



INTI Project: One-Stop Shop: A New Answer for Immigrant Integration?

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Country Report for Ireland

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The suggestion has been made that other State services e.g. Revenue Commissioners, Department of Social and Family Affairs should be represented in an expanded “one stop shop” and that the service should also be available to EU nationals [...]. It has also been suggested that representatives of non-Governmental organisations could be present to assist migrants in interacting with the State “system”.

This suggestion will need careful examination and consideration in the light of the changing nature of migration into this country, the changes in the arrangements for long-term residence in the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill when enacted and the administrative advantages/disadvantages associated with the creation of such a “one stop shop”.

Office of the Minister for Integration. *Migration Nation: Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management* (1 May 2008), pp. 51-2.

0. Introduction

The most recent figures released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) show that the total population in Ireland is now 4,422,100 having increased by just under 200,000 during the period April 2006 to April 2008. This gives Ireland the fastest growing population in the European Union (CSO, 20.09.2008).¹ The total population of the Republic of Ireland according to the 2006 Census was 4,239,848. This represented an overall increase of 322,645 people (8.2%) since the previous census in 2002, when the total population was 3,917,203. The figures provided by the CSO do not include details of those who did not fill in the census forms.

Since 1991, net migration has been an increasingly significant factor in the demographic growth of the Irish population. Between 2002 and 2006, net migration in Ireland totalled 186,408 people (CSO, 2007a: 87). Ireland is likely to remain attractive as a migration destination in the medium term, and immigrants are expected to account for 40 to 50 per cent of labour force growth up to 2016 (NESC & IOM, 2006: xii). The population of Ireland is predicted to reach five million in 2022, of whom 2 million will live in the Greater Dublin Area (Institute of Public Administration, 2007).

¹ Population growth in Ireland in 2007-2008 was also influenced by a natural increase of 44,600 within a year. This was the highest rate of natural increase in the country for 25 years, and outstripped the contribution of net migration to population increase (CSO, 20.08.2008).

0.1 Numbers of immigrants

Table 1: Irish Migration Statistics

Year Ending April	1993	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Immigration	34,700	60,000	58,500	84,600	107,800	109,500	83,800
Irish Immigrants	-	17,600	16,700	18,500	18,900	20,000	16,200
Non-EU Immigrants	-	<u>24,500*</u>	<u>21,100*</u>	<u>13,700</u>	<u>16,400</u>	<u>20,600</u>	<u>18,300</u>
Emigration	35,100	29,300	26,500	29,400	36,100	42,200	45,300
Net migration	-400	30,700	32,000	55,100	71,800	67,300	38,500

*Includes EU-12. Source: CSO Estimates, 20.08.2008.

0.2 Proportion of the national population

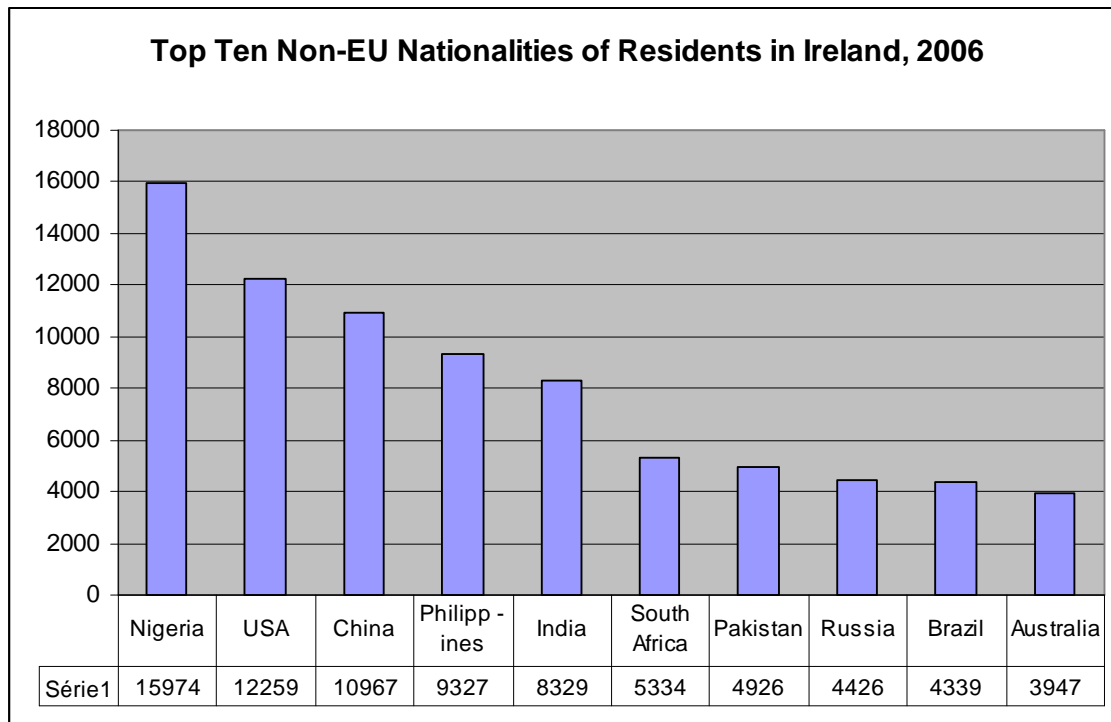
The census of population conducted in April 2006 showed that immigrants comprised around 10% of the Irish population; about 420,000 people (CSO, 2007: 9). However it should be noted that this data refers only to immigrants captured in the 2006 census. The CSO definition of immigrants includes people born abroad to Irish parents, and immigrants from within the European Union (EU).² The proportion of non-EU immigrants in Ireland, according to the census, is 3.24% of the total population, or 137,643 people, while a further 1%, or 44,279 people, did not state their nationality. In view of the new estimates released by the CSO, cited above, the proportion of immigrants in the Irish population is likely to have increased to over 11.5%.

0.3 Top ten nationalities of immigrants

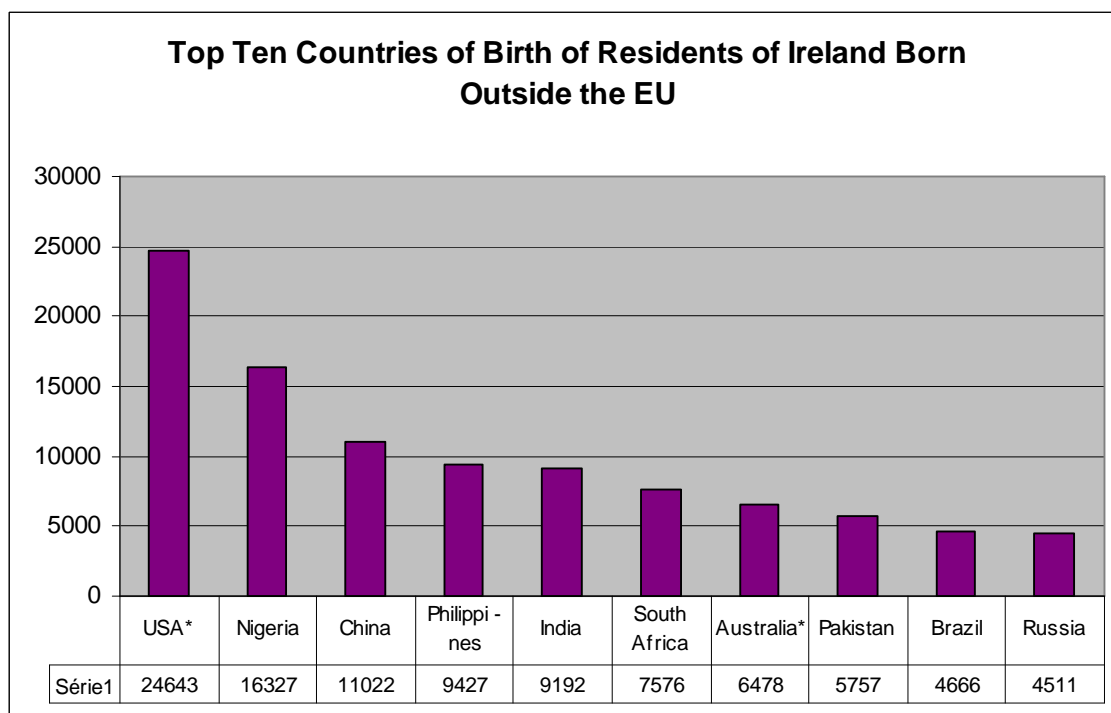
The largest non-EU immigrant group in Ireland, according to the 2006 census, is Nigerian. However, questions were raised as to the quality of the census data, and there may have been significant under-reporting of many groups. During the inter-censal period 2002-2006, there was a significant increase overall in the immigrant population, but most significantly in the numbers of people from the EU-10 countries. The Asian

² Return migration by Irish emigrants was a significant feature of migratory flows during the 1990s, though in recent years it has been less preponderant.

population also more than doubled, while the African population increased by about 75%.

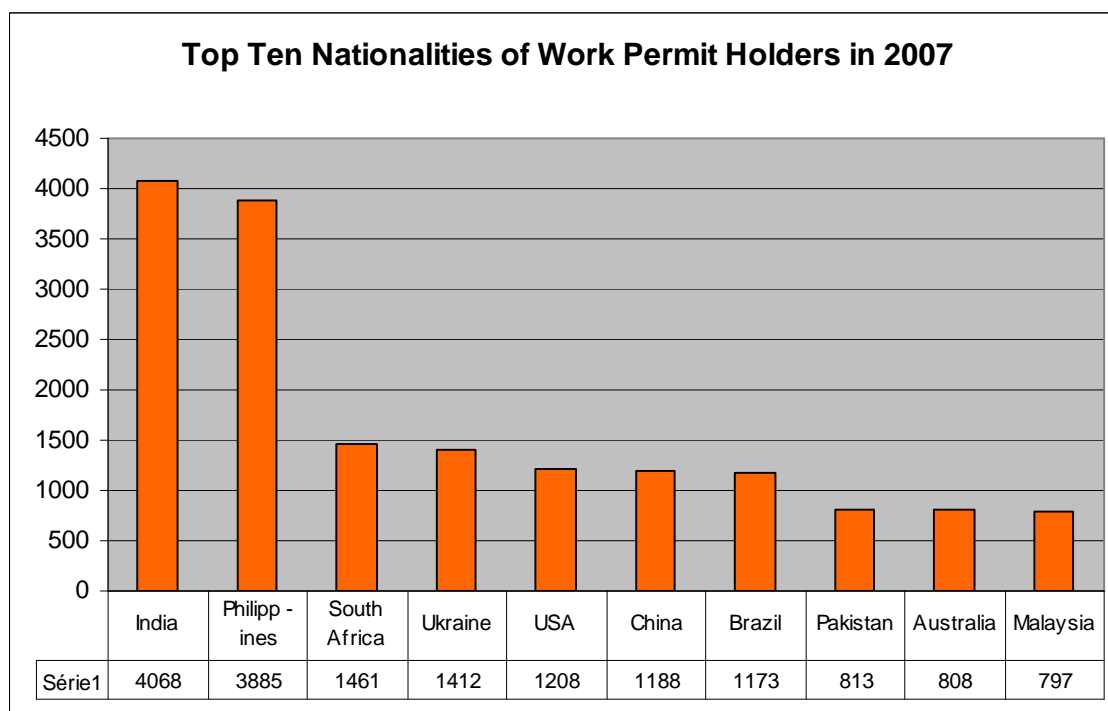


Source: CSO, 2007a: Vol. 4.



