



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
agus Comhionannais
Department of Justice
and Equality

Community Sponsorship Ireland

Guidance for Sponsors' Settlement Planning

Welcome!

Sponsoring and welcoming a refugee family into your community is a serious undertaking, but it is also a hugely rewarding process. At first it may seem challenging, but with the right preparation and support, you are sure to succeed. The purpose of this guide is to help your community group on your journey through the process of Community Sponsorship and to assist you in your preparations and in the completion of your settlement plan.

Your settlement plan should outline the details of how your community sponsor group will deliver settlement support and services to the refugee family who will be resettled in your community. This guide will help you develop a robust plan which will, in turn, help you throughout the settlement process. The guide includes pointers and questions to act as prompts to help you and your community sponsorship group focus on the details required.

The plan covers the basics of what will need to be done to welcome and support a refugee family. It will require you to detail how you propose to meet the outcomes and requirements outlined below under the various headings. And remember, you are not alone; your Regional Support Organisation will be on hand to assist you in compiling the plan and will review the completed plan prior to submission.

Key factors you will need to identify in the plan:

Who in your group will do the tasks you have identified?

How you will all fulfil your assigned roles?

Where will the family live, the children go to school, etc.?

When you are completing the plan please ensure you have addressed the full range of things that will be needed to welcome, support and integrate a refugee family in your community. This includes:

- A home of their own, of an acceptable standard, furnished and with adequate facilities.
- School places for the children.
- Appropriate interpreting services, as required.
- Arrival day plans, and a comprehensive welcome and support plan for the first week.
- Accessing Social Welfare Payments and eligibility for the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and providing financial support to the family until the Social Welfare payments are in place.
- Opening a bank account.
- Signing on with a GP, dentist and other medical services.
- English language training, both formal (ESOL training and qualifications) and informal (conversation sessions).

In this plan you will need to show that you can deliver across all aspects of the resettlement process from welcome, to ongoing support and integration. You will need to show either that members of the group have the relevant experience or expertise, or that you have linked with others and organisations in your area who can provide it. Necessary or useful skills and competencies include:

- Finance – budgeting, accounting, etc.
- Child safeguarding knowledge and designation – either as a Mandated Person or Designated Liaison Person (DLP)
- Ability to act as, or to access, interpreters (most often Arabic to English).
- English language tuition e.g. ESOL qualifications.
- Experience as a health practitioner.
- Local authority experience and/or contacts.
- Knowledge of or connections to organisations or groups specialising in supporting refugees or asylum seekers, social inclusion or local development.
- Ability to find employment or training opportunities for the refugee families.
- Knowledge of or connections to places of worship, cultural centres, refugee support groups.

1. Accommodation: Sourcing suitable housing for the refugee family

One of the primary and more difficult challenges your group may face is finding suitable housing for the refugee family for the duration of the sponsorship period. Finding suitable housing can take time, so it is recommended that your search starts as soon as possible, ideally as soon as your initial application as a Community Sponsorship Group has been approved. Housing support does not replace existing entitlements. Rather, it is a commitment to ensure that housing has been identified and is available upon arrival in the destination community and will remain so for 24 months. In the plan you will be required to show, in detail, that you have addressed this essential criterion.

