THE OPEN COMMUNITY

Welcome Plan

Guidance for Hosts and Host Communities



Welcome!

Welcoming a refugee family or individuals to your home or community is a serious undertaking, but with the right support and guidance you are sure to succeed and find the experience rewarding for all involved.

One way to make sure you are able to respond effectively to any challenges that may arise is to establish a Community Support Group, made up of at least 5 people, who are on hand to assist and support hosts. Having a community support groups means that you will be able to share roles and work together to make sure you can meet all of the needs of the refugee family or individuals.

The purpose of this Welcome Plan is to provide a useful framework for you and your Community Support Group as you welcome, support and integrate a family or individuals into your home and community.

You can use the questions and guidance in each section of this Welcome Plan as pointers to help you focus on different aspects of the process, from welcome to ongoing support and integration.

You will need to consider the relevant experience or expertise that you and the members of the group have, as well as how you can link with other people and organisations in your area who can help.

Key factors you will need to consider when drafting your Welcome Plan:

WHO in your group will do the tasks

you have identified?

HOW will you all fulfil your assigned

roles?

WHEN will your group deliver the

various supports to the family or

individuals?

WHAT other individuals or

organisations can you make contact with to support your

group?



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YOUR COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP

1.1 What is the name of your Community Support Group? In what town and county are you located?

Provide the name and location of your group, and detail how you came together, e.g. is one of your group members hosting a family or individuals, or is your group providing support to a community host?

1.2 Please list all of the people in your group who will play a regular or significant role in the delivery of support to the family or individuals.

Include the title and full name, group role, type of support to be provided and any relevant skills of members of your community support group. It is recommended that your group consist of at least 5 members.

1.3 Have you raised any funds in order to support the family financially?

If you have done so, include here information about any funds your group has raised to date.

Having some funds available to your group can help support the implementation of your welcome plan and cater for unexpected eventualities.

If your group has raised funds, it is recommended that a dedicated account should be set up for the purposes of administering and holding in trust any funds raised with appropriate oversight and controls established – for instance a minimum of two cosignatories should be required prior to any withdrawal.

N.B. Seed funding is available of €1000 per community support group. Groups will be required to sign up and complete 5 simple steps on the <u>ChangeX</u> platform in order to avail of the funding support.

1.4 Have you prepared a draft budget, based on any funds raised to date?

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If your group has raised funds, it may be useful to develop a simple budget that outlines how any funds raised will be used to support the family or individuals.

When preparing your budget take into account which resources can be provided in-kind, through donations and which can be covered by social welfare until such time as family members or individuals access employment.

TRAINING FOR HOSTS

1.5 Have you completed training provided by The Open Community?

An Irish Welcome: A Training Programme for Hosts and People Hosting and Supporting Refugees in Their Home and Community is a free training programme provided by The Open Community and is designed to support you and your group to successfully welcome a refugee family or individual into your home and community.

The training covers aspects including:

- Introduction to becoming a host and the community support role
- Welcoming your guests into your home preparation and first week
- Building a strong support group
- An introduction to trauma and how it affects people
- Supporting people who have experienced trauma
- Host and group wellbeing
- Supporting people when we speak different languages
- Cultural differences and final tips

N.B. The training is available online and can be accessed via the Interactive Learning Centre on <u>The Open Community</u> website.

Every group member who completes the training will be issued with a downloadable certificate upon completion.

1.6 Has each group member completed Tusla's e-learning module, 'Introduction to Children First'?

If you are welcoming a family with children, consider how, as a group, you will keep children safe from harm while they are being supported by your group.

It is recommended that all group members complete Tusla's <u>Children First E-Learning</u>

Programme, which is available free online.

Every group member who completes the E-Learning programme will be issued with a downloadable certificate

1.7 Have you appointed a point of contact within your group for matters concerning child safeguarding?

Have you appointed a point of contact within your group for matters concerning child safeguarding?

Consider how, as a group, you will keep children safe from harm while they are being supported by your group.

It is recommended that you appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact for matters concerning child safeguarding.

Name that person here, and outline briefly their role.

It is important that all group members know who this person is and know when and how to contact them if necessary.

Additional Resources

- Tusla Children First E-Learning Programme Website
- The Open Community An Irish Welcome: A Training Programme for Hosts and People Hosting and Supporting Refugees in Their Home and Community
- The Open Community and ChangeX Community Host Programme

CREATING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

2.1 Who in the group will meet and greet the arriving family or individual during the first engagement?

The first interaction with your group will have a lasting impression as the family or individuals arrive in Ireland. Consider keeping the welcome team small so as not to overwhelm the family or individuals.

