

# Safe Haven

The Needs of Refugee Children  
Arriving in Ireland through the Irish  
Refugee Protection Programme:  
An Exploratory Study

## Executive Summary

**CHILDREN'S  
RIGHTS  
ALLIANCE**

Uniting Voices For Children

**Dr. Muireann Ní Raghallaigh,  
Dr. Karen Smith  
& Dr. Jennifer Scholtz**

**September 2019**



An Roinn Leanaí  
agus Gnóthaí Óige  
Department of Children  
and Youth Affairs



An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development

**Tony Ryan Trust**

Europe is seeing the greatest movement of refugees since the Second World War. Ireland has rightly promised to provide support for people fleeing war and persecution through the Irish Refugee Protection Programme. By June 2019, 2,519 people had been relocated or resettled in Ireland under this programme. At the time of our study, around half of the people who arrived in Ireland were children under 18.

This report is a scoping study on the needs of children and young people coming to Ireland under the International Refugee Programme. The families involved in this research are exclusively from Syria, a country that has lived through more than eight years of civil war and bloodshed. Many are traumatised, have lost loved ones or witnessed acts of violence or torture before arriving in Ireland. Some children reported bedwetting, nightmares or having difficulties sleeping. Teachers referred to behavioural issues in the classroom like fighting, biting, spitting, bad language, which they attributed to trauma. Professionals were concerned that some children found it hard to make friends and were struggling emotionally. What is clear is the need for education professionals to receive training on trauma-awareness yet this is not routinely available.

Once refugee children arrive they are keen to get settled in school, in their local youth groups and to make friends. They want to belong and a life just like any other child or young person. At the same time, the experiences of refugee children differ. Some have not been to school before or their education may have been disrupted. Ireland's education response to child refugees is one of the most significant aspects of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme. Without the right approach or supports, child refugees simply won't reach their full potential.

The study reveals that schools are trying their best despite not always having the resources they need. Extra supports to learn and integrate are being provided and work well in some places but are not always available in others. One teacher reported sourcing materials for refugee children herself because school funds were simply not enough. Schools need far greater capacity to meet the learning, language and socio-emotional needs of young refugees and to support them in their transition to school.

Language was identified as a barrier to learning in school, accessing healthcare and forming friendships. It can also limit a child's academic potential. It is a major barrier for parents in obtaining information, communicating with schools and helping with homework. Often children are more proficient in English than their parents and must translate for them. Greater and more consistent support to learn English is essential.

Access to health services was an issue for some children because of waiting lists and other factors. Numerous stakeholders reported that children had considerable oral health needs but did not know how to deal with these. Refugee children have often been exposed to serious trauma in their country of origin. Like many other children, they experience difficulties accessing mental health supports here in Ireland.

Many refugee parents are also experiencing debilitating mental health problems but are not always getting the help they need.

We now know from this research that many of the supports that have been put in place, such as dedicated resettlement workers for families, have proved to be vital.

In places, the report points to a lack of cultural understanding and paternalistic attitudes. This needs to be addressed.

This report found that children and parents were eager to make friends and settle into life in Ireland. Opportunities for refugee children to connect with local young people were generally valued and enjoyed. Despite the challenges they face, refugee children and their families have high aspirations to do well and where supported they can do great things both in terms of education and in their community.

Our history of mass emigration means that we know in our hearts what it is like to arrive in a new country not knowing what the future holds. Many local communities have shown remarkable generosity and should be lauded.

The State has begun to respond to the wider refugee crisis and important steps have been taken to support these families but there is much more we can do. We need to act now to close these gaps if we want to do our best to welcome, support and empower these children to live happy, healthy lives.



**Tanya Ward**  
Chief Executive



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## 1

## Introduction

The Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) was established in September 2015 by the then Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald TD in response to the European refugee crisis.

Under this programme Ireland pledged to accept 4,000 refugees through the EU Resettlement and Relocation Programmes and to prioritise families, children and unaccompanied minors as part of this commitment.

