1: To Enhance Language and Communication Skills for migrants through improved access to appropriate English language training.					
Action No.	Action	Expected Output(s)	Timeframe	Lead Agency(s)	Partner Agency(s)
1.1	Provide a wider range/and more advanced English language classes for those that wish to seek employment or progression with employment. Classes to be provided in consultation with employers and in accessible places that suit migrants.	Higher engagement rates in the work force, enhanced quality of life for migrant families.	2023 onwards	Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board (MSLETB)	Leitrim County Council integration team, Leitrim Development Company.
1.2	Identify, signpost, and address gaps in basic conversational English language provision (e.g Fáilte Isteach Programmes) for migrants in Co .Leitrim. Continue to support and resource services, currently operating in the county. Promote targeted uptake of English language classes among various migrant communities.	Increase in accessible English language learning provision	2023 onwards	Leitrim Development Company	Leitrim Volunteer Centre, MSL ETB, Leitrim Library Service, Third Age Ireland Fáilte Isteach Programme.

GOAL 2: Improve access to Public Services, Healthcare, Housing and Transport					
Action No.	Action	Expected Output(s)	Timeframe	Lead Agency(s)	Partner Agency(s)
2.1	Agencies provide cultural awareness, equality and diversity training for service providers and also public service provider staff with the aim of improving access of public services to the migrant community.	Cultural awareness, equality & diversity training programme developed and delivered	2 training programmes delivered per year starting in 2023	Leitrim County Council (Lead agency takes lead on Letirim Integration Community Forum to ensure that other agencies put this in place)	All Leitrim Integration Community Forum members
2.2	Establish and Develop Leitrim Integration Community Forum to build capacity of Migrant Community to engage in the delivery and receipt of public & community services.	Engagement with service providers enhanced. Engagement mechanism created.	Created in 2023	Leitrim County Council	LDC, MSLETB, Health Service Executive, Department of Social Protection, Citizens Information Service, Tusla, Donegal Sligo Leitrim Local link, Leitrim Public Participation Network
2.3	Provide orientation and induction pack for new migrants arriving in Co. Leitrim. Develop and maintain this information and make it available in a number of languages.	Orientation pack developed and maintained	Prepared in 2023	Leitrim Development Company	Leitrim Citizens Information Service
2.4	Continue to maintain & develop pathways into healthcare	Pathways to healthcare supports enhanced.	2023 onwards	Health Service Executive	Leitrim Development Company



2.5	Provide targeted information for the migrant community about rights and entitlements of people living in Ireland.	Targeted information developed.	2023 onwards	Citizen Information Centre	LDC, DSP, HSE
2.6	Maintain & develop provision of existing supports & advocacy services for vulnerable migrants (such as asylum seekers, victims of gender-based violence / torture, single parents & people lacking English.)	Advocacy supports developed.	2023 onwards	Citizens Information Centre	
2.7	Enhance engagement and communication between accommodation providers and the Migrant population regarding living conditions in the county.	Mechanism developed to improve engagement & communication regarding systematic recurring issues identified with living conditions in the county.	2023 onwards	Leitrim Development Company	Leitrim County Council (Community and Housing sections)
2.8	Support displaced Ukrainians to access accommodation, education, employment, health and welfare services through linkages with existing services and supports as well as applying for extra resources where gaps exist	Improved access to services	2023 onwards	Leitrim County Council	Leitrim Integration Community Forum members

GOAL 3: To provide opportunities to engage with the broader community.					
Action No.	Action	Expected Output(s)	Timeframe	Lead Agency(s)	Partner Agency(s)
3.1	Host an annual county wide Intercultural Day across the county with migrant support groups and encourage communities and schools to promote awareness of integration, diversity and interculturalism.	Intercultural event delivered	Begin in 2024	Leitrim Development Company	MSLETB, Schools in County
3.2	Develop projects with local community groups to celebrate the richness of migrant cultures, promote integration and to support the delivery of a programme to tackle racism.	Campaign to tackle racism implemented.	Begin in 2023	Leitrim Development Company	Leitrim Arts Office
3.3	Work with local media to promote 'good news stories' and positive coverage of migrants & asylum seekers playing a proactive role in society.	news stories publicised annually	Begin in 2023	Leitrim Development Company	Leitrim Integration Community Forum
3.4	Proactively seek to engage migrant youth involvement with youth-based organisations.	Increase in Migrant youth participation rates in youth organisations.	Begin in 2023	Sligo Leitrim CYPSC	Foroige, North Connaught Youth and Community Services, Youth Work Ireland