*Likely to include a significant proportion of people born abroad to Irish parents.

Source: CSO, 2007a: Vol. 4.



Source: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, “Work Permit Statistics 2007”.

0.4 Immigrant population by legal status

There is a strong concentration of immigrants holding **work permits** in the services sector, particularly in medical services, nursing and catering. In 2003, 47,707 work permits were issued, including renewals, but this declined to 33,209 in 2004, and 27,136 in 2005. Under the new employment permits scheme, outlined in section 1 below, just 23,604 permits were issued during 2007, including 13,457 renewals (DETE, 2007).

A further 2,976 people arrived in Ireland with **green cards** for highly-skilled employment in 2007, half of whom work in the healthcare sector. The monthly figures for issuing green cards have been declining since July 2007 (Mac Cormaic, 04.01.2008). In 2006, over 25,000 non-EEA **students** were registered with the Garda (Police) National Immigration Bureau (GNIB), of whom a large proportion are estimated to be Chinese.

16,693 people were granted leave to remain in Ireland in 2005 on a two-year renewable permit under the Irish Born Child Scheme (**IBC/05**), of whom almost half (47%) were from Nigeria, Pakistan and the Philippines. Some other family members of people granted leave to remain were also granted work or residence permits, though relatively

few due to the statutory declaration required of applicants that granting of IBC/05 residence would not entail an automatic right to family reunification. By early October 2007, 10,915 parents had had their status renewed for another three years, while a further 1,845 applications remained to be processed (CADIC Coalition and DJELR meeting, 3 October 2007).

Working holidaymakers in Ireland are from countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Hong Kong. Many immigrants in Ireland also have residence or employment permits on the basis of their **spouses** or **family members**, though this is not an automatic right, and can be difficult to obtain particularly for spouses and family members of immigrants with work permits for low-skilled jobs. Data have not been published by the Irish Government on the numbers of immigrants in the country on the basis of their spouses or family members.

0.5 Other relevant statistical information (e.g. data on second and third generation; naturalised foreign-born population, etc.)

Of the 83,800 people who immigrated to Ireland during the year ending April 2008, around 22% were from outside the European Union (CSO, 20.09.2008). The Employment Permits Act 2003 granted all immigrants from the ten new EU member states free access to the Irish labour market from the date of accession in May 2004. Ireland has received a relatively large number of immigrants from countries such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Slovakia, partly because it was one of only three pre-2004 EU countries to allow immigrants from the new member states free access to the labour market from 2004.

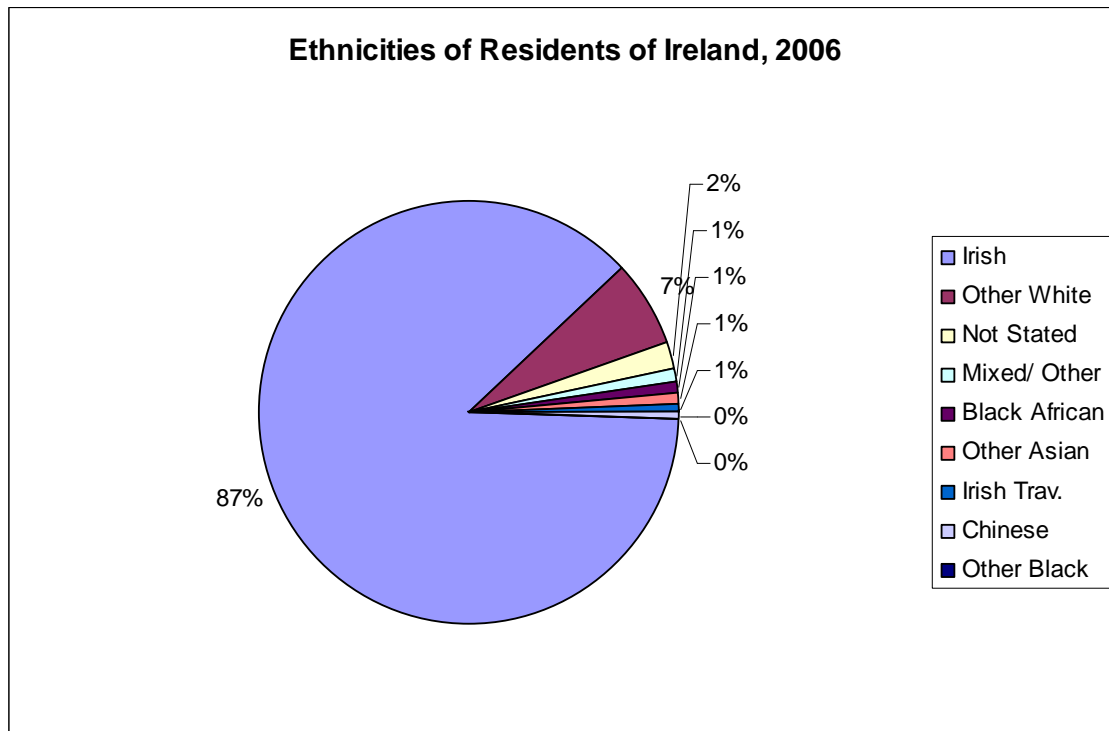
People from the twelve new EU countries currently comprise approximately one-third of Ireland's immigrant community (CSO, 2007a: Table 20). Before Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007, Romanians comprised a significant proportion of the non-EU population of Ireland, with 7,633 people of Romanian nationality and a total of 8,492 Romanian-born residents of Ireland recorded in the 2006 Census. Restrictions on working rights for Bulgarian and Romanian EU citizens have remained in place in Ireland since their accession in January 2007.

During the period May 2004 to February 2006, a total of 183,996 people from the ten new EU member states applied for Personal Public Service numbers in Ireland (Mutwarasibo in: Plaetevoet, 2007: 43). A significant proportion of Eastern European EU citizens arrive in Ireland every summer and return home after a few months, while others remain much longer and may permanently settle.

The annual number of people seeking asylum in Ireland peaked in 2002 at 11,598, and has during the past few years been less than 4,500 per year, with a refugee recognition rate of about 9%. The total number of applicants in 2007 was just 3,985, and the largest groups were Nigerian, Iraqi and Chinese. During the period 2001-2007, family reunification applications by refugees were processed for 6,054 dependants (ORAC, 2007), before being sent to the Family Reunification Section of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service for a decision.

Ireland is also one of the 22 countries worldwide that participate in the UNHCR Refugee Resettlement Programme, with an annual quota of ten families from 2000 to 2004. In 2005, this increased to 116 people per year, and again to 198 in 2006. The annual quota is now 200 people, including immediate family members and dependent parents.

The collection of data on ethnicity in Ireland is in its early stages. In many cases in anti-racism and anti-discrimination policies and data collection, the category of Traveller is included. Travellers are Irish citizens who come from a background that was traditionally nomadic, with a shared history and value system that make them a distinct group. The 2006 Census included a question on ethnicity for the first time, and the results were as follows:



Source: CSO, 2007a: Vol. 4.

Research was undertaken by the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) into undocumented workers in Ireland during 2007, based on semi-structured interviews with 60 research participants, selected through contact with MRCI and other personal contacts. The majority of the undocumented immigrant workers participating in MRCI's research were from the Philippines, China, Bangladesh and Brazil (MRCI, 2007: 14).

A large number of the participants, who all had some experience of undocumented migration, had entered the country legally and subsequently become undocumented. In many cases, immigrants' employers had not renewed their work permits, or they had been made redundant (MRCI, 2007: 22). In response to this issue, the Minister of Justice is to bring a proposal to Government to consider certain categories of cases "in a sympathetic manner" (Lenihan, 14.02.2008). There are no reliable data available on the numbers of undocumented immigrants in Ireland.

1. Legal Framework for Immigration

Prior to the mid-1990s, Irish immigration was regulated by the 1935 Aliens Act, which provided for the control of people who were not Irish citizens, with broad discretionary powers for the Minister for Justice. The Refugee Act was passed in 1996, establishing the mechanisms for granting refugee status in Ireland. The period 1999-2004 saw the passing of four Immigration Acts, mostly dealing with measures for control, including detention and deportation of immigrants, refusal of leave to land and punishment of illegal employment.

Article 4 of the Criminal Justice (United Nations Convention against Torture) Act 2000 provides protection for immigrants from being returned to a country where they would be in danger of torture. The Employment Permits Act 2003 provided the legal basis for the prosecution of employers and employees not complying with immigration laws. A series of Irish Nationality and Citizenship Acts 1956-2004 sets out the framework for the acquisition of Irish citizenship.

The Employment Permits Act 2006 reformed the previous system for labour migration, which had provided for four major types of employment permits: work permits, work visas and authorisations, permits for intra-company transfers and trainee permits. The new Act was enacted on 24 January 2007, and introduced four new employment schemes:

- Green cards / Employment permits (for salaries over €60,000 p.a. and in a restricted list of professions in the range of €30,000-59,999)
- Work permits (subject to a labour market test and salary over €30,000 with some exceptions)
- Intra-company transfer (salaries over €40,000)
- 6-month residence permit for students who have just graduated in Ireland to seek a job and apply for a work permit.

Immigrants with green cards are entitled to live and work in Ireland for two years, and the cards are generally renewable for an indefinite period. Spouses and children may

join the green-card holder in Ireland immediately. There is no labour market test in the procedure for application for a green card (DETE, January 2007a).

Applications for work permits are subject to a labour market test to ensure that the job cannot be filled by someone from the EEA, while a number of specific job categories have been excluded from the scheme, including childminders and all hotel and catering staff except chefs (DETE, January 2007b). It is likely that the proposed EU “blue card” scheme - providing for EU work permits for highly-skilled immigrants, together with many family reunification and working rights equivalent to those of EU citizens - will not be implemented in Ireland.

New arrangements for work permits for spouses and dependents of permit holders came into effect on 1 February 2007. Spouses and dependents of immigrants with work permits must have a separate work permit in order to work. Spouses and dependants may apply for work permits for any occupation without the need for a labour market test and their applications are exempt from the usual application fee. Spouses or dependants living outside Ireland must go through the normal work permit procedures. Spouses must be legally married to the work permit holder, and dependants must be unmarried and under 18 (DETE, January 2007c).