By March 2018, when this study began, 1,740 people had arrived under the relocation (909) and resettlement (795) programmes. Almost half (49.5%) of the refugees admitted were under 18 on arrival, the majority (85%) of these children were under 12. In addition, the Calais Special Project was established in 2016 as part of the IRPP in order to relocate up to 200 unaccompanied children/young people following the dismantlement of unofficial camps in the French city of Calais. At the time of this research, Ireland had relocated and resettled 45 unaccompanied minors. By June 2019, 2,519 people had been relocated or resettled in Ireland under the IRPP of the 4,000 we had proposed to help.

Refugee children are extremely vulnerable: many have experienced significant trauma, lost loved ones or witnessed acts of violence. Many will never have had the opportunity to go to school or if they have then their education may have been significantly disrupted. When these children experience prolonged displacement, it can have a detrimental impact on their physical and mental health.

While Ireland offers a safe haven for many of these families, it takes time for them to develop a sense of belonging. Children and families who arrive in Ireland may not have the knowledge, skills or confidence to identify or access the supports and services they need. To support the successful and early integration of refugee children, it is essential that their needs are identified and met in a timely manner. A clear assessment of needs can be used to inform the development of evidence-based policy; the planning and

development of support services and; inform future tendering processes for services for refugee children.

In November 2017 the Children's Rights Alliance commissioned Dr Muireann Ni Raghallaigh, Dr Karen Smith and Dr Jennifer Scholtz of University College Dublin to undertake research on the needs of refugee children who had recently arrived in Ireland through the IRPP. The aim of the research was to:

- 1 Identify gaps in provision of supports to children and their families
- 2 Identify barriers faced by refugee children and families in accessing and engaging with existing services
- 3 Highlight models of best practice

IRPP

4,000

1,740

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200

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2,519

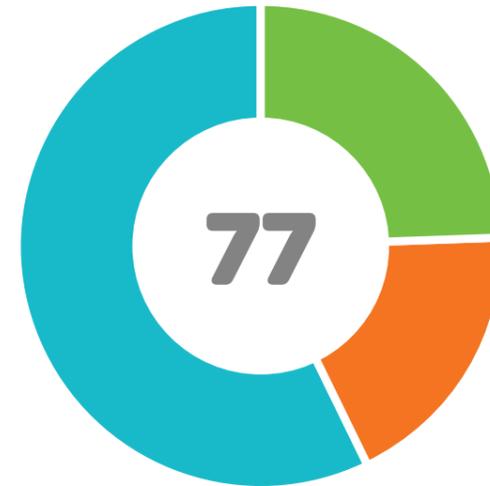
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# 2

## Methodology

The researchers adopted a qualitative, participative, child-centred research design, informed by a rights-based approach. The perspectives of children and young people informed all elements of the research study, guiding the approach to data collection and the analysis of the findings. The researchers gathered data using face-to-face focus group consultations with young resettled Syrian refugees. The researchers also interviewed children and young people, parents, service providers, professionals and officials.

In total, 77 people participated in the research:



44

Stakeholders

19

Young People

14

Parents

“

We would like them (Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres (EROC) staff) to understand them (refugee children) a little bit. ... That they appreciate what they have been through and understand them and that even the parents as well have been through much, and they can't take much more so they [need to] understand the parents as well.