| Outcome 1 – Accommodation | |
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| The resettled family has a home in which to settle in Ireland, which is of an adequate standard of living and meets the Standards for Rented Houses Regulations 2017 | |
| Requirements | Detailed explanation of how requirement will be met |
| Suitable and sustainable accommodation is available for use by the refugee family for a minimum period of two years, with a 24-month lease. | You must demonstrate that accommodation is available to rent to the family for a minimum period of two years. You must specify the potential capacity of the accommodation in compliance with guidance from the local authority on occupation levels. Describe the property: Is it a flat or a house? What is the nature of the lease? Is it rented privately? Is it a donated property and if so, what are the terms of the lease or license agreement? Where is it located? Is the size of the property suitable for the family? Is it suitably furnished with all essential appliances? If you do not have a housing solution available at the time of submission of the settlement plan, it is essential that you set out clearly how you intend to secure it if your application is approved subject to housing. |
| The accommodation must be available to the resettled family at a cost that is affordable and sustainable, considering the social welfare income, including HAP, the family will receive. | State when the accommodation will become available. The rent must be affordable and sustainable, considering Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) rates in your local area, that the refugee family may be entitled to. The current HAP rates are available here: http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/renting_a_home/housing_assistance_payment.html |
| The property provides adequate privacy. | The property must be own-door and not rooms in a house share. |
| The accommodation complies with local authority guidance on occupation standards. | The housing must meet the standards set out in the Housing for Rented Houses Regulations 2017¹ by the time the family arrive. Your local authority will be able to assist you with the details of this. |
| Assistance is provided to register with utility companies and appropriate arrangements are made for payment. | Set out arrangements for registering with utility companies. What are payments likely to amount to and how will they be made? Has your group planned to help pay for utilities until receipt of benefits by the family? Outline how you will communicate how heating systems and billing works. Will the family have a contact point if appliances break down? Consider potential language barriers. |

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| Information is provided to the family on the accommodation and health and safety, and who will act as an emergency contact point. | How will the family be informed of contacts in the event of emergencies or problems that may arise in the property? Who is the accommodation lead person and point of contact for the group? How will you provide information on all accommodation issues, including Health and Safety issues? |
| The property is adequately connected to public services, transport, and the local community. | Families will require access to key state and community services. This includes doctors, dentists, schools, further education, English language tuition, shops and local amenities. Community supports such as local groups and sports clubs are essential to support good integration and community connections. The property should be located within easy reach of the wider community to enable a meaningful community integration process. What steps have you taken to mitigate for any potential community tensions? |
| The house has safe electricity and/or gas supplies with adequate ventilation and lighting. | Has the property been tested for safety of supply? State recent repairs and replacements, e.g. if the boiler etc. has been replaced or serviced. |

Additional Resources

- Information on the Housing Assistance Payment: Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government 'Housing Assistance Payment'².
- The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed: Working for Work handbook which outlines people's rights and entitlements with regard to social protection supports and services³.
- Local Citizens Information Centres⁴.

2. 'Welcome to Ireland' – Resettled individuals feel welcome in Ireland and can quickly adapt to life in their new home.

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| Outcome 2 – Welcome to Ireland | |
| Resettled family members feel welcome in Ireland and can quickly acclimatise to living in Ireland | |
| Requirements | Detailed explanation of how requirement will be met |
| The arriving family are met and welcomed at the airport and escorted to their accommodation. They are briefed on how to use the amenities. | Consider which members of the group are going to travel to meet the family at the airport. Keep the group small. Include an interpreter and consider gender balance. Consider the nature of the welcome, a small banner, or a letter of welcome in the main language of the family. Plan the journey from the airport to the home. Consider the fact that the family may have a lot of luggage. Will you need a child seat? |

² <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/social-housing/housing-assistance-payment/housing-assistance-payment>