Family reunification is one of the principal concerns of many immigrants, and the Immigrant Council of Ireland receives a significant number of queries in relation to this process (Cosgrave, 2006). Despite the specific elevation of the position of the family in article 41 of the Irish Constitution, the family reunification system is currently characterised by a high level of discretion. Due to the lack of explicit legislative provisions in this area, no family reunification application is guaranteed (Mutwarasibo in: Plaetevoet, 2007: 46). Unmarried couples are not legally recognised in Ireland for family reunification purposes. On this subject, the Minister for Justice recently stated that ministerial orders and schemes will deal comprehensively with provisions for family migration, as family reunification was not included in the 2008 Immigration Bill, outlined below (Lenihan, 14.02.2008). For more information on experiences of family reunification in Ireland, please see section 3 below.

Ireland has not signed the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Family (1990). Ireland has also opted out

of the EU Long Term Residents Directive (2003), and there is no specific Long Term Resident status in the Irish legal framework.

Ireland is not a signatory to the Schengen Agreement, but has operated a “Common Travel Area” with the United Kingdom since the early 1950s, whereby passports are not required for travel between the two countries. This has had the complementary effect of largely aligning Irish immigration policies with those of the United Kingdom (MacÉinrí, 2002).

The ‘Good Friday Agreement’ between the Governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom in 1998 sought to resolve the contentious issue of Northern Ireland. The Agreement also resulted in changes to the Irish Constitution. The new Article 2 read: “It is the entitlement and birthright of every person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, to be part of the Irish Nation.” This provided a constitutional basis for a legislative practice that already existed, whereby anyone born in Ireland was granted Irish citizenship, regardless of the status of their parents. From 1996 until early January 2003, a total of 10,584 people were granted residency in a more-or-less automatic fashion on the basis of their Irish children (*Dáil Éireann Debates*, 25.11.2003).

In early 2004, the Government proposed an amendment to the Constitution to restrict citizenship to people born in the island of Ireland who had at least one parent who was either an Irish citizen or entitled to Irish citizenship. The referendum was held on 12 June 2004 and the constitutional change was accepted by an overwhelming majority of 79% of the Irish electorate (Ruhs, 2004). Children born on the island of Ireland to foreign parents therefore no longer had a constitutional right to Irish citizenship.

While the constitutional right to citizenship was restricted to children of Irish citizens and of people entitled to Irish citizenship, the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 2004, which came into force on 1 January 2005, provided a broader entitlement. Children born in Ireland to foreign parents are granted citizenship if either of their parents have been lawfully resident in Ireland for three of the four years prior to the child’s birth (Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 2004, Art. 4). If the parent or parents

in question have been in Ireland as students, seeking asylum or without State permission, the child is not granted citizenship.

Immigrants may apply for Irish citizenship after five years of “reckonable residence” in Ireland, or three years if they have married an Irish citizen. This does not include periods spent seeking asylum, as a student, or on a working holiday visa. There is, however, no objective right to naturalisation. Applications lodged in January 2006 were being processed at the time of publication of this report (www.inis.gov.ie), indicating a waiting period of over two and a half years.

Ireland has a well-developed framework in place for anti-racism and discrimination, dating back to the 1989 Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, and including Employment Equality and Equal Status Acts covering nine grounds for discrimination: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race religion and membership of the Traveller community.

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (hereafter DJELR) is in the process of overhauling the immigration system and introducing a new Immigration, Residence and Protection Act. In April 2005, DJELR published *Outline Proposals for an Immigration and Residency Bill*, and initiated a process of consultation with stakeholders. This was followed by the *Scheme for an Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill* in September 2006.

In January 2008, the DJELR published a new Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill. The Minister for Justice presented the Bill as “a major legislative response to the need to manage our immigration system [...], both codifying the existing law and bringing new areas into legislation” (Lenihan, 14.02.2008). The Bill contains the following provisions:

- Statutory provisions for Long-Term Resident Status, renewable every five years;
- Statutory basis for visa procedures;
- ‘Recovery and Reflection’ period of 45 days for victims of trafficking, which can be extended if the person in question cooperates with police investigations;
- Faster deportation process, with less access to appeal mechanisms;

- Restriction of state services for undocumented immigrants;
- Collection of biometric data from immigrants and the compulsory carrying of ID cards by immigrants;
- Introduction of a single procedure to determine whether an applicant is in need of protection;
- Compulsory advance notification of the Minister for marriages between Irish and non-EU nationals, and between non-EU nationals, together with a ban on marriage for people seeking asylum (Oireachtas, 2008).

This Bill has not yet been enacted, and is currently being discussed in the Irish parliament, the *Dáil*. The Irish Human Rights Commission published its Observations on the Bill in March 2008, welcoming the consolidation of immigration law into a single statutory code, while expressing concern at the lack of full protection of the human rights of immigrants and protection applicants, and proposing additional safeguards. The Commission is particularly concerned with the level of Ministerial discretion provided for in the Bill, the lack of explicit reference to international human rights law, the lack of a non-discrimination clause and the minimal provisions for appeal of negative immigration decisions. Concerns are also raised with regard to the absence of statutory provisions for family reunification and restrictions on marriage (Irish Human Rights Commission, March 2008).

The Law Society, the representative body for solicitors in Ireland, presented a submission to the parliament committee debating the legislation, suggesting 57 changes to the proposed Bill. In the submission, the Law Society expressed grave concern about “the manner in which the bill appears to be designed to reduce access to justice for foreign nationals”. Some of its concerns relate to summary deportation and the reduction in the time allowed for applying for judicial review. The body also called for the principle of proportionality to be a cornerstone of the bill, to ensure that measures taken are proportionate to the objectives of the legislation (Coulter, 07.04.2008).

In late April 2008, there were reports that a number of amendments to the Bill were being considered by the Government, including the removal of the requirement to request the Minister for Justice’s permission for marriage and provisions for multiple re-entry visas. In relation to family reunification, the Minister for Justice is to make a

statement on criteria to be fulfilled, aiming “to reassure legally-resident migrants that their immediate family will be entitled to join them here”. Officials were also said to be studying the Canadian reunion model for sponsoring family members to become permanent residents. The changes were to be made in the context of intensified global competition for skilled workers (Mac Cormaic, 21.04.2008).

2. Identification of Integration Support Services

2.1 Official integration policy

Mass immigration to Ireland is a relatively recent phenomenon, beginning in the late 1990s. The first year of positive net migration in the country was 1996. The Irish Government has had to respond to rapid changes to the country, its population, society, economy and culture within a short period. As a result, many individual Government departments and statutory agencies have developed and implemented policies and strategies from a mainstream perspective to deal with the increased demand on services, large increases in ethnic minority populations in local areas, particularly in the Greater Dublin Area, as well as other factors. The pace of the growth of the Irish population, simply in numerical terms as well as in terms of diversity, puts pressure on transport, education, housing and health infrastructure.

Ireland adopts a mainstream policy of service provision, while recognising the need for targeted initiatives in the short term in the area of integration. The Office of the Minister for Integration was established in the wake of the national election of May 2007, and is a Junior Ministry based at the Department of Community, Rural and *Gaeltacht*³ Affairs, with links to the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The Office has a cross-departmental mandate to develop, drive and coordinate integration policy across other Government departments, agencies and services.

The Office of the Minister for Integration plans to set up a taskforce during 2008 to identify issues affecting immigrant communities, consult with immigrants and the population at large, visit communities, examine existing research and provide recommendations. The Office is also to establish a Ministerial Council for Immigrants, to facilitate continuous input by immigrants into policy and implementation. A Commission will also be set up to include a broad representation of stakeholders, based on the recommendations of the taskforce. The Commission is to advise the Minister on all aspects of developments in integration. The Office will be involved in developing a long-term national policy on integration, to be informed by widespread consultation.

³ “Gaeltacht” is a region where Irish is the official language and is spoken by the majority of the residents. These regions are mostly located along the West Coast.

The concept of integration was first addressed at Government level in 1999, with the establishment of the Inter-Departmental Working Group on the Integration of Refugees in Ireland and the publication of the group's report *Integration: A Two-Way Process*. There are many other Government initiatives in place that have a remit in the area of immigration and integration. The *National Development Plan 2007-2013* covers the promotion of social inclusion for disadvantaged groups. The *National Action Plan Against Racism, 2005-2008* was developed on foot of a public consultation process and is overseen by a monitoring group within DJELR. The Plan has been criticised as 'asylum-inspired' (NESC & IOM, 2006: 172). It aims to promote tolerance rather than integration per se.

The Taoiseach (Prime Minister) established a Taskforce on Active Citizenship in 2006. Other social inclusion projects such as those operated by Pobal (non-profit organisation managing Government social inclusion projects) and the Office of Social Inclusion also deal with related issues. The current Social Partnership Agreement⁴ *Towards 2016* made a commitment to developing an integration policy and to increasing the number of language support teachers in schools, as well as tackling the exploitation of immigrant workers by employers. In mid-2006, the Joint Oireachtas (Houses of Parliament) Committee on European Affairs recommended that the Government publish a white paper on integration.

The Government's discussion document with proposals for an *Immigration and Residence Bill* (2005) made the following statement with regard to setting up a body responsible for integration: "It is intended to create within the new service an Immigrant Integration Unit to promote and co-ordinate social and organisational measures across the whole spectrum of Government, for the acceptance of lawful immigrants into Irish economic and cultural life." The National Economic and Social Council 2006 report on migration policy stated that the Immigrant Integration Unit was to lead government thinking on integration and build a comprehensive integration policy.

In February 2007 the Government held a conference on Integration Policy in order to consult with NGOs and key stakeholders. As a follow-up to this, in December 2007, the

⁴ Since 1987, labour relations in Ireland have been governed by a series of social partnership agreements concluded between the Government, employers' organisations, workers' organisations and, since 1997, voluntary organisations.

Minister for Integration held a policy workshop on integration, entitled “The Chance to Get It Right”. In February 2007 a cross-departmental group chaired by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) was established to review existing integration policy and provide initial indications for future policy options. The group submitted a policy framework document in May 2007. The Minister for Integration is to take over the chairing of this group.

Dublin City is the largest urban area in Ireland, and immigrants make up over 15% of the population of the city. At a local level, Dublin City Council set up a committee to assist it in developing a Strategic Anti-Racism, Diversity and Integration Framework Plan, and other similar local-level initiatives are in place across the country. Dublin City Development Board, with Dublin City Council as the lead agency, has completed this policy framework, entitled “Towards Integration: A City Framework” and published it in May 2008.

This local integration framework involves a Declaration of Intent by members of the Development Board, representatives of local government, local development, Government agencies and social partners to develop a strong focus on integration in strategic planning and business processes, and to collaborate in measures and policies that contribute effectively to the concept of an open and integrated city. The framework comprises a range of actions that will be implemented by a new Office for Integration at Dublin City Council.