Young person living in an EROC

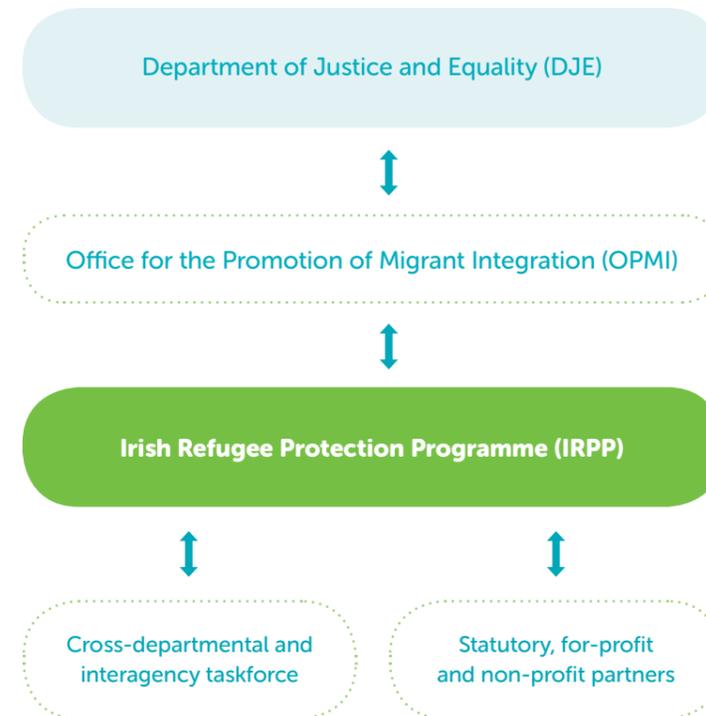
The research highlighted a lot of promising and positive practice, but it also identified gaps in the provision of supports and areas where improved coordination of supports and resources could improve the outcomes for refugee and asylum-seeking children in Ireland. It highlights some key findings in the areas of health, education and community inclusion and proposes recommendations to improve the planning development and delivery of accommodation and services to refugee children and their families.

# 3

## The Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP)

The IRPP is delivered through a complex mix of for-profit, non-profit and informal organisations and actors. Operational responsibility for the programme rests with the IRPP team within the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI) in the Department of Justice and Equality (DJE). At national level a cross-departmental and interagency task force oversees the programme. The task force comprises representatives of relevant government departments as well as the UNHCR and the Irish Red Cross.

The interagency approach is reflected at local level in the coordination of services at the reception stage and following resettlement in the community. The IRPP accommodates newly-arrived refugees in Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres (EROC) until a local authority identifies appropriate housing to resettle families in the community.



When the research was conducted there were four EROCs – one has since gone back into use as a Direct Provision centre. Three of the EROCs in the study are former hotels meaning that the accommodation is not conducive to private family life, which adds to the existing challenges that families face upon arrival in Ireland. A number of different professionals interacted with, and offered support and advice to, children and parents in the EROCs. However, the absence of staff with social care qualifications hindered the provision of appropriate early intervention support at a time of huge transition for parents and children. By contrast, the services in place for unaccompanied children and young people were staffed by highly-qualified professionals with significant social care experience.

Resettlement support workers and intercultural support workers are crucial sources of support for families who are transitioning to life in a new community but it is clear that they often felt overstretched and under-supported thereby impacting on their

capacity to provide a quality service. Thorough evaluation is required and appropriate training and support in order to determine if services for children are “outcomes driven, effective, efficient and trusted” as advocated for in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020* (DCYA, 2014: xv).

The interagency model (where different services work together) is a strength of the Irish resettlement programme and some stakeholders relayed their positive experiences. However, there is no overarching framework or guidelines for local authorities and resettlement staff on the steps they should take to support families with children and young people arriving in their area and help them to integrate. This results in duplication and each area ‘reinventing the wheel’. Services and practices have been rolled



People need stability. Then they would know they have a house, a school. They can take care of their children and their upbringing. One can go to their children’s school in person to follow things. ... When parents are happy, this is reflected on the family. ... So settlement in one place is good.

### A refugee parent arrived in Ireland

out without an established evidence base, with few previous evaluations available to inform practice, and no provision for evaluation of the current programme. There are limited opportunities for resettlement programmes to learn from each other which contributes to inefficiency as well as disparities between the services provided in different counties.

An implementation framework for community integration which includes comprehensive evaluation mechanisms could capture best practice and identify areas for improvement. This information could provide a valuable resource for resettlement support workers and local authorities and could inform tenders and policy development for the delivery of services and supports to refugee children and their families.

## 4

## Education

'Learning and achieving from birth' is a key outcome under *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020* with four key aims: that all children/young people are learning and developing from birth; have social and emotional wellbeing; are engaged in learning; and are achieving in education.