Consider:

- Who will greet the family or individuals;
- How you will make sure that the welcoming team features a gender balance;
- The things you will prepare, for instance a letter of welcome in the main language of the family or individuals;
- Efforts you have made to ensure that an interpreter will be present to translate, if necessary

2.2 Have you prepared and translated a welcome booklet providing information about the accommodation to assist them settling in? Who will be responsible for preparing this booklet?

Consider what initial information they will need to know about the home, local community and life in Ireland.

It can be useful to prepare a translated welcome booklet that provided information such as:

- The basic safety and orientation information relating to the home (e.g. how-to guides for appliances, other household equipment and objects that might be new to them),
- Emergency contact person,
- List of emergency numbers, including information on 999 and 112,
- Nearest hospital and walk-in clinic,
- Welcome cards,
- Maps of the local area,
- Bilingual and pictorial dictionaries,
- Names, contact details and times of availability of the group members (as long as group members are happy to provide this information).

Outline here who in the group will be responsible for this.

2.3 Have you prepared a Home Sharing Agreement? How will you communicate this to the family or individuals? Who will be responsible for preparing this agreement?

Consider having a Home Sharing Agreement in place with the family or individual. The agreement should set out agreed arrangements around relevant things such as bathroom or kitchen times, eating together and separate, having guests over, washing machine use, living area use, security, noise after a certain time, and any other household norms or requirements.

This could be written or verbal but should be reviewed together to make sure everyone is in agreement.

Outline here who in the group will be responsible for this.

2.4 What essential and non-essential items will you provide to the family or individuals? Who will be responsible for getting these items?

Consider what basic and practical items the family or individuals might need. Consider also how you could accommodate initial basic food and hygiene needs, and how you could prepare for any specific dietary requirements, e.g. vegetarian etc.

You could consider providing these items as part of a welcome pack to help make the family or individuals feel more at home upon arrival. This might include things like slippers, a coffee and tea set, maps and information on the local area, toys for children, scented candles and so on. Other requirements might include basic stationery, plug adaptors, mattress protectors for children, sanitary products, toothbrushes and toothpaste etc.

Outline here who in the group will be responsible for this.

2.5 Are you able to provide information on budgeting assistance if required? Who will take responsibility for this?

It is recommended that you make efforts to research the services available at your local Monetary Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) office. Consider how you will make the family or individuals aware of MABS if required.

2.6 How will you help the family or individuals become familiar with the value of the Euro currency and how much things are worth? Describe here how you will help the family or individuals to become familiar with the Euro currency and what things cost in Ireland.

2.7 How will you help relevant family members or individuals to set up a bank account? Who will take responsibility for this? Detail here the research you have conducted into local banks; the paperwork and criteria that will need to be completed and fulfilled to set up an account; and any information you have received from the bank.

Consider when you will assist them to establish a bank account and identify who will take responsibility for this.

2.8 How will you provide information around local shops and transport? Who in the group will be available to show them the local amenities and shops etc.?

You should consider:

- How they will become acquainted with their local area;
- Whether you will provide maps / transport / information on fares and;
- How you will make them aware of the different local shops.

Consider also when you intend to introduce them to the local community and amenities, and who will take responsibility for this.

2.9 How will you assist the family or individuals to access mobile phone services on arrival (including sim cards) and the internet?

Describe the arrangements you have made to ensure that the family or individuals will have access to a phone, computer and WIFI. For example, describe the preparations you have made around providing mobile phones and Irish sim cards, and access to an internet connection.

Additional Resources

- The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)
- Helping Irish Hosts

ONGOING SUPPORTS: ESTABLISHING A LIFE IN IRELAND

IRISH RESIDENCE PERMIT (IRP)

3.1 How will you assist the family or individuals to register for their Irish Residence Permits (IRPs)??

All citizens from outside the EU/EEA who are 16 or over must register and get an Irish Residence Permit. Describe the steps you have taken to prepare for this and the research you have done around it.

Consider:

- The travel arrangements you have made or will make for appointments;
- Who from the group will be able to accompany members of the family or individuals to appointments;
- Who can explain the requirement / purpose / limitations of the Residence Permit if necessary and:
- How an interpreter will be sourced.

N.B. If your group is welcoming Ukrainian nationals, there is no immediate requirement to register their immigration permission and you should not worry about it at this time.

The permission letter they will receive from the Department of Justice confirming that they have been granted Temporary Protection under the EU Directive is all the proof needed for them to be able to immediately access employment, income support, accommodation (if needed) and other State support in Ireland.

You can get more information at a Ukraine Support Centre. These centres provide information about social welfare, immigration and housing.