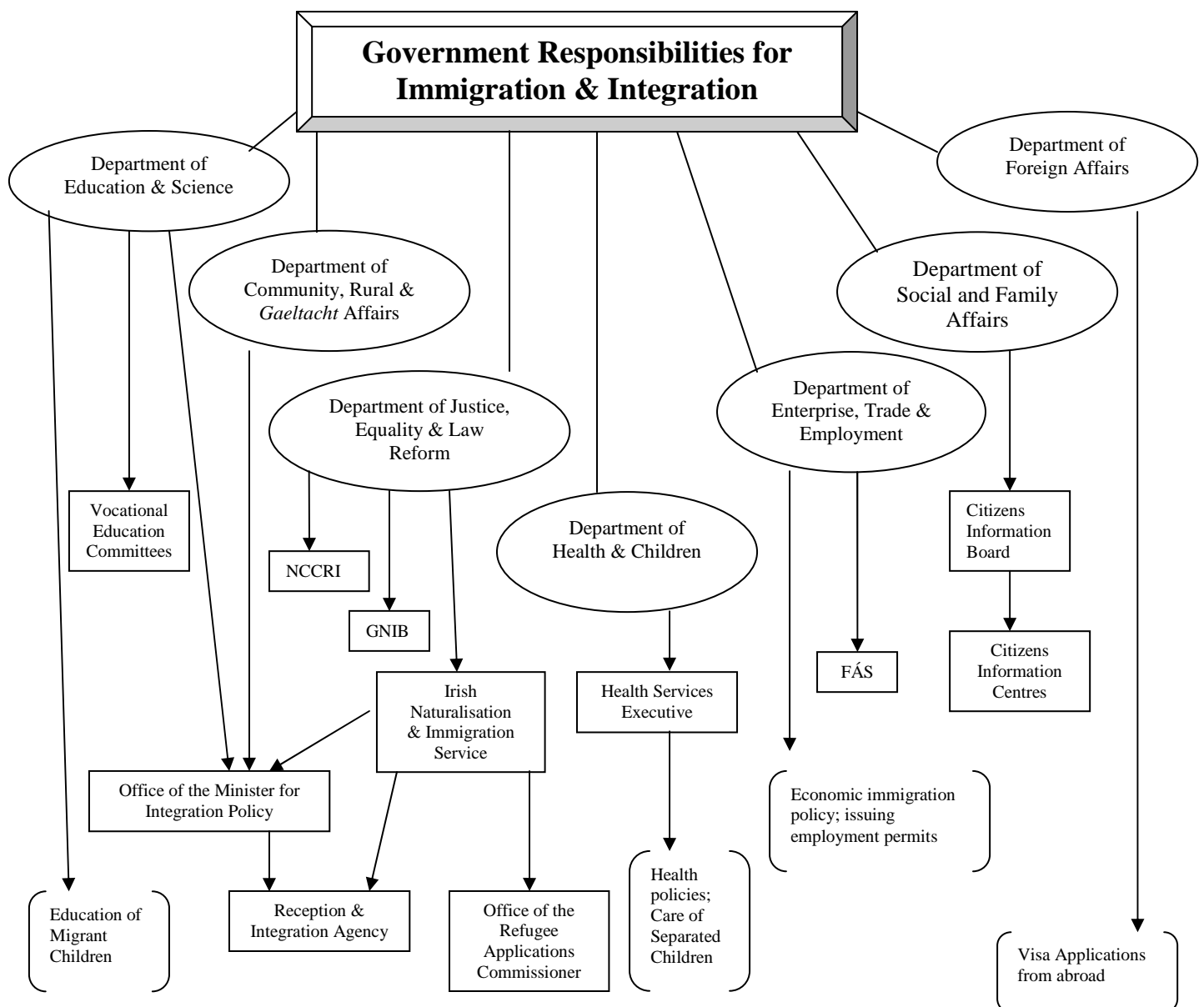
The 1992 Electoral Act provides for voting rights, as well as the right to be a candidate, in local elections for all adults who are ordinarily resident in the area – that is, resident since 1 September of the year prior to the election. In 2004, two Nigerians were elected as Town Councillors and one of them has since been appointed Mayor of an Irish town.

Ireland does not as yet have an official language and introduction policy (Healy, 2007), though the Government has commissioned research with a view to developing a broad strategy and to making recommendations on implementation of the strategy. The report is due in 2008. This is particularly urgent in view of the fact that the Government announced in December 2007 that language requirements would in the future be part of

the naturalisation process (O'Brien & Mac Cormaic, 17.12.2007). The Government is also conducting a study on interpretation and translation services.

2.2 Integration Support Services

Responsibility for immigration and integration in Ireland is currently divided between three Government departments and two Government agencies broadly responsible for admissions, and four further departments responsible for integration services. Various state agencies within these departments have a remit in the area.



Please note: This diagram is intended as an outline of responsibilities and is therefore not exhaustive.

2.2.1 General

Responsibility for the promotion and coordination of integration measures for legally-resident immigrants lies with the Office of the Minister for Integration, while delivery of integration services is the duty of the relevant Government departments. The 2008 Government Budget allocated additional money to the Office of the Minister for Integration. This is seed funding in order to facilitate organisations in achieving defined integration objectives. Funding aimed at integration and immigrants is within the budget allocations of several other Government departments. Local authorities, within the framework of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, have also developed local social inclusion programmes and integration frameworks.

The roles of the Office of the Minister for Integration are:

- to coordinate integration policy across other departments, agencies and services;
- to develop national policy on integration;
- to establish the Taskforce on Integration, a Ministerial Council and a Commission to consult with migrants in developing and implementing integration policies;
- to administer the Small Grants Scheme for integration initiatives at a local and community level;
- to establish new funding lines for faith-based groups, membership organisations and local structures;
- to coordinate the Government's Programme for Resettlement of Programme Refugees;
- to administer the European Integration Funds;
- to develop research and be involved in strategic studies.

The Reception and Integration Agency (RIA), created in 2001, has recently become a functional unit of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS). RIA is responsible for providing accommodation and other services to people seeking asylum, under the direct provision system, and for repatriating immigrants who do not qualify for social welfare under the habitual residency condition. Since May 2004, social welfare payments have been subject to proof of 'habitual residence' in Ireland for 2 years or more, regardless of the applicant's nationality.

2.2.2 Education

Until July 2008, all children in Ireland, irrespective of their parents' status, have the right to attend State-funded primary and secondary school in Ireland (age 5-18). The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service officially changed their policy at that time with regard to non-EEA students, who may only continue to have their child in State schools if both parent and child are already in education during the 2007-2008 academic year. Non-EEA students arriving for the first time in Autumn 2008 will be required to confirm that they are not - and will not be – accompanied by children.⁵

98.5% of State-funded schools are under the patronage of Catholic or Protestant religious organisations and the Department of Education and Science (DES) states that a school 'can admit a student of a particular religious denomination in preference to other students. Such a school can also refuse to admit a student who is not of that religion, provided it can prove that this refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school' (DES, 2004: 13-14).

In September 2007 a difficulty arose in the north Dublin town of Balbriggan, widely reported in the media, related to the provision of primary school places. At the beginning of the school year, there were not enough places for all the children starting school in the area. A meeting was held by the DES for parents of children who did not have school places. It was reported that the majority of these parents were African.

This resulted in the creation of an "emergency all-black primary school" (McDonald, 16.09.2007). A multi-denominational school was opened a year earlier than planned, and though it was intended for just 30 children, 106 children applied for places, many of them from the local immigrant communities. Balbriggan is located close to the largest direct provision centre for people seeking asylum in Ireland, and therefore many immigrants who previously lived in that centre have chosen to settle in Balbriggan in order to maintain contacts and use the same services. The situation in Balbriggan arose in the context of an overall increase in children enrolling in primary schools in Ireland. In January 2008, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, partly as a response to this

⁵ See: "Children of Non-EEA Students attending State Schools" at: <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/WP08000025>.

situation, approved a pilot enrolment scheme to reserve one-third of school enrolments in two primary schools in districts with high numbers of immigrants, for non-Catholics.

The DES statement of strategy for 2005-2007 does not refer to racism or interculturalism in schools. Within the school curricula, no tuition is available in languages spoken by immigrants from outside the EU, apart from French and Spanish.⁶ In 2005, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment published its guidelines for intercultural education in primary and post-primary schools.

The DES currently employs almost 1,900 language support teachers in primary and secondary schools. Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT) was the designated agency for English language support teachers and has developed benchmarks in interculturalism for schools. IILT provided training days to teachers in language support and has published materials for teaching English to schoolchildren. The organisation also provided English and introduction courses for recognised refugees and immigrants with long-term residence permits. A decision was made to close down the organisation in July 2008 and to mainstream the provision of language and introduction courses.

In 2002, the DES pointed out that there is “a critical need to address the language needs of adults for whom English is not the mother tongue, *regardless of status*” (DES, 2002: 18). Through funding from the Vocational Education Committee and the Reception and Integration Agency’s grants, the Irish government and the European Union currently fund largely voluntary groups to provide English courses, preventing the development of a standard course or high-quality service (Healy, 2007).

In 1993, the International Education Board of Ireland was set up to promote Ireland as an international education centre. It responds to enquiries from international students wishing to study in Ireland and advertises Irish education abroad (see: www.educationireland.ie).

The organisation responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications is the Qualifications Recognition Ireland (QRI), operating within the National Qualifications Authority. This is a crucial issue, as Ireland’s immigrant population is particularly

⁶ For the first time in 2006, it was possible to sit some subjects in the final secondary school exam, the Leaving Certificate, which facilitates entry into third-level courses, in Hungarian, Slovakian, Latvian and Lithuanian.

highly qualified, both relative to the native population, and to immigrant populations in other EU countries. QRI formally issued recognition to over 1,000 applicants during January to September 2006, and provided advice on comparability to many more immigrant workers and employers.

2.2.3 Employment

A recent report on equality in Ireland by the Central Statistics Office, based on the 2006 Census, indicated that levels of unemployment were far higher for non-EU nationals (12.7%) than for Irish (4.8%) or other EU (7.9%) nationals. Even more strikingly, unemployment among people of “Black” or “Black Irish” ethnicity was 26.6%.

In the wake of high-profile cases of exploitation of immigrant workers, such as by Irish Ferries, Carrickacroy Mushrooms, and Gama in the construction industry, there have been repeated calls for an increase in the number of labour inspectors, currently 37 inspectors for over two million people in employment. The Labour Inspectorate is now part of the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA), the statutory employment rights compliance office established in February 2007, and the number of labour inspectors is to be increased to 90 in the near future. In mid-2007, the NERA was in the process of recruiting ten more inspectors, with language skills (*Dáil Éireann Debates*, 04.08.2007).

The Equality Authority is an independent state agency that promotes equality and prevents discrimination on nine grounds including religion and race, in accordance with the Employment Equality Act 1998, the Equal Status Act 2000 and the Equality Act 2004. The Equality Authority also provides information on equality legislations and can provide legal assistance in bringing claims to the Equality Tribunal.

Intercultural and anti-racism training has been provided to the staff of major advice centres in relation to employment, including the Congress Information Opportunities Centre and FÁS Local Employment Services. Local Employment Services often work in partnership with minority ethnic groups and with local Partnership Companies, improving the quality of their services provided to immigrants and ethnic minorities (Watt & McGaughey, 2006: 124-5).