Access to education is key to fulfilling long-term aspirations (Mohamed and Thomas, 2017), and in the short-term can provide distraction and give children a sense of security, routine and normality following displacement and resettlement (Sleijpen et al., 2017; Betancourt and Kahn, 2008).

Schools also serve an important social function by providing spaces to build friendships and to gain access to the support of competent adults (Sleijpen et al., 2017; Pastoor, 2015; Betancourt and Kahn, 2008), thus playing an important protective role.

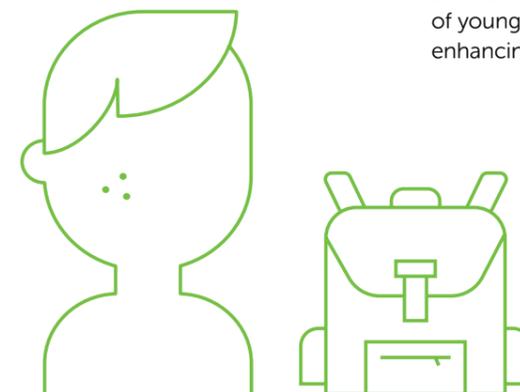
Earlier intervention and prevention are predicated on the timely identification of needs. It is clear from the research that schools and educational services need more support in assessing the academic abilities and needs of young refugees independent from language.

Educational settings are also important sites for identifying and responding to socio-emotional and psychological needs and the importance of access to trauma-awareness training for education professionals was raised by participants.

Providing access to English as an Additional Language (EAL) and learning supports is central to refugee children and young people's right to education. In order to ensure equality of opportunity, provision and access needs to be equal for all children. Issues relating to accessing EAL supports and apparent disparities across services therefore raise serious concerns. They also create barriers to young refugees' participation in the educational system and in wider society.

Refugee children and young people are likely to face considerably more transitions over the course of their education than the general child population. Strengthening transitions for refugee children and young people requires effective systems to share information between services, particularly in relation to the transition from EROC provision to mainstream school. This has been recognised by the Department of Education and Skills and it has taken steps to improve the flow of information since this study was completed. The provision of comprehensive information and support to schools and educational services, through toolkits or information packs and access to interpreters, is key to promoting best practice, creating inclusive educational environments and easing the transition to mainstream school for young refugees.

As with other services provided to resettled refugees, schools and educational services are engaged in practices of 'reinventing the wheel'. While there are some resources already available, greater guidance and support would be of benefit both in enhancing the capacity of schools and educational services to meet the learning, language and socio-emotional needs of young refugees and in enhancing resource-efficiency.



“

...the young people go into the school and they're actually quite academically able and they're well-educated but their language level is still quite low, and sometimes they might be placed in a class—for example, they might be directed towards Leaving Cert Applied rather than traditional Leaving Cert even though they are actually academically able.

Stakeholder with expertise in education for refugee children and young people

## 5

## Community Supports

*Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* intends for all children living in Ireland to be “connected, respected and contributing to their world”. Under this outcome all children should have a sense of their own identity free from discrimination; positive networks of friends, family and community; are civically engaged, socially and environmentally conscious; are aware of their rights, responsible and respectful of the law.

The move to a new home, while eagerly awaited, is associated with disruption to existing connections. Families are resettled in small clusters so there may be only one or two families that they know nearby.

Children and parents expressed eagerness to make friends and settle into life in Ireland whilst simultaneously wanting to keep their own cultural traditions and values and maintain connections with family and friends made before and after their arrival in Ireland.