Dublin: Dublin 8 Intreo Centre, Guild Building, Cork Street, Dublin 8, D08 XH90

Cork: Cork City PSC and PPSN Centre, Department of Social Protection, Hanover Street,

Cork, T12 PX62

Limerick: Dominick Street, Limerick, V94 X327

PERSONAL PUBLIC SERVICE NUMBER (PPSN) REGISTRATION

3.2 How will you assist the family or individuals to register for their Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSNs)?

Outline the preparation you have made around assisting the family or individuals to access PPS Numbers.

Consider outlining:

- Efforts you have made to contact and identify your nearest PPS Number Allocation Centre, which will be an Intreo office;
- Efforts you have made to obtain and familiarise yourself with the required processes, forms and documentation;
- The address of your local Intreo office;
- When you hope to arrange an appointment for them;
- Who will make the initial appointment;
- Who will accompany the family on the day and;
- How you will source an interpreter if required.

The family or individuals cannot access Social Welfare Payments without a PPS number. It is therefore imperative that they obtain PPSNs as soon as possible.

N.B. Upon arrival in Ireland, families or individuals from Ukraine will be able to apply for a PPS number and social welfare payments at a dedicated processing centre.

If this hasn't be possible for any reason, the family or individuals can register at a Ukraine Support Centre in Cork, Dublin, or LImerick, or at an <u>Intreo office</u>.

In this instance, PPS number applications should **not** be made online for Ukrainian citizens.

SOCIAL WELFARE SUPPORT

Please note that when researching the below supports, it is advisable to contact your local Community Welfare Officer, Citizens Information service or a Ukraine Support Centre for guidance and up to date information. Please describe your efforts to do so, where relevant, in support of each section.

3.3 Have you identified the nearest social welfare branch office, Intreo centre or Ukraine Support Centre?

Consider how you will assist the family or individuals to access the nearest social welfare branch office, Intreo centre or Ukraine Support Centre, especially if they are not easily accessible from the home.

Outline who in the group will take responsibility for this.

3.4 How will you support the family or individuals to make a claim for social welfare income?

Please set out how you will support the family or individuals to access social welfare entitlements.

Please outline:

- How you will ensure that they are able to make a claim for social welfare income as soon as possible after their arrival (note that they will be required to have obtained PPS Numbers prior to making a claim for social welfare income);
- Who will be responsible for helping them to make the necessary applications and;
- Who will accompany them to appointments and organise interpretation services as necessary?

N.B. Upon arrival in Ireland, Ukrainian citizens can apply to the Department of Social Protection for financial support and will get a temporary social welfare payment called <u>Supplementary</u> <u>Welfare Allowance</u>. If they need help applying for this payment they can visit the nearest Ukraine Support Centre.

They will continue to get Supplementary Welfare Allowance until they apply for a more suitable social welfare payment.

3.5 What information have you gathered so far around social welfare supports?

Describe here the efforts you have made to research the welfare supports the family or individuals may be entitled to.

If one or more members of the group are familiar with the workings of the Department of Social Protection / the welfare system, and can take the lead on this, please mention that here.

You should be aware of and have access to the following forms/supports:

- UP1 Jobseekers Allowance This is the form required for claiming the main benefit for the family.
- Jobseekers Claim Part B This form is connected to the UP1 and further assesses the applicant's situation such as availability of public transport, size of town, etc.
- Application for Jobseekers Allowance Means
 Test This form assesses assets held by the
 family in order to determine claim.
- Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA.1) and Request for Nominated Payment (SWA.22.A)
 - The Supplementary Welfare Allowance will help to provide the family with income before their jobseekers claim is processed.

N.B. The family or individuals may be eligible for other supports and therefore require other forms, depending on their individual circumstances.

More information on the range of social welfare supports available in Ireland is available in English, Arabic, Pashto, Dari and Ukrainianare via the Swift Integration mobile app. Download the app for free by searching 'Swift Integration' in your App Store.

HEALTHCARE SUPPORTS

3.6 How will you support the family or individuals to register for medical cards? Who in the group will take responsibility for this?

Describe here how your group will help the family or individuals to apply for medical cards. Outline the research and preparation you have made towards this.

When do you intend to assist them with their application for medical cards?

Outline who in the group will take responsibility for this.

N.B. There is a special <u>medical card application form</u> (pdf) for people from Ukraine. The medical card application form is also available in <u>Ukrainian</u> (pdf) and <u>Russian</u> (pdf). Completed forms can be emailed to PCRS.Applications@HSE.ie or by post to the address on the form. In 9 months' time, they will have to make a full application for a medical card.