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) has produced leaflets on workers' rights translated into major immigrant languages. Prior to January 2007, the work permit application form also contained details of employment rights (Ruhs, 2005: 25). Application forms under the new regime simply refer the applicant to the DETE's website for more information.

A programme was set up by the non-Governmental organisation Business in the Community to provide training to people with IBC/05 status as outlined above. The project, Employment for Parents of Irish-born Children (EPIC), provided a six-week training module on the English language and on life and work skills for over 200 people. 70% of participants in the pilot Dublin phase of the programme, which began in September 2006, went on to enter employment or mainstream further education and training, assisted by dedicated training and employment officers (Downes, 07.12.2007). The next phase of the programme has been extended, the name has been changed to Employment for People from Immigrant Communities, and it is now open to all regularly resident immigrants. It is funded by the Office of the Minister for Integration.

In late 2006, the Irish Government announced the allocation of over €500,000 to projects around the country focusing on pre-employment training and job-seeking for refugees and immigrants granted leave to remain. The projects cover programmes such as language courses, information provision and employment training.

FÁS (the Training and Employment Authority) provides a training allowance to unemployed migrants attending a range of training and employment programmes. All FÁS services are open to immigrants from within the European Economic Area (EEA), while immigrants from outside the EEA may also access the courses if they meet certain criteria. Simultaneous interpretation is available to all FÁS clients, and open days have been conducted to provide information on FÁS services to immigrants. FÁS also provides information on living and working in Ireland in various European languages at their offices. A two-day training programme on diversity is available to all FÁS staff, together with a set of Guidelines on Interculturalism (www.fas.ie). FÁS has developed specific vocational English programmes for EU immigrants working in hospitality, construction and security, and two generic programmes, as evening courses.

The One Step Up programme provides financial support for eligible programmes to assist in the upskilling of people in employment. The One Step Up programme is available to Irish and migrant workers. FÁS provides financial support towards the cost of the programme and, where appropriate, employers agree to release workers to attend. In a research study on families with IBC/05 status, many of the people interviewed reported the benefits of such courses in terms of improving employability and language skills (Coakley & Healy, 2007: 65).

The FÁS Asylum Seekers Unit was set up in 1999 to provide vocational training services to a particular group of people who had sought asylum before mid-1999 and were to be granted work permits. The Unit was mainstreamed in 2001, but was seen to have achieved considerable success in assisting people in accessing employment.

The FÁS Safe Pass course is a one-day training awareness programme for workers in the construction sector, providing a basic knowledge of health and safety in the workplace. Various consultancy firms, trade unions and employers provide the course in Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Russian, Slovakian, Portuguese, Turkish, Spanish and other common immigrant languages.

FÁS is also undertaking a pilot project, called DIALOG, to assist immigrants in integration, adaptation, problem solving and progression, initially among the Polish, Latvian and Lithuanian communities. The project aims to explore the possibility of setting up an advisory point for immigrant workers in partnership with other Government agencies and NGOs.

A newly-established company called Skillnets Ltd, working with limited resources, funds networks that facilitate employers in training employees in various skills including the English language. Employers contribute over half of the cost of providing the training. For a number of years, companies that have a large proportion of non-English-speaking employees, such as Glanbia (an international dairy food company) and Piers Construction, have provided English classes at the workplace. Trade unions such as the Technical, Engineering and Electrical Union (TEEU) have also offered short-term English and orientation courses.

National Anti-Racist Workplace Week is an initiative established by representatives of trade unions, employers' unions, the DJELR and the Equality Authority, and in partnership with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. It has taken place every year since 2000 and seeks to promote and support workplaces in being free from discrimination; being welcoming to minority ethnic employees and customers; providing for diversity; achieving equality in practice; and communicating a message of equality. The 2007 Anti-Racist Workplace Week was the last to be held in the current format, which is being reconsidered for 2008.

2.2.4 Health

The Government health agency, the Health Service Executive (HSE), has developed an Intercultural Strategy on the basis of consultation with ethnic minority communities, in order to improve their health status and their access to services. This is a significant document which sets out the framework for progress in the area. The strategy was published in February 2008. It recommended the establishment of a national interpretation service, as well as further staff training on interculturalism. The strategy also recommends the use of an ethnic identifier within the service for data collection.

Methods of reaching out to women from ethnic minorities, who have a low take-up of antenatal and postnatal programmes, were suggested, as well as dealing with cultural or religious practices (HSE, 2008a). The Executive Summary and the Recommendations in the strategy have been translated into the principal immigrant languages (Chinese, Czech, Polish, French and Lithuanian). The Strategy is governed by principles of inter-sectoral collaboration, interculturalism, community participation and partnership, among others. An Advisory Group will be established to monitor the implementation of the Strategy.

The key priorities identified through the process of consultation for the strategy were:

- information, language and communication;
- service delivery and access to services;
- changing the organisation;

- working in partnership with minority ethnic communities.

The Recommendations cover accessing services, service delivery, mechanisms to promote access, underpinning access, data, information and research, and human resources and organisational development. The Strategy is also committed to developing mechanisms “to promote recruitment, promotion, development and the retention of staff from diverse backgrounds” (HSE, 2008: 9).

The strategy was developed through consultation with staff, service-users and stakeholders since May 2006, through a process of roadshows, focus groups, surveys and written submissions (HSE, 2008b). Structures are to be put in place for ongoing consultation with minority ethnic groups, and for the provision of community-based services (Mutwarasibo in Plaetevoet, 2007: 48).

Both in its extensive consultation with stakeholders and its comprehensive approach to intercultural health provision, the HSE Intercultural Strategy is an example that could be emulated in terms of integration in general. The Ethnic Minority Health Forum was organised for the consultation of the strategy, meeting at a national level to discuss issues of concern and decide on actions to be taken, organised by Cáirde (see below).

Crucial health-related information is currently being translated into a number of languages, to be made available on the HSE website. The Asylum Seeker and Refugee Counselling and Support Service has been set up at the largest accommodation centre for people seeking asylum, Mosney. The Service refers people for counselling and is overseen by a multidisciplinary steering committee (HSE, 2008b, 41).

In November 2005, the HSE, the Irish College of General Practitioners and the Berkeley Clinic launched the ‘General Practice Care in a Multicultural Society Information Pack’ to assist GPs (family doctors) in providing care to different communities and to people with specific illnesses. GPs do not yet, however, have access to a nationwide interpretation system, and in general in the healthcare system, the provision of interpreters is at the discretion of the service providers (Watt & McGaughey, 2006: 117-8). The Department of Health and Children delivered a report in 2006 on the provision of ‘cultural male circumcision’ by appropriately trained persons, prioritising the welfare of the child (Watt & McGaughey, 2006: 128).

In 2004, the Primary Care Department of HSE West established an Asylum-Seeker/Refugee Committee to provide a collaborative approach to health provision and to develop projects in the area (HSE, 2008b, 45). A number of Irish hospitals are part of the World Health Organisation's Migrant Friendly Hospitals projects. The HSE's National Intercultural Hospitals Initiative was set up to build on this experience (HSE, 2008b: 53).

There are many non-Governmental organisations involved in the area of health. Cáirde (meaning "friends") is a non-Governmental community development organisation that seeks to address health inequalities among ethnic minorities in Dublin by improving access and participation in service provision. The organisation runs a health information and advocacy centre, an ethnic minority health forum, a women's health support group, and a community development and health project. Cáirde has also published reports on various policy issues and runs health and equality projects.

Louth African Women's Support Group composed a set of guidelines and training programmes for the health sector on parenting African children for foster parents (HSE, 2008b, 51). The Gort Embracing Migrants programme in Galway provided crucial information to the HSE on the importance of community-based, accredited interpreters (HSE, 2008b, 40).

The Spiritan Asylum Seekers Initiative (SPIRASI) also runs Health Information and Promotion services for people seeking asylum, through a peer-led method, both in group sessions and one-on-one. The Vincentian Refugee Centre in the north inner city of Dublin provides information on health, among other issues. The Galway Refugee Support Group runs a health action project, 'Migrants, Asylum seekers and Refugees Training for Action', funded by the Government's Combat Poverty Agency to reduce health inequalities, with representation from community care, primary care, mental health, maternity services, family support and childcare services (Watt & McGaughey, 2006: 129).

Immigrant networks and associations are essential in providing assistance and advice to immigrants who have just arrived in Ireland, particularly in relation to emotional needs. A Directory of Migrant-Led Organisations published in 2007 lists 26 immigrant organisations providing support for specific national groups, and 21 organisations

providing support generally for new communities.⁷ There are also many more immigrant organisations not listed in the Directory which provide this kind of support.

2.2.5 Housing

In international research, Dublin has shown relatively low levels of segregation, and ethnic clustering is not considered an urgent immigration or integration issue (CLIP Network, 2007: 15, 23). However, research has indicated that the high proportion of immigrants renting accommodation is a concern, particularly in view of the limited legal protection afforded to tenants in Ireland (MCRI, 2008). Local authorities in Ireland are responsible for providing mainstream social housing, affordable housing and shared ownership. People who qualify are put on a waiting list, and each local authority has its own rules for deciding the order of priority on the list. The absence of long-term residence status per se affects immigrants' access to the various forms of social housing as well as access to mortgages. In recent years there has been increasing pressure on the stock of social housing available, which has led to tensions in relation to the allocation of social housing to immigrants.

Other housing measures provided include low-cost housing, improvement works, a local authority mortgage and the affordable housing scheme. Social housing is also provided by housing cooperatives and housing associations. The results of research with immigrants with IBC/05 status indicated that many of those interviewed valued the range of residential supports available to people in Ireland and the high standard of housing in general, though some difficulties were experienced in finding accommodation (Coakley & Healy, 2007: 71).

The NGOs the Immigrant Council of Ireland and Focus Ireland are currently undertaking research on housing for Lithuanian, Indian, Chinese and Nigerian communities in the Northwest Dublin area. The NCCRI commissioned the Irish Centre for Housing Research to undertake a programme of consultative research during 2007 entitled 'Housing ethnic and cultural diversity'. The Office for Social Inclusion is also

⁷ Directory of migrant-led community organisations available at: www.immigrantcouncil.ie/images/8995_directoryimelo.pdf.

analysing each district of Dublin City to identify ‘cultural groups’ and the prominence of immigrant issues (CLIP Network, 2007: 66).

The Government’s Homeless Agency has highlighted problems with immigrant workers experiencing difficulties finding work and therefore becoming homeless. NGOs such as the Simon Community, Focus Ireland, Crosscare, the Capuchin Day Centre and St Vincent de Paul also provide services to homeless people, a disproportionate number of whom in recent years have been immigrants. People using homeless services receive supplementary welfare payments, but the habitual residency condition (the requirement to have lived in Ireland for the previous two years in order to receive social welfare, outlined above) has been a particular problem in relation to homelessness.