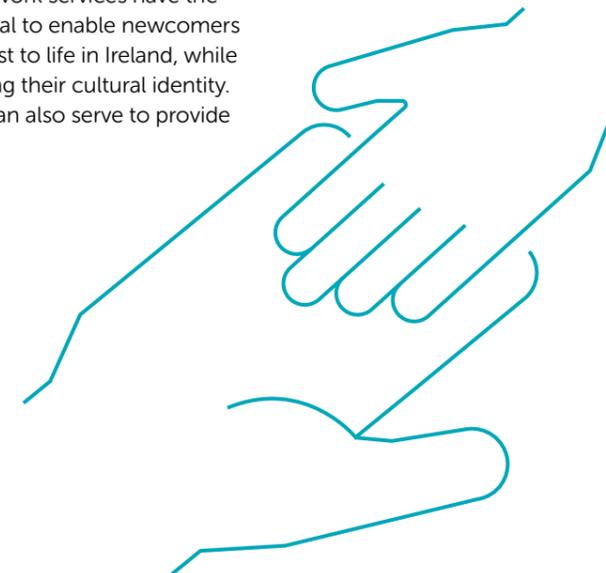
There is a clear need to plan for and provide coordinated interagency supports – as advocated by the BOBF framework – in relation to these transitions. These supports should focus on early intervention, supporting children, young people and their families to manage transitions but also supporting service providers, local communities and schools to facilitate integration and inclusion from the outset. Parents should have access to the labour market, something which can facilitate their integration and inclusion, and the integration and inclusion of their children.

The evidence presented in the research suggests that quality youth work services have an important role to play in supporting the integration of young people in a manner that is empowering, participatory and rights-based. Different youth services built relationships with children and young people who did not have English as a first language in different ways.

Youth work services have the potential to enable newcomers to adjust to life in Ireland, while retaining their cultural identity. They can also serve to provide

a space for young people from different backgrounds to engage in intercultural dialogue. The findings of this study provide some insight into gender as a factor in the experience of integration, with girls highlighting examples of prejudice based on cultural and gender stereotypes. Youth work services should be supported to also engage with refugee families rather than only focusing on young people. Other programmes and agencies like Tusla’s Prevention, Partnership and Family Support programme and Family Resource Centres could also provide useful ways to engage and offer appropriate support to resettled and relocated refugee families with children.

In order to provide quality services that effectively support the integration and inclusion of children, young people and their families, mechanisms must be put in place to evaluate outcomes in the short, medium and long term, taking into account key factors such as gender, age and ethnicity.



“

Now, it wasn't perfect at all, but I definitely think our relationships were stronger for young people seeing us struggle and make an effort and for them to struggle and make an effort. ...We supported them as much as we could to speak Arabic and we would try and learn a little bit that we could and we started writing out Arabic words... When most other services... were relying on an interpreter to speak it was kind of a surprise for them to see us not doing that and making a fool of ourselves and going red and getting embarrassed and getting it wrong. Then they'd laugh and then we'd move on.

Youth Worker

## 6

## Health

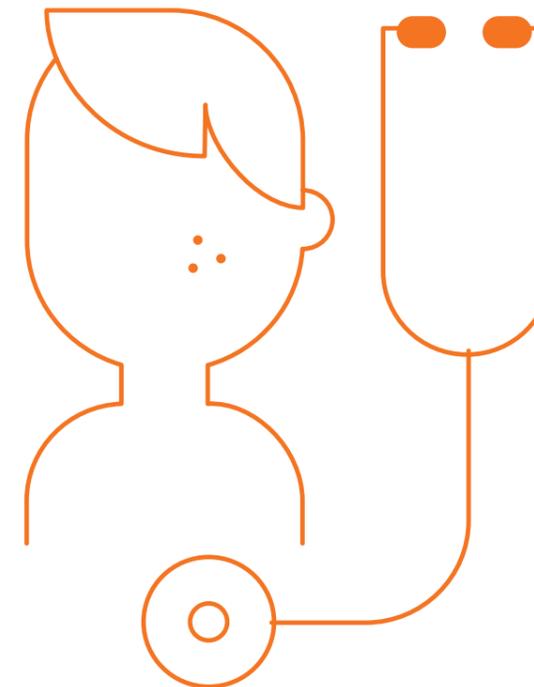
*Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, commits to tackling inequalities in health outcomes for identified vulnerable groups, including refugee and asylum-seeking children. Access to comprehensive health screening, assessment and treatment is crucial to ensure that refugee children are mentally and physically healthy (Sandahl et al., 2013; Watts et al., 2012; Raman et al., 2009).