3.7 What steps have you taken/will you take to identify and contact local GPs?

Outline the steps you have made to identify a suitable GP and local doctor's surgery. If you have found a surgery with space on their books, please provide the address here.

Outline the steps you have taken to check what information will need to be brought to the GP when they first register or attend an appointment, e.g. medical history, which may need to be translated.

Describe any travel arrangements that may be necessary for the family or individuals to attend appointments, and how you will assist the family with this.

Describe here arrangements you have made to ensure that there can be an interpreter present for GP appointments if necessary. Your local surgery may be able to provide an interpretation service, either via phone or in-person. Please note that many people will prefer a same-sex GP (and interpreter when using this service).

Outline who will be responsible for helping with this.

N.B. The HSE will assign a GP if 3 GPs won't accept new patients or medical card holders. Keep a log of your contacts with GP services and, where relevant, their stated reason for not permitting the family or individuals to register with them. This may prove useful when contacting the HSE if necessary.

3.8 How will you assist the family or individuals to register with a local dentist? Who will accompany the family? or individuals if needed Centre?

Describe the research you have done around locating and contacting the nearest dental clinic and HSE Dental Clinic (for children up to 15) in your area.

Please provide the address and any relevant details here.

N.B. Not all private dental clinics will provide services to medical card holders. You can check with the dental clinic or with Citizens Information to check if a particular clinic accepts medical card holders. Additional treatments are available to medical card holders who have certain medical conditions.

Many people will prefer a same-sex dentist (and interpreter when using this service).

If necessary, outline who will be responsible for accompanying the family or individuals to their appointments and helping them through the registration process.

3.9 Have you identified any appropriate mental health services and specialist services in your region?

Describe steps you have taken to research mental health and psychosocial supports that may be available to the family or individuals if required. Consider both phone-based support services and in-person services.

To find out about the mental health services and supports available in your area, freephone the Your Mental Health <u>information line</u> on 1800 111 888. You can also send a text to 50808 to get support and information about services.

Outline who in your group will be responsible for this.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CHILD/REN

3.10 Educational Support for Child/ren If you are welcoming a family, how will you assist the family to register their child/children with local schools?

N.B. The Back to School
Allowance is only available for
select months ahead of the
beginning of the school term in
September.

If necessary, outline here the steps you have taken/will take to help register a child or children in a local school.

Outline who in the group will be responsible for this.

Please outline:

- If you have identified spaces in (a) local school/s;
- Any research you have done around the requirements to register a child in a school, e.g. requisite documentation, whether they will qualify for the Back to School Allowance;
- Any research you have conducted around the Back to School allowance and any other potential sources of support for school-going children;
- Any supports that schools can offer around English language provision;
- Any other learning supports that are available, as well as social supports including 'buddy systems' and orientation that schools can provide;
- If there is a school bus route near the home or facilities such as a 'walking bus' and;
- Where relevant, the ethos and approaches of the schools in your local area.

3.11 What additional supports may be available to assist the child/children especially during the first 6-12 months in school?

Describe your research here in relation to the additional educational and social supports and extracurricular activities that local schools can provide.

Specify if the school/s can provide additional psychosocial support in a school context, should the child/children require.

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)

3.12 How will you arrange formal English language tuition for adults as soon as possible, ideally within a month of arrival (depending on the needs of the family or individuals)?

Note any research you have done around where the nearest language school/s is/are located. This should be an ACELS recognised English Language Teaching Organisation. If it is a considerable distance from the home, how can you assist with transport arrangements?

Does your group include a member who is a qualified ESOL English language tutor, or do you have access to a qualified ESOL tutor? If so, name the group member or connection between the ESOL tutor and the group.

Outline when you anticipate the family or individuals might start accessing English language tuition following their arrival, and how you will facilitate them to access English language tuition at a pace that suits them.

3.13 How will you supplement formal English language tuition with less formal conversational English practice?

Describe here your plans to organise regular English language practice in a way that also accommodates their preferences and capacities.

Outline your plans to arrange regular meetups, and how you would plan this with the family or individuals. Note down which members of the group are available to meet for informal language / conversational practice.

Demonstrate here any relevant research, including access to free services such as <u>Fáilte Isteach</u>, a community project in which volunteers help welcome migrants through conversational English classes.

Outline other programs and supports for language learning outside of classes such as conversation circles, online learning, and phone apps.

3.14 Have you identified any local opportunities for the family or individuals to achieve English language qualifications that will support access to employment and education?

Note your steps to contact your nearest Education and Training Board (ETB) or Intreo office for any information on English language courses that offer recognised certification tailored towards employment and education.