2.2.6 Border police and other services that regulate immigration status

In 2005 immigration and asylum admissions, as well as citizenship services, were reorganised into the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR). The service was set up to provide a ‘one-stop shop’ to incorporate admissions and applications for residency, the naturalisation process, and the enforcement of immigration and asylum legislation. It aims to improve information sharing, service times and enforcement mechanisms. However, it should be noted that INIS is not a one-stop shop in the sense of this Project.

The Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) exists within the Garda Síochána – the national police service - and has its headquarters in the same building as the INIS, in a central location in Dublin city centre. The Garda Síochána is responsible for the control of immigrants entering the State, the control of immigrants residing in the State – including the registration process - and the removal of immigrants whose presence in the State has been deemed unlawful, from the State. The Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) was established within the Garda Síochána in 2000, and has overall responsibility for immigration policy issues within the organisation. GNIB undertakes border and immigration functions in the Dublin area and has particular responsibility for the investigation of immigration-related criminal activity, including human trafficking and people smuggling.

The 2004 Immigration Act provides for the appointment of immigration officers, who are generally members of the Garda Síochána. Members of the Garda Síochána who have been appointed as immigration officers undertake immigration control functions at ports of entry to the State, with GNIB officers performing that function at Dublin airport.

All non-EEA migrants who are resident in the State for more than three months must register with the Garda Síochána. The chief superintendent who is Head of Bureau at GNIB is the registration officer for the Dublin Metropolitan Area. The GNIB head office is open from 8am to 10pm Monday to Thursday and until 4pm on Fridays, with special opening hours for students only, on some Saturdays. Hours of opening of registration offices outside of the Dublin area vary. (www.garda.ie/gnib.html). Outside of the Dublin Metropolitan Area, the superintendents in charge of Garda Síochána districts are the registration officers for their respective districts.

2.2.7 Legal advice and legal representation

The Legal Aid Board is a Government-funded independent organisation providing professional and accessible legal aid and advice. It has 33 full-time law centres throughout the country, as well as a Refugee Documentation Centre. The Legal Aid Board also provides a Refugee Legal Service (RLS) to provide confidential and independent legal services to people applying for refugee status and in appropriate cases on immigration and deportation issues. The RLS has two offices in Dublin city centre, one in Cork, one in Galway, and information clinics around the country. Unfortunately, however, in the experience of NGOs, immigrants are often not aware of their rights in relation to legal aid, and pay high fees to private lawyers.

The network of Free Legal Aid Centres (FLAC) was established in 1969 as an independent human rights organisation providing advocacy, strategic litigation and analysis, and assisting those dealing with poverty and discrimination. FLAC is currently campaigning for the restoration of universal child benefit to all children living in Ireland, regardless of family income or immigration status, which has been subject to the habitual residency condition since May 2004. The Immigrant Council of Ireland also

recently achieved the status of independent law centre, enabling the NGO to provide direct legal representation to immigrants.

2.2.8 Social welfare

The Department of Social and Family Affairs administers the social welfare system in Ireland, and decisions on entitlement to payments are made by Deciding Officers of the Department. People have the right to appeal social welfare decisions by internal review. The habitual residency condition excludes many recent immigrants from access to social welfare. In certain circumstances, however, a payment of Supplementary Welfare Allowance, administered by the HSE, may be made to people who do not satisfy this condition. Exceptional Needs Payments may also be made by the social welfare authorities where appropriate.

Immigrants and ethnic minorities are considered a specific target group for Government anti-poverty policies, though a conflict has been noted between the objectives of immigration and social inclusion policies (Fanning, 2007: 250). The payment of child benefit, for example, has been restricted in relation to the habitual residency condition, outlined above, and is not paid to people seeking asylum who live in direct provision accommodation (where full board is provided).

2.2.9 Other relevant areas

Policing

The Irish police force, An Garda Síochána, has trained over 500 police officers to function as ethnic liaison officers in police stations, with 150 based in stations around Dublin. However, because of a large workload, these liaison officers often spend little time performing their ethnic liaison duties, as this role is part of their wider policing responsibilities (Watt & McGaughey, 2006: 127).

In March 2006, the Garda Commissioner established a group to engage in research and consultation both in Ireland and abroad on issues relating to religious and ethnic minorities, diversity and integration. The group concluded that the intercultural

approach to integration was most useful, and implemented, among other initiatives, a diversity training package, a human rights audit of Garda activities, an action plan and a Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan (www.garda.ie/press_story1.html).

The Garda Recruitment Initiative of October 2005 encouraged the recruitment of Irish residents from different ethnic backgrounds into the force. The key change in entry rules was the requirement to hold a qualification in *either* English *or* Irish and in one other language, rather than, as was previously the case, in English *and* Irish. The recruitment drive was intended to enable the force to better reflect the composition of Irish society.

The Garda Racial and Intercultural Office (www.garda.ie/racial.html) in Dublin city centre provides advice, and monitors and coordinates police activity in relation to racial, ethnic, religious and cultural issues. The Office is developing a recording mechanism on racially motivated incidents and has links to victim support services in relation to racially-motivated crime. The Office is considering the development of a network of minority ethnic representatives, the publication of a newsletter and awareness-raising campaigns on racial and ethnic issues.

NCCRI and Anti-Racism

The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) is an expert body that provides advice and develops initiatives on anti-racism, as well as promoting a more inclusive intercultural society in Ireland. The Committee works on the basis of promoting cooperation between Government and non-Government organisations to provide advice and information, to inform policy and to develop international networks.

Support for anti-racism and minority rights is also provided within the National Action Plan Against Racism (NPAR), by the Irish Human Rights Commission, and NGOs such as the Immigrant Council of Ireland, the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties and Residents Against Racism. Many community organisations led by immigrants also provide support.

Childcare

There are 33 city and county childcare committees throughout Ireland, comprising partnerships between statutory and voluntary groups, local Partnership Boards,

childcare providers and parents. The committees receive funding from the Government, and some committees provide multilingual information packs in European, African and Middle-Eastern languages.

Sport

The Football Association of Ireland has published the first 'Intercultural Football Plan' to "ensure every individual can feel *free* to become involved in football on a basis of *equality*, confident that they will be *welcome* if they do so, and to contribute thereby to an *integrated* society at ease with its growing diversity." The objectives of the plan are to combat racism in football, to promote participation among all communities, to develop a dynamic and globally competitive culture of football and to contribute to the wider process of integration (NCCRI, 09.2007: 30). In response to a racist incident at a Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) match in July 2008, the national Irish sports organisation is intending to enshrine binding anti-racism measures in its official rule-book at its Congress meeting early in 2009.

2.3 Joined-up Government and partnerships

There is currently no cross-departmental structure with competences in both immigration and integration in Ireland, nor are there national or local structures for formal consultation with ethnic minorities. The establishment of the Office of the Minister for Integration Policy, described in 2.1 above, is a step in this direction. Some of the initiatives proposed by the Minister of State may ultimately conform to a one-stop shop model to a certain extent. The following are examples of inter-governmental co-operation in Ireland on other issues which may provide some learning for the establishment of such a structure in the future.

2.3.1 Office of the Minister for Children (OMC)

The position of Minister of State for Children was created in 1994 and the Minister attends all Ministerial Cabinet meetings. The Office of the Minister for Children (OMC), launched in December 2005, identifies priority cross-cutting initiatives,

monitors the implementation of the National Children's Strategy and promotes capacity building. The Office also oversees implementation at a local level and creates awareness of the children's strategy. The OMC has representation from the Departments of Health and Children; Education and Science; and Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The work of the Office is overseen by the Minister and by its Director-General. Political leadership is provided by the Minister, together with a Cabinet Committee on health and children (www.omc.gov.ie).

The OMC is physically located within the Department of Health and Children, but representatives of other departments and organisations with a remit for children are co-located to the Office to promote coherence. The OMC is an independent body with substantial budgetary resources to support the Minister for Children and other Government Departments as well as high-level personnel. The Board of the Office comprises Assistant Secretaries from the relevant government departments.

2.3.2 Office for Social Inclusion (OSI)

The Office for Social Inclusion (OSI) was set up to oversee the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAP/incl.) and is not represented by a Minister of State (www.socialinclusion.ie). It is located within the Department of Social and Family Affairs and incorporates the National Anti-Poverty Strategy and social partnership commitments. NAP/incl. is coordinated and monitored by the Office across different Government departments, agencies, regional and local government to ensure that the plan's agenda is being implemented and further developed. The Office identifies priorities in each department and promotes a more coordinated approach.

The OSI also coordinates and drives the social inclusion elements of the National Development Plan (NDP), and of Ireland's report to the EU on strategies for social protection and social inclusion (NSSPI). These tasks include monitoring and evaluating progress in implementing the NAP/incl. and these strategies, and reporting to Government, the social partners and other stakeholders, the general public and the EU. Other key tasks include supporting regional and local implementation of the strategies,

implementing a communications strategy on social inclusion and managing the international dimensions.

To support this work OSI coordinates a data strategy to ensure there is sufficient data for policy development and for monitoring and evaluating progress, the poverty impact assessment of policies and programmes to determine their impact on poverty, and research on the scale, nature and causes of poverty, and on the multi-faceted policies and programmes required to effectively tackle and ultimately eliminate poverty and social exclusion.

As a result of the high levels of immigration to Ireland in recent years, one of the four priorities in the first Report on the NSSPI to the EU in 2006 was integration of the migrant population. A further NSSPI report is due in September 2008 and this will include an assessment made of the progress achieved on the integration of migrants since 2006.

The OSI undertakes consultation with the Departments of Justice, Finance, Education, Employment and Health and with the NCCRI, the social partners, the British Irish Council and the Combat Poverty Agency. The Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion provides strategic direction and monitoring (www.socialinclusion.ie).

2.4 One Stop Shop models

2.4.1 Existing One-Stop Shop models for immigrant integration

2.4.1.1 Citizens Information Board

While there is no model in Ireland for the holistic provision of services directly aimed at immigrant integration, the structure that mostly closely approximates this model is the network of Citizens Information Centres (CICs), overseen by the Citizens Information Board under the Department of Social and Family Affairs. This service is aimed at the general population, but in practice a high proportion of service-users are immigrants.

As a result of a partnership between the CICs in northwest inner-city Dublin and the NGO the Irish Refugee Council, the Refugee Information Service was established in 2001. This provides a specialist information, advice, advocacy and referral service for refugees and people seeking asylum, and supports community groups and other CICs in

providing information to this group and to the general public. The Immigrant Council of Ireland provides training to CIC staff and volunteers, and runs a helpline to support the CICs' work with immigrants.

The Citizens Information Board is the national support agency for the provision of information, advice and advocacy on social services. Together with providing information directly through the information centre network, the Board supports other statutory and voluntary information providers, and engages in assessments of social policy and research. The Board also provides an Information Phone Service and a comprehensive information website (www.citizensinformation.ie). The newly-branded website received a UN World Summit Award in the e-Government category in 2007 and was cited as an EU best practice model at an e-Government summit. The content of the website is available in English and Irish, with many relevant documents also available in Polish, Romanian and French.