The research showed that there were a number of positive initiatives in this area including a focus on earlier intervention as regards health through the provision of medical screening upon arrival, the establishment of a dental clinic in one EROC, and establishing systems to respond to the specific needs of individual children, all of which are likely to improve health outcomes.

However, gaps in appropriate mental health services and a lack of qualified and experienced interpreters presented significant barriers impinging on quality service provision. Child refugees may find it difficult to build a relationship of trust with mental health professionals or to seek help where they will have to relive the trauma of what they faced in their home country or what they experienced on their journey to safety. Refugee children arriving from war-torn countries will require specific support given the trauma that they have experienced and may often have physical as well as psychological symptoms that need to be addressed.

When families moved out of EROCs, intercultural support workers on resettlement teams play a critical role in supporting access to health services. Resettlement support workers highlighted the significant time and financial

investment required in the initial resettlement period to support families to access health professionals, health appointments and appropriate transport. While the issue of poor public transport affects the Irish population in general, it is likely to affect refugees disproportionately: they are unlikely to have their own transport, especially upon initial resettlement, and they also lack family and social ties with individuals who might be in a position to help with transport.



“

He sees nightmares, and bedwetting, because of the fear that we experienced in Syria.

Refugee parent speaking about her young son

“

When I was first time when I went to the psychology I was really—I was have really depression. So I was staying there in my room all the day and I was really sad at the time. It's like depression.

Young person who had lived in an EROC

## 7

# Family Support

To support people to parent “confidently and positively” as envisaged by *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, and to ensure quality services, people on the frontline of service provision must be equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills to perform their duties. Supportive earlier intervention and prevention which include a strength-based parenting approach are key in order to prevent child welfare and protection crises emerging later on. However, this assistance must be provided in an evidence-informed and outcomes-focused manner by people with the requisite skills and who are culturally competent.

Considered, supportive and professional responses where different services work together that are strengths-based and that empower rather than undermine families are needed. In addition, collaborative, interagency responses are often required, and in this regard it was evident that the interagency model was considered beneficial particularly in planning responses to child welfare and protection concerns.

It was evident from the research that families face a plethora of challenges related to their previous experiences and their ongoing situation. In addition, participants in this study raised legitimate child welfare and protection concerns. Combined, these highlight the importance of creating spaces where appropriate information and support is available for newly arrived parents.

It was evident parents were grappling with a range of issues with which parents and child protection professionals frequently struggle. The complexity of these issues, even for experienced professionals, highlights the importance of ensuring that appropriately trained and qualified professionals are employed. Interventions (including the provision of information) should be conducted in a way which values parents' knowledge and their experiences of parenting their

own children. Interventions should acknowledge the challenges posed by parenting in a new context and within the EROC environment, and which recognises that for many of these families the child protection and welfare system is likely to be completely new. Without this, parents are likely to lose confidence and are less likely to seek support when needed. This means that low-level child welfare and protection issues are more likely to escalate. This is especially important given increasing concerns internationally that refugee families are a high risk of mandated interventions from child protection authorities (Losoncz, 2016; Ramsay, 2017; HIQA, 2015).

Overall, the concerns about supervision of children and the manner in which these were dealt with by EROC staff primarily highlight the unsuitability of this type of environment for family life, especially if used for more than an initial short reception period. The issues raised also point to the huge expectations placed on staff members who do not have the professional qualifications to appropriately respond to the complex issues with which they are faced.

“

Now, there have been a few child protection concerns that we are working with Tusla on, but again it just depends. It varies from family to family massively but I think those Tusla info sessions are—and this is part of kind of a bigger information session schedule that we do, but those have been useful and just a chance for them to ask questions in a kind of safe environment ...

Community stakeholder with a social care background



# Recommendations

Since the completion of this study, a number of initiatives have been undertaken across areas relevant to this report that have informed the development of the report's recommendations set out below. This includes the publication of the Findings of Joint Inspectorate and NEPS Visits to Education Settings in Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres (EROCs) in relation to education. The Second National Intercultural