³ <https://www.inou.ie/workingforwork21/>

⁴ <http://centres.citizensinformation.ie/>

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| <p>A welcome pack is provided, the contents of which should take account of the likely culture and nationality of the resettled family.</p> | <p>Consider what initial information the family will need to know about their new community and life in Ireland. Set out what information will be included in the Information pack. Consider translating this information into the family’s language. Do you know someone who can translate? Include key contacts of core group members. Provide some food and toiletries. Consider providing food that can be easily heated up upon arrival. Do any of the family members have specific dietary requirements e.g. Halal? If the family are arriving in winter, consider providing some warm clothing. How will you ensure the family’s privacy and dignity is maintained, for example managing information about their arrival, and ensuring they are not overwhelmed on and after arrival? What items will you provide for the family? How will you make sure the family is familiar with how the appliances work in the house? Ensure that they have the requisite utensils and that all of the appliances work. What other arrangements will you put in place to make the family feel welcome?</p> |
| <p>On arrival, sufficient cash is provided per person (adults and children) for initial expenses including groceries, toiletries, clothes, while their claim for social welfare is being processed. Initial payments should be at the same level as social welfare payment entitlements.</p> | <p>In advance of the family’s arrival you should contact your local Community Welfare Officer and local Citizens Information Centre who will be able to assist you and the family to get a PPS number and lodge an application for Job Seekers Allowance and Supplementary Welfare Allowance within the first week of arrival. Consider how you will make the money available to the family until the Social Welfare payment comes through. How will you arrange for the family to purchase groceries and essential items that they may need?</p> |
| <p>Information is provided on budgeting assistance if required.</p> | <p>Consider how the family will become familiar with the currency and what things cost in Ireland. Will someone be able to assist the family with budgeting their money? How will you start to encourage the family to take autonomy over their own finances? How will you make the family aware of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service if required?</p> |
| <p>Assistance is provided to set up a bank account for relevant family members.</p> | <p>Have you researched the paperwork and criteria needed to open a bank account for the family? The family should be given a choice in how they receive and spend their money.</p> |
| <p>Information and support is provided to access local shops and transport.</p> | <p>How will the family become acquainted with their local area? Will you provide maps/transport/information on fares? The family will need help navigating the area to access local public transport to attend appointments and to access local amenities. Who will be in charge of providing assistance on this? How will the family be made aware of the different local shops?</p> |

Additional Resources

- Information on social welfare payments available from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/
- The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) <https://www.mabs.ie/en/>

3. Establishing a life Ireland – Resettled individuals can make a life for themselves in Ireland

| Outcome 3 – Establishing a life in Ireland | |
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| The resettled family can make a life for themselves in Ireland, including accessing community activities, medical care, language skills, education and employment | |
| Requirements | Detailed explanation of how requirement will be met |
| The family are assisted to register for an Irish Residence Permit within 7 days of arrival in Ireland. | The family will be required to register with the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service within 7 days of arrival. Consider contacting your local Garda station in advance of the family’s arrival to ascertain if they can register locally or if they are required to travel to a nearby city/town. Consider travel arrangements and identify a member of the group who will be able to accompany the family. Is a member of the group able to explain the requirement/purpose/limitations of the Residence Permit if necessary? Also remember that the family will be required to make a return trip at a later date in order to collect their Residence Permits. Be aware of the requisite fees for Residence Permits. You should bring an interpreter with you. |
| The family are assisted to register for a PPS number within 7 days of arrival in Ireland. | Have you contacted and identified your nearest PPS Number Allocation Centre, which will be an Intreo office? Provide the address of the local Intreo office. Consider who will make the initial appointment and who will accompany the family on the day. Note, the family cannot access Social Welfare Payments without a PPS number. Have you arranged for an interpreter to be present? Are you familiar with the PPSN application and documentation requirements? Consider contacting your local Community Welfare Officer and Citizens Information offices in advance for advice on documentation, especially personal documents e.g. passports. Familiarise yourself with the welfare supports the family may be entitled to and outline the projected amount and type of welfare payments you foresee for the family. |
| The family are assisted to register their child/children with local schools as soon as possible – commencing prior to arrival and concluding registration no later than 2 weeks after arrival. Identify what additional supports may be available to assist the child/children, especially during the first 6-12 months in school. | Outline what steps you have/will take to register a child or children in a local school. Have you contacted and identified spaces in a local school/s? Outline any research you have done around it. Are you familiar with the requirements to register a child in a school, e.g. requisite documentation. Also consider the additional educational and social supports that the local school/s can provide. Have you considered the time of year that the family is arriving at? Will they qualify for this year’s Back to School Allowance (i.e. will they arrive in or just prior to August or September)? Have you made all the preparations for securing PPS numbers for the family members in order to confirm eligibility for Back to School and other welfare allowances? Consider specific language requirements, is language assistance likely to be required? Is it likely to be available? Consider also the social needs of the children in the school. Has the school any support/new pupil/’buddy system’ in place? Consider availability of learning supports in local schools. Can the school provide additional psycho-social support in a school context, should the child/children require it? Consider the ethos and approaches of the schools in your local area, e.g. religious ethos, and their suitability accordingly. Consider the school’s uniform policy, the books and accessories needed, and transport routes to the school. Is there a school bus route near or past the family’s house? Budget for initial uniform, essential stationary and accessory costs. Consider what items the school may be able to provide. |