3.5	Proactively seek to engage migrant youth involvement with sporting bodies and clubs.	Increase in Migrant youth involvement with sporting bodies and clubs	Begin in 2023	Leitrim Sports Partnership	GAA, FAI, Sports Clubs
3.6	Encourage migrant participation in volunteering through targeted campaigns highlighting benefits to migrants.	Increase in Migrant participation in civic society	Begin in 2023	Leitrim Volunteer Centre	LDC, Leitrim PPN
3.7	Build the capacity of Leitrim International community group and Leitrim Intercultural forum to increase involvement of migrants in decision making	Increase in migrant participation in policy influencing structures such as the PPN.	Begin in 2024	Leitrim Development Company	Leitrim PNN
3.8	Encourage integration and inclusion in cultural programming events and activities and encourage local groups to do the same	Intercultural events delivered	2023 onwards	Leitrim County Council	Leitrim Development Company, PPN, CYPSC, Leitrim Volunteer Centre
3.9	Promote integration in sporting activities through liaison with a local community and non-Irish community to participate in area-based activities.	Intercultural event delivered	2023 onwards	Leitrim County Council	Leitrim Sports Partnership, FAI, Healthy Leitrim
3.10	Work with Leitrim Sports Partnership and non-Irish support groups to see what sports migrants play and introduce locally.	Increased participation of migrants in sports	2023 onwards	Leitrim County Council	Leitrim Sports Partnership, Healthy Leitrim
3.11	Promote and celebrate Africa Day in Leitrim through	Intercultural event delivered	2023 onwards	Leitrim County Council	Leitrim County Council (Community Unit) Healthy Leitrim

	events around food, music and culture.				
3.12	Promote the engagement of migrants on Leitrim Older People's Forum to seek the voice of the migrant, propose solutions and inclusion projects that promote integration and link with the local Age Friendly strategy	Identify challenges they encounter	2023 onwards	Leitrim County Council	Leitrim Age Friendly
3.13	Include migrant representation on the Joint Policing Committee (JPC)	Increased representation of migrants in decision making structures	2023 onwards	Leitrim County Council	Leitrim JPC

GOAL 4: Improve access to and availability of Education and Training opportunities for Migrants and increase awareness and understanding of cultural diversity in the Education Sector.

Action No.	Action	Expected Output(s)	Timeframe	Lead Agency(s)	Partner Agency(s)
4.1	Identify transport solutions for migrants seeking to access education and training opportunities.	Increased participation in training and education.	2024 onwards	Leitrim Development Company	Donegal Sligo Leitrim Local Link, Leitrim County
4.2	Deliver an anti-racism schools programme annually	1 programme delivered annually	2024 onwards	MSL ETB	Schools & LDC

GOAL 5: Remove barriers and improve access to Employment and Business Development for Migrants					
Action No.	Action	Expected Output(s)	Timeframe	Lead Agency(s)	Partner Agency(s)
5.1	Encourage employers to utilise current labour market supports available such as Jobs Plus to employ migrants and increase migrant participation rates on scheme such as CE/Solas and TUS.	Decrease in migrant unemployment rate	Begin in 2023	Department of Social Protection.	Leitrim Development Company, LEO, MSLETB
5.2	Provide opportunities for migrants to re-train, gain skills by providing information, access to training options.	Increase in migrant enrolment and completion of skills to employment based training.	2023 onwards	MSLETB	LDC, Local Enterprise Office
5.3	Provision of structured support for skilled migrants to transfer /legitimise their professional qualifications in Ireland. E.g. Doctors, teachers etc.	Skilled migrants enabled to fully participate in the workforce.	2023 onwards	MSLETB	
5.4	Conduct a skills audit of employer needs to identify reskilling requirements to meet market demands	Skills audit completed to match reskilling of migrants.	2024	LEO/MSLETB	LDC
5.5	Explore opportunities for Migrants to gain work experience as a means of working towards securing employment utilising schemes including Work Placement Experience Programme(WPEP)	Increase in numbers of migrants accessing on WPEP,	2023 onwards	DSP	Employers, LDC & MSLETB



Section 6: Implementing, Monitoring and Evaluating the Action Plan

During the development of this strategy and action plan it was stated by the consultees that the goals and actions should be realistic and achievable but should also be demanding and challenging.

The plan should be deliverable within the resources the core agencies that have subscribed to the plan as lead partners on actions, and with a view to working with others who can partner on specific actions which are outside of their remit and against which additional resources could be added or sought.

The Strategy should be a living document to which actions can be added or amended as new evidence emerges and experiences and circumstances change.

Going forward, it is intended that annual priority actions will be developed based on the action plan, and that the new Migrant Integration Team in the Local Authority, in partnership with Leitrim Development Company and a newly formed Leitrim Integration Community Forum will take a lead in co-ordinating the implementation of the strategy. The Leitrim Integration Community Forum will monitor and evaluate the plan.