The Citizens Information Board supports the delivery of information through three channels: online, telephone and face-to-face. The public can access integrated information directly through the Citizens Information website, www.citizensinformation.ie. The Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) provides a telephone service, and the nationwide network of Citizens Information Services (CISs) provides the face-to-face service. These three channels ensure that the public have access to information, advice and advocacy services. A survey of the Centres in early 2008 indicated that up to 23% of the 612,687 clients during 2007 were foreign nationals. This corresponds to approximately one-third of the entire official immigrant population of the Republic of Ireland.

The staff of the Central Services of the Board liaises with CICs and other local statutory bodies, authorities and development agencies to achieve a more integrated service approach. The Citizens Information Board was established by the Comhairle Act in 2000 and is further regulated by the Citizens Information Act which was passed into law in February 2007 (www.citizensinformationboard.ie).

2.4.1.2 Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS)

The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service was established ostensibly to provide a ‘one-stop shop’ service, yet in the sense of this project, INIS does not strictly qualify as such a model. Moves towards a holistic government approach are indicated by the temporary assignment of staff from other relevant departments to INIS, “with a view to advancing the whole of government approach to immigration issues.” INIS has assumed the Department of Foreign Affairs’ responsibility for issuing visas in Dublin, though applications from abroad continue to be processed by Foreign Affairs. Border control remains the responsibility of the Garda Síochána and the Garda National Immigration Bureau, in particular.

INIS has not taken over the labour market policy and employment permit function of Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE), though there will be a virtual link between the systems of the two Departments. DETE has retained its responsibility for economic migration policy. Agencies currently responsible for the admission and integration of refugees report to the Minister for Justice through INIS. However, the Citizenship Division of INIS moved to another county outside Dublin in July, further affecting the original idea of a ‘one-stop shop’.

2.4.1.3 NGO services

A number of NGOs that work with immigrants provide a range of services within the same organisation, such as the Immigrant Council of Ireland, SPIRASI, the Vincentian Refugee Centre, the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland and Crosscare Migrant Project in Dublin. Outside of the capital, similar services are provided by the NGOs NASC in Cork, Doras Luimní in Limerick, the Refugee Support Group in Galway, and Mayo Intercultural Action in Mayo, among others. Mainstream NGOs working on the issues of homelessness, violence against women and family support, among others, have also been involved in supporting immigrants.

For reasons of brevity, just two are considered here. The Immigrant Council of Ireland provides a drop-in and telephone information service for immigrants, engages in advocacy and lobbying on immigration policy, and publishes research and information.

The ICI is also a recognised Independent Law Centre, providing legal advice and representation in certain cases and undertaking strategic litigation. It also provides training on immigration issues to a variety of State and non-State organisations working with immigrants around Ireland.

SPIRASI (Spiritan Asylum Seekers Initiative) is an organisation run by the Spiritan Fathers to provide specialist services to people seeking asylum, refugees and other disadvantaged immigrant groups. The core activities of SPIRASI are the Centre for the Education and Integration of Migrants, the Centre for the Care of Survivors of Torture (accredited by the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims), and a Centre for Health Information and Promotion with an outreach programme.

2.4.2 Socio-Cultural Mediators

The Irish Government does not currently employ any socio-cultural mediators. The HSE Intercultural Health Strategy, outlined above, includes a commitment to consideration of using Cultural Mediation at community level to promote interculturalism in the health service (HSE, 2008, 20). A cultural mediation training project was undertaken by the NGO Access Ireland, with European Refugee Fund and EU-JOIN (Joint Promotion of Anti-discrimination at Local Level) funding, in 2002. This resulted in the establishment of the Access Ireland Cultural Mediation Service.

Access Ireland is a non-Governmental Organisation that seeks to promote the integration of people of diverse cultural backgrounds, with a focus on their health and well-being, using community development principles. Their work includes training people from minority ethnic backgrounds to work as intercultural mediators and promoting their employment in the health and social services. The role of the intercultural mediators includes facilitating access and outcomes in using services for members of the minority ethnic population, providing training for service providers in cultural competence and assisting in the culture-proofing of information materials.

The organisation has developed a particularly positive relationship with school liaison teachers, and mediators have also given intercultural training in schools. The Service has established a network of organisations representing groups that have been

discriminated against, and has worked with autism and social support services. A relationship has also been established with the Garda Racial and Intercultural Unit. The mediation service specifically provides a service in relation to African and Roma communities, and works together with the Roma Support Group.

The Roma Cultural Mediation Project developed from this project, and on foot of requests received from Irish service providers. The project aimed to provide better equality of access to health, social, educational and probation services for Roma people, as well as better professional skills and intercultural competence among service providers. The project was run by a Development Partnership involving Access Ireland, the Roma Support Group, the HSE, the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee, Tallaght Intercultural Action and Dublin City University. The project also signed a Transnational Cooperation Agreement with Belgian, French, Slovakian and Spanish organisations.

The service is intended as a resource for both service providers and minority ethnic communities in the areas of health and social services; mediation and interpreting; and culture, health and cross-cultural communication. The roles of cultural mediators trained by Access Ireland are to provide a communication link between service providers and minority ethnic users, provide information on services, support and encourage minority ethnic users in using services and delivering training and awareness-raising sessions (www.accessireland.ie).

2.4.3 New Developments in Information and Communications Technology

INIS is in the process of computerising and collating statistics in relation to asylum, immigration, repatriation and citizenship, and creating virtual links between the databases of relevant government departments. An international consortium headed by IBM is developing an IT system for INIS including a case management information system, an accommodation management system for the Reception and Integration Agency and a country of origin research system for the Refugee Documentation Centre. This includes the establishment of electronic links within INIS systems, with the GNIB and with other Government agencies. The project is to be completed in mid-2008.

3. Immigrants' Experiences of Government Services

The Irish Government has commissioned the OECD to undertake a review of the public service in Ireland, making recommendations as to future directions for reform, supporting the Government's "drive for delivery of world class services to the citizen". The review examined the quality of front-line service delivery as well as tackling issues such as child welfare and poverty reduction (OECD, 2007: 1-2). According to the Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), the Government is investing 'unprecedented levels of resources in public services'.

An NGO providing services to immigrants, the Crosscare Migrant Project, produced a submission to this OECD Review in June 2007 outlining difficulties experienced by immigrants in accessing public services, which serves to inform this section of the report (Emigrant Advice, 2007), together with information provided by the national Advisory Committee for the "One-Stop Shop" project and the Coordinator of the Immigrant Council of Ireland information and support service.

3.1 Accessibility – opening hours, location

Many Government services, such as the Reception and Integration Agency and the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, are located only in Dublin, and immigrants living outside Dublin City may have to travel a significant distance in order to access the services. The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) does not have a public office, and is difficult to contact by telephone. If immigrants do not have a car, public transport may be lacking, and where they are available, buses and trains can be expensive.

The majority of immigrants in Ireland are working, and it is therefore often difficult to access services, particularly English language and other training courses, that are only available during office hours. This may contribute to preventing immigrants from working at an appropriate skill level, due to the difficulty of learning English and/or achieving certification of their skills in Ireland.

3.2 Language and intercultural communication

The Department of Social and Family Affairs state that they have application forms in various languages, yet in practice very few service-users have been provided with these (Emigrant Advice, 2007: 1). Most public service websites are available in English and Irish only, though the Citizens Information website, as mentioned above, has information in three common migrant languages. Immigrant women surveyed for Immigrant Council of Ireland research had limited information on health services in Ireland, experienced language difficulties, and some relied on pharmacies or even travelled to their home countries for treatment (Pillinger, 2007: 80). A recent report on Government service provision to minority ethnic groups highlighted issues such as communications and language difficulties, attitudinal barriers, and a lack of understanding of the system and of the services available in relation to minority groups in Ireland (Watt & McGaughey, 2006: 117).

For individual immigrants, and NGOs working with immigrants, the cost of translation and interpretation services is generally prohibitive. NGOs often rely on the linguistic skills of their staff, or ask people to bring a bilingual friend to translate. This has implications for confidentiality, and for confidence that information is being properly relayed. Interpretation is not always available to Government agencies, such as the Citizens Information Centres, and service-users have no general right to an interpreter, though they are sometimes provided at the discretion of the service-provider. There is as yet no generally applied nation-wide system of quality control and accreditation for translators and interpreters.

3.3 Cost to the immigrant

The costs of the required translation of documents for immigration purposes can be very high, and immigrants may need to pay for certified translations of a range of documents. Frequently, translation companies charge a minimum fee of about €50, regardless of the size of the document. Because of this and other factors, the process of recognition of qualifications, or joining a professional association in order to practice certain professions, can also be very costly, as well as difficult to access and time-consuming.

The cost of registration with GNIB for students staying for longer than 90 days is to increase by 50% from €100 to €150 from August 2008, and the fees for applying for naturalisation have also increased.

In order to apply for a Personal Public Service number for tax and social insurance, immigrants have to provide proof of address, which can prove difficult, and there have been reports of people charging a fee to immigrant workers in order to use their address for this purpose (Emigrant Advice, 2007: 1). For immigrants who do not qualify for a medical card and do not have health insurance, there is no access to hospital in-patient services and maternity and infant services, and a fee must be paid to visit a family doctor.

The fee for a work permit is €500-1,500, depending on the period of validity, which is not refunded if an immigrant worker loses their job, and is not transferable between jobs. Furthermore, all non-EEA immigrants must obtain a Certificate of Residency at a cost of €100, which cannot be paid in cash. If any visa-required immigrant wishes to leave Ireland and then return, they must apply for a re-entry visa, at a cost of €60 for a single re-entry, and €100 for multi re-entry, paid by bank draft or postal order only, and it is often unclear to whom it should be made payable. Family members of EEA or Swiss nationals are exempt from these fees.

3.4 Provision of information

The quality and accessibility of information for immigrants in Ireland is regularly highlighted as a major problem in terms of exercising rights. Relatively little information is available in languages other than English and Irish. Due to a lack of clear and accessible information on the immigration process, immigrants often pay high fees to solicitors to assist with applications that they could otherwise have completed unassisted. Immigrants experience difficulties in exercising employment rights due to lack of information and lack of legal support. Many immigrants working in Ireland do not understand the tax system as it is quite complex. This results in many people over-paying taxes (Emigrant Advice, 2007: 2).

In a study on women immigrants, respondents noted a lack of basic information from the Government in their own language on arrival, and relied on churches, ethnic newspapers and informal networks for such information (Pillinger, 2007: 84-5). The employers' union IBEC commented that many immigrant workers do not understand the legislation that governs their employment, nor do they know exactly what documentation is required. Furthermore it was reported that many immigrants bring their children to information services to interpret for them in relation to work issues (Watt & McGaughey, 2006: 124-5).