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| <p>English language tuition is arranged for adults as soon as possible and within one month of arrival. Formal English language tuition is provided by a suitably qualified ESOL teacher. Formal English language tuition is supplemented on a regular basis by less formal conversational English practice.</p> <p>Whilst it is recognised that progress will differ between individuals, there is an expectation of reaching an adequate level of English (in speaking and listening, reading, and writing) over the course of the year.</p> | <p>Does your group include a member who is a qualified ESOL English language tutor, or do you have access to a qualified ESOL tutor? Consider contacting a tutor prior to the family’s arrival who would be available to provide regular lessons. Consider the cost of language tuition, and budget for that as part of your fundraising plan. Consider how to organise regular English language tuition. Think about arranging regular meet ups, and how you would plan this with the family. Consider which members of the group are available to meet for informal language/conversational practice, and dynamics including gender balance. Consider the need to consult the family once they are settled to see what kind of times and dynamics would work for language tuition, e.g. depending on their own personal obligations or schedules. Consider what childcare arrangements may need to be put in place while the parents take ESOL lessons. Have you researched available funding from your local authority for childcare provision to enable parents/carers to access ESOL lessons?</p> |
| <p>The Community Sponsorship Group has completed a safeguarding risk assessment in consultation with their RSO’s Designated Liaison Person. The CSG has developed a clear Child Safeguarding Statement appropriate to the risk assessment, which outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks identified. The Safeguarding Statement is in line with the Children First Act 2015. All group members are familiar with the contents of the group’s Child Safeguarding Statement and can easily access it.</p> <p>Each group member has completed Tusla’s e-learning module, Introduction to Children First, and will provide proof of completion. Each group member is familiar with the group’s reporting procedures and policies, in accordance with their Child Safeguarding Statement. The group has appointed a Point of Contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement.</p> | <p>Consider that as a group you will be working with children. It is vitally important that Children First guidance and legislation is strictly adhered to by CSGs, with the support and assistance of their RSO, in the implementation of community sponsorship. Consider how, as a group, you will keep children safe from harm while they are being supported by the CSG. Have you carried out a risk assessment to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while being supported by the CSG? Have you developed, in consultation with your RSO’s Designated Liaison Person, a Child Safeguarding Statement that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified? It is necessary to appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation’s Child Safeguarding Statement. Has each group member completed Tusla’s Children First E-Learning Programme? Has each group member provided, or is able to provide evidence that they completed Tusla’s Children First E-Learning Programme? Each RSO will have an appointed Designated Liaison Person (DLP) within their organisation. As a group, are you aware of who your Designated Liaison Person is, and what their role is?</p> <p>The Child Safeguarding Statement and proof of completion of the E-Learning Programme must be submitted along with your settlement plan.</p> |