A mid-term review of the strategy should be programmed for as part of the work plan.

Section 7: Appendices

Key Action Areas for Inclusion in the Plan

Table 15: Key Action Areas for Inclusion in the Plan

<p>Facilitating Language Training and Acquisition</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify gaps in English language provision and fill these • Make English skills acquisition easier to navigate • Provide different types & levels of English language skills (2 hours of class a week is not enough to access employment) • Continue to support and resource the Fáilte Isteach Programme model which involves local volunteer tutors. • Signpost those seeking employment in schools to where to acquire the necessary level of Irish language skills • Support migrants access work by providing support for CV and interview preparation • Provide incentives to support employers to employ someone with limited English language skills • Target English language classes at skilled and qualified migrants with limited English language skills to assist them retrain and re-enter the labour market using their qualifications. (electrician, economist etc.) they need to acquire an equivalent qualification in many cases in Ireland.
<p>Improving Information and Awareness of Education and Training Opportunities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist migrants navigate local education and training options available to them • Assist migrants to access quality work placements • Identify community transport options and solutions for migrants accessing education and training • Host an annual Intercultural Day in the County. • Establish homework clubs to assist parents with limited English language skills assist their children do homework • Support the inclusion of more young people in youth clubs. More sports clubs/leagues available in the home country's national sport • Peer support groups to continue traditional crafts etc • Where school places are not available locally for asylum seeker children, provide alternative tuition options for these children.
<p>Supporting Access to Healthcare, Transport and other Services</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure information in how to make a complaint of racist behaviour by staff or other customers is clearly and prominently displayed in all public offices • Establish a Leitrim Integration Community Forum to advise and monitor delivery of Integration Actions within county. • Develop information pack for migrants on life in the County.

- Highlight the benefits of volunteering for/by migrants
- Ensure existing intercultural resources are used locally (e.g. HSE has a range of intercultural resources).
- Use the Cultural Champions as a conduit for engagement with various migrant communities.
- Improve access to mental health services for migrants (including migrants leaving areas of conflict that may be dealing with PTSD and migrants dealing with mental health issues as a result of living in direct provision over an extended period of time)
- Increase the visibility of migrant groups on the PPN.
- Investigate the feasibility of providing a Creche and Parent and toddler group in St Patrick's Accommodation centre
- Identify community transport options and solutions for migrants and IPAs seeking to access hospitals, bigger towns, places of worship.
- Increase awareness of and access to locally based translation services for both service users and service providers.
- Create a greater awareness of laws related to gender-based violence in Ireland and increase awareness of supports and services available for anyone experiencing gender-based violence and or abuse.

Supporting Employment, Business Development and Pathways to Work

- Encourage new migrant entrepreneurs (many migrants bring skills with them)
- Remove barriers to accessing employment (e.g. relevance and transferability of skills/qualifications)
- Preparation for employment – language / CV preparation / accessing suitable job vacancies / preparing for interview / rights & entitlements & employment law and norms etc. / tailored employment supports

Improve access and standard of Housing and Accommodation for Migrants

- Economic migrants working in the manufacturing sector are often provided with accommodation by their employer. Where an individual wants their family to join them this is often not possible as there is a shortage of affordable housing for families
- There is a shortage of affordable accommodation for large families
- Individuals/families who leave direct provision are often not in a position to locate affordable accommodation. There is a need to improve support and information on housing for those granted asylum.
- Some private landlords are reluctant to accept migrants as tenants
- Some landlords require the payment of large deposits which effectively excludes migrants accessing these properties.
- Seek to encourage vacant properties back into the rental market in the county.

Within Direct Provision /IPAS accommodation centres

- There is a need to address the stigma that is attached to migrants living in direct provision centres or other IPAS accommodation centres.
- Need for more places for children to play where families are placed in non-family friendly accommodation.
- Improve liaison with service providers before placing IPAs in locations where they cannot access basic health/education services.

- Improve wi-fi and internet availability

Promoting and engaging in Integration into the Local Community and advancing Social Inclusion

- Raise awareness and educate broader population on the reality of migration in the county
- Need to improve access to information and appropriate induction for migrants when they arrive.
- Need more multicultural events in towns and villages.
- Migrants need more structured opportunities to meet local people.
- Work with migrant women to help build their confidence to participate in community development activities
- Continue to encourage integration and inclusion through cultural programming events and activities
- Work with the media to develop positive media coverage of the contribution of migrants to local communities,
- Promote good news stories in the local media and on social media.
- Support local parenting programmes to incorporate cultural diversity and anti-racism into parenting programmes.



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