Mention here any group member who is familiar with employment and/or language education who can assist with this. If you know any members of the community who could offer tuition, please describe any steps you have made to contact them.

Describe any research you have done around available funding from your local authority for childcare provision to enable parents/carers to access ESOL lessons.

Outline when you anticipate the family members or individuals might benefit from relevant English language qualifications, keeping in mind that they may wish to settle in before accessing vocational language support.

If you are welcoming a family, it is also important to consider what childcare arrangements may need to be put in place while the parents take ESOL lessons.

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

3.15 How will you provide assistance regarding access to employment, including development of curriculum vitae, education and recognition of qualifications etc.? Who will take responsibility for this?

Set out how you as a group can provide support around employment, CV development and qualification recognition.

Your Intreo office can assist with developing curriculum vitaes and identifying vocational courses or other training schemes. Identify who from the group will introduce family members or individuals to their local Intreo office (see above).

Note any preparations you have made for an interpreter to be present, if required.

Identify here the relevant authorities, e.g. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), who can assist with assessing qualifications, qualification transfers etc.

Describe how your group can assist those who are ready for employment in understanding the job search process, interview process, job readiness courses, and channels to find a job.

Job searches may occur on the internet, or through employment agencies, mailing lists, employment bulletins, and social networks.

Outline how you will support the family or individuals to seek and access employment, while also respecting their individual pace and preferences.

VOLUNTEERING AND DRIVING

3.16 What volunteering opportunities have you identified for the family or individuals, if any, in the local area?

Consider the steps you will take to identify any initial volunteering opportunities etc. in the community that may be of interest to the family or individuals. Note that everyone is different, and the family or individuals therefore may not be interested in the opportunities that you have identified.

3.17 How will you assist the family or individual members to obtain an Irish driving licence, if desired?

N.B. Ukrainian citizens can exchange their Ukrainian licence for an Irish licence. The new licence is valid for 12 months and applies to cars only. They can apply to exchange their licence in any National Driver Licence Service (NDLS) centre. An appointment can be booked online to attend an NDLS centre. They will need to fill out an application form for a driver licence at the NDLS office.

Describe any research you have done on the applicable laws around recognition of foreign driving licences.

Describe any steps you have taken to familiarise yourself with the NDLS requirements for obtaining a driving licence in Ireland. If a family member or individual wishes to replace or obtain a new driving licence, outline here how you could support them.

Please mention here if you have identified any driving schools or instructors in the area with which the family or individuals could complete the 12 hours of Essential Driver Training. Describe how you might source an interpreter, if needed.

Consider insurance costs and how these will be covered.

Identify who in the group is responsible for this.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

3.18 What local community activities have you identified that the family or individuals could be linked to if they so wish?

Identify here any local community groups who may be willing to help welcome the family or individuals.

Note here if any members of your group are members of other societies or clubs in the local area.

Note any youth clubs or places of worship that offer community activities.

When do you intend to introduce the family or individuals to these activities if they are interested?

3.19 What places of worship have you identified in your area?

Consider the potential religious beliefs of the family or individuals.

List any local appropriate places of worship.

If these are a considerable distance from the home, describe how you plan to assist with transport arrangements.

Who in the group will be responsible for helping with this?

INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION SERVICES

3.20 Have you sourced locally available interpreting services that will be available to the family or individuals?

How will you identify and sustain interpreting services?

Outline who in the group will be responsible for this.

Please be aware that there is no regulation of interpretation in Ireland and quality may vary.

ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE

3.21 Can you briefly outline what your groups' strategy is to ensure the family or individuals attain independence when your group's support ends?

Consider how you will support the family or individuals to become self-sufficient and independent.

This includes phasing out the reliance on the group and providing only as much support as the family or individuals needs.

Some benchmarks of self-sufficiency include, but are not limited to: proficient English language skills obtained, employment/self-employment secured with sufficient income to cover living expenses; and, the ability to conduct day-to-day tasks such as paying bills, budgeting, navigating the local area and accessing local transport networks and learning to drive.

Additional Resources

- INIS information on obtaining an Irish Residence Permit (IRP)
- List of PPS number allocation centres nationwide
- Accreditation and Coordination of English Language Services (ACELS) list of recognised language schools nationwide
- NDLS Information on obtaining a driving licence for holders of non-Irish driving licences
- HSE GPs who accept medical cards
- HSE medical card application process
- Information on social welfare payments available from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
- Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association
- Local Educational Welfare Service
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland
- BITC RISE and EPIC employability projects

DEVELOPED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



Nasc, the Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre www.nascireland.org



Irish Refugee Council
www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie



Irish Red Cross
www.redcross.ie



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