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| <p>An opportunity is provided to obtain an English language qualification at the appropriate level, where this will support access to employment and education.</p> | <p>Consider where the family’s nearest language school would be, e.g. an ACELS recognised English Language Teaching Organisation. If it is a considerable distance from the family’s home, how can you assist with transport arrangements? Have you contacted 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? Is a member of your group familiar with employment and/or language education who can take the lead/do you know any members of the community who could offer tuition? Have you budgeted for the cost of any English language tuition, qualification and certification likely to be required?</p> |
| <p>The family are assisted to attend the local Intreo centre, within the first week of arrival.</p> | <p>Contact your Community Welfare Officer and nearest Citizens Information office in advance of the family’s arrival. Is a member of your group designated to accompany family members to the Intreo office to arrange PPS numbers and welfare entitlements? Is there a member of the group who is familiar with the workings of the Department of Social Protection/the welfare system who can take the lead? Have you arranged for an interpreter to be present?</p> |
| <p>The family are assisted to register with a local GP within one week of arrival.</p> <p>The family are assisted to register with a local dentist.</p> | <p>Consider notifying the GP in advance of the family’s arrival. Have you identified a suitable GP and local doctor’s surgery in advance? Will the family need an interpreter to register/for ongoing medical appointments? The family may not have been able to access dental services for some time. Have you researched what dental services are available for adults with a medical card? Have you researched the nearest Health Service Clinic (HSE dental clinic) in your area? Have you budgeted for initial costs and identified a suitable dentist in your area?</p> |
| <p>Appropriate mental health services and specialist services are identified in your region, where available, such as for victims of torture, and gender-based violence.</p> | <p>Have you enquired with your Regional Support Organisation or spoken to health professionals about any local, regional or phone-based support services for victims of torture, gender-based violence, mental health, etc. that you will be able to access should they be required? Consider any associated transport requirements. Consider where in-person services are located.</p> |
| <p>Assistance is provided regarding access to employment, including development of curriculum vitae, and education, recognition of qualifications etc.</p> | <p>Consider the needs and aims of any resettled individuals relating to employment. Ensure someone is available to introduce family members to their local Intreo office, as above. Have you made preparations for an interpreter to be present if required? They may be able to assist with developing curriculum vitae, vocational courses or other training schemes. Have you identified the relevant authorities, e.g. QQI, who can assist with assessing qualifications, qualification transfers etc.? Have you identified any initial volunteering opportunities etc. in the community that may be of interest?</p> |
| <p>The family are assisted to access mobile phone services and the internet.</p> | <p>Consider how, and where, the family may have access to a phone, computer and WiFi. Have you made preparations for an internet connection within their household? If the family members are not computer literate, or able to function independently online, what support or training can you put in place? Consider English language literacy. Are certain family members likely to need assistance, for example with Roman alphabet keyboards or translation of online services (depending on languages available)?</p> |

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| Adult family members are made aware of how to obtain an Irish driving licence, if required. | Are you aware of the applicable laws around recognition of foreign driving licences? Have you familiarised yourself with and can you communicate the NDLS requirements for obtaining a driving licence in Ireland? If a family member wishes to replace or obtain a new driving licence, consider how you could support them. Is there a driving school in the area in which to complete the 12 hours of Essential Driver Training, if desired? Will an interpreter be needed? |
| The family are made aware of, and supported to attend, local community activities, both with and without the sponsoring group, such as children’s playgroups, coffee mornings, local clubs, local events, etc. | Have you identified local community groups who may be willing to help welcome the family? Consider gender balance, age and identifying activities for different members of the family. Are any members of the Community Sponsorship Group members of other societies or clubs in the local area? Are there any youth clubs or places of worship that offer community activities? |
| Places of worship are identified in the area. | Consider the potential religious beliefs of the family. Have you identified a local mosque/church/other appropriate places of worship in advance of their arrival? |
| Orientation support is provided by the Sponsorship Group. | Identify local amenities; put the family in touch with local services including GP, other health services, schools, Intreo office and access to welfare, English language tuition arrangements; identify transport, access to driving licences, information, WiFi and internet services, etc.; identify local groups, clubs, social spaces including relevant places of worship that could assist with social integration and orientation. Have you identified member(s) of the group who can provide a point of contact and proactively assist, especially in the initial months of the family’s arrival, with orientation in the local area, and further afield? Consider anything that might not have been mentioned in previous sections. |
| Appropriate interpreting services are provided, as required. | Access to interpretation services, of one form or another, is likely to be required over the course of the sponsorship period, particularly during the initial period. How will you sustain daily interpreting services for the first week? Explain how associated costs will be met. Consider any back-up arrangement including access to a telephone or text support for interpretation. Have you considered in which situations informal solutions would be inappropriate and where professional interpretation services would be necessary? Have you arranged for an interpreter who will be available to accompany family members to meetings, GP appointments, etc.? Is a member of your group able to interpret in more informal, e.g. social settings? |

Additional Resources

- INIS information on obtaining an Irish Residence Permit (IRP) www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/irish-residence-permit
- List of PPS number allocation centres nationwide <http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Personal-Public-Service-Number-Registration-Centres-by-Count.aspx>
- Updated list of ACELS-recognised language schools nationwide <https://www.acels.ie/schools>
- Information on obtaining a driving licence for holders of non-Irish driving licences <https://www.ndls.ie/holders-of-foreign-licences.html>

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