3.5 Coherence of information provided by various organisations

Due to a lack of transparent and accessible information regarding people's rights and entitlements, there can be difficulties for immigrants in being properly informed. In many cases there are no written rules available in relation to immigration and therefore it is problematic even for Government service-providers to access accurate information on immigration.

3.6 Customer Service – Waiting Times, Respect for Service User, etc.

The GNIB moved to a central city location in October 2002, in the same building as the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service. This resulted in a substantial improvement in terms of queues, removing the necessity for immigrants to queue from early in the morning at the old office. While complaints are made from time to time relating to the service provided by the Garda Síochána in the registration process, the GNIB has introduced shift work for those employed at its head office in Dublin, where 65% of all registrations are conducted, along with opening on Saturdays at peak times, with a view to eliminating the queues that were a feature of that process in earlier years.

The naturalisation process is currently in difficulties because of a significant backlog. It takes about two and a half years for an application to be processed, thus extending the effective required period of residence for naturalisation from the legislative five years, to almost eight years in practice.

Immigrants can apply for five-year residence permits if they have had a work permit, visa or authorisation for at least five years. These applications currently take a year and a half to process. In addition, many applications for residency, such as those by spouses of Irish or EU citizens and other immigrant categories, do not have a set processing time, and may take over a year. During this time, the immigrant must remain in Ireland, but does not have permission to work.

A significant High Court case was brought to the attention of the media in July 2008 and made front-page headlines and editorials in national newspapers, in relation to customer service to immigrants. A representative for the Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform issued an apology at the High Court and announced that immigration procedures at the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service would be reviewed on foot of his Department's failure for three years to inform a Somali woman that her family's family reunification visas had been approved (MacCormaic & Carolan, 26.07.2008).

This failure led to the woman in question spending over three years alone in Ireland while her husband and young children remained unnecessarily in a refugee camp in Ethiopia (Healy, 26.07.2008). Opposition party members called the case a "gross act of maladministration," reflecting "a consistent pattern of behaviour by the Department of Justice", and immigrant groups stated that the family reunification system was "unclear and laborious" (MacCormaic, 26.07.2008). It was reported that family reunification processes often take 24-30 months to complete (Kenny, 29.07.2008).

3.7 Racism and discrimination

The Department of Social and Family Affairs does not collect data on the nationality of people who are refused or granted social welfare payments on appeal, which hampers efforts to ensure fairness in this process (Emigrant Advice, 2007: 2). Research was undertaken by the Economic and Social Research Institute for the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia in summer 2005 among over 1,100 employment permit holders and people seeking asylum in Ireland. 35% of people

surveyed had experienced harassment on the street, on public transport or in public places, a proportion that rose to over 50% among the Black African community.

Harassment at work and discrimination in access to employment were also relatively common, particularly among both Black and White Africans. 17.6% of those surveyed who had contact with the immigration services reported that they were badly treated or received poor services. Other common forms of discrimination were in accessing private housing, accessing credit and being harassed by neighbours. Black Africans experienced the most discrimination overall among the groups studied and people seeking asylum experienced more discrimination in all domains than work permit holders (McGinnity et al, 2006).

3.8 Any other issues that arise.

A high proportion of immigrants live in inner-city Dublin, where approximately 25% of the population is non-Irish. Some particular issues that immigrants experience in relation to housing have been that accommodation is tied to employment, and some accommodation provided by employers has been found to be substandard and lacking in basic utilities (Mutwarasibo in: Plaetevoet, 2007: 50). The CSO equality study cited above showed that the majority of non-EU immigrants live in rented accommodation, while the majority of Irish nationals own their own homes (CSO, 2007b: 32). Housing rent in Ireland can be very expensive relative to the minimum wage. Immigrants also tend to live in over-crowded accommodation. However, research has shown that immigrants generally feel safe where they live and are satisfied with their accommodation (MCRI, 2008).

In common with many residents in Ireland, immigrants experience particular difficulty in accessing affordable childcare services. This problem is accentuated for immigrants as they are less likely to have an established network of family and friends in Ireland. Though the rights of the child are explicitly protected in Irish legislation, in practice, high-quality childcare and pre-schools can be difficult to access. The lack of affordable childcare emerged as one of the principal barriers to economic inclusion in research on immigrants with IBC/05 status (Coakley & Healy, 2007: 67-8).

4. Analysis

Integration services in Ireland, as is clear from the above description, are spread out among various Government departments, Government agencies and NGOs. Government spending in this area consists of the funding of the activities of these Government departments and agencies, together with various programmes of project-specific grants to NGOs.

The Irish Government does not currently employ socio-cultural mediators, therefore if intercultural misunderstandings or conflicts arise, their resolution may be a drawn-out process and costly in terms of human resources. Although the NCCRI's Training and Resource Unit has been providing anti-racism and intercultural awareness training to Government service-providers, individual staff may not always be sufficiently trained to deal with immigrant service-users, particularly where services to immigrants are provided on a mainstream basis together with other service-users. A One-Stop Shop service will facilitate improved staff training and greater coherence in decision-making on the part of service-providers, who will assist immigrants in making the transition from specifically targeted services to mainstream service provision.

Thus far, many NGOs in Ireland, as outlined above, have been providing a range of integration services to immigrants, particularly in terms of information provision. These NGOs generally work with very limited funds and may rely on voluntary human resources in order to provide their services. This can impinge upon the quality of the service. Financial insecurity can also mean that much expertise is lost if an organisation cannot continue to fund its activities. Much time may be spent on sourcing funding, rather than on the actual work of the organisation. Recent attempts have, however, been made at a national level to improve coordination between immigrant NGOs with a view to presenting a common policy platform.

The provision of accurate information on immigration issues, as well as legal advice, has been highlighted in this report as problematic in the Irish context. As there are difficulties in information provision to immigrants, many people can find themselves going to the wrong location in order to deal with a specific issue, resulting in unnecessary extra costs for both service-providers and for immigrants themselves.

There is also a need for the provision of specific advice to immigrants in relation to issues such as housing and childcare. It has been commented upon in this report that information on public services, for example on websites, is often only available in English and Irish.

A One-Stop Shop service in Ireland will bridge this information gap, providing a location where immigrants can avail of reliable, coherent and comprehensive information in relation to various Government and non-Government services. Of particular concern for immigrant residents of Ireland are experiences of racism and discrimination. Information will also be provided by the service on methods of redress against racism, promoting improved reporting levels on incidents of racism and discrimination. Such information provision should work in partnership with the existing Citizens Information Centres network.

The Irish context is characterised by a central Government, the crucial role of NGOs in service provision to immigrants, and the recent nature of immigration to the country. It is also of significance that the majority of immigrants in the country are from within the European Union. The implementation of a One-Stop Shop model would therefore be particularly feasible and useful in this context, as the development of integration services is still at an early stage. It will be adapted to these particularities of Irish immigration. Furthermore, Ireland has comprehensive experience of Government service provision in both English and Irish. This expertise could be built upon by extending the number of languages used to facilitate immigrant service-users.

Many NGOs and individual Government departments and agencies have by this time amassed considerable experience and expertise in the area of immigration and integration. The involvement of NGOs and the relevant Government departments in a Government One-Stop Shop for immigrants would therefore be essential, and would be facilitated through the provision of cultural mediators and through partnerships with and within the Government. It is essential for the various Government actors to work together on this issue, building upon the existing cross-departmental structure of the Office of the Minister for Integration.

In terms of costs, the provision of a One-Stop Shop in Ireland will both serve to ease pressure on mainstream services and provide for better pooling of resources and information between organisations with expertise in the area. The provision of cultural mediators will serve to resolve problems much more rapidly, and to improve information sharing within immigrant communities and between Government and non-Government actors. Interpretation costs for specific State services are currently high, and would be reduced by the presence of full-time socio-cultural mediators, who could apply their language skills in providing services to immigrants.

It has been emphasised in this report that the costs to immigrants of various services can be very high. The improved coherence in service provision and cost-saving aspects of the implementation of a One-Stop Shop in Ireland can contribute to reducing the financial burden of migration. In relation to waiting times, which, as is evident in this report, are particularly long in relation to naturalisation, family reunification and applications for five-year residence permits, the provision of various services under the one roof will also provide an improvement.

Another crucial issue relates to the nature of the various relationships between the Government, Irish society and immigrants. The establishment of a One-Stop Shop in Ireland will contribute to the dissemination of a positive message to Irish society in relation to immigration. The fact that the Government is investing in specific service provision for immigrants, as a contribution to a better society for all, will serve to heighten people's understanding of the potential benefits of the migration phenomenon for the country, and of the transition period that an immigrant experiences before being able to use mainstream services.

The economic and social benefits of immigration in the Irish context have been substantiated by much research, yet in some cases this message has not reached society at-large. The publicity surrounding the establishment of the One-Stop Shop should emphasise the contribution that has already been made by immigrants to Irish society and the Irish economy, in order to avoid potential tensions.

Working in partnership with NGOs, the One-Stop Shop will enhance the efficiency of relations between Government and civil society, particularly migrant-led organisations, facilitating cooperation and the sharing of expertise and best practices. This will contribute to a more broadly-based integration policy and a climate of cooperation.

The signal that the Government sends to the immigrant community in Ireland through the implementation of a One-Stop Shop will also be positive. Investment in immigrant integration represents a message that the relationship between the Government, Irish society and immigrants is one of respect and cooperation, contributing to more efficient service provision as well as a more harmonious society.

5. Recommendations

1. A One-Stop Shop service for immigrants should be established in Ireland in a central, accessible location, providing a number of Government agencies and/or Departments and support services under one roof.
2. The service should incorporate representatives from various Government departments working together in providing services to immigrants, guided by a coherent, cross-cutting integration policy, and specifically trained to provide services to immigrants.
3. Local authorities across the country should be involved in the establishment of the One-Stop Shop and the extension of services to local areas.
4. The service should be complemented by a network of local centres, in partnership with the Citizens Information Centres.
5. The One-Stop Shop should also function on the basis of partnerships with NGOs that have expertise in the area of immigration and integration.
6. Services should be provided in the One-Stop Shop by appropriately qualified and trained cultural mediators from the immigrant communities, who will mediate between service-users and service-providers, and will also provide support services.
7. The establishment of the One-Stop Shop should build upon existing structures in relation to policy, namely the Office of the Minister for Integration, and should build upon other Government agencies in relation to service provision, such as the Citizens Information Board.
8. Within the structure of the One-Stop Shop, there should be a specific emphasis on the provision of accurate information.
9. The services of the One-Stop Shop should be available to all EU and non-EU immigrants and their families.
10. The One-Stop Shop should serve to enhance a climate of cooperation and consultation between all of the stake-holders – the Government, immigrants, migrant-led associations, NGOs, employers, trade unions and the Irish public.
11. The publicity surrounding the establishment of the One-Stop Shop should highlight the positive contribution that immigrants are making to the Irish economy and Irish society.
12. The One-Stop Shop should be seen as a service for immigrants with specific integration needs, who experience difficulties in accessing mainstream services, but ultimately promoting the transition to the use of such mainstream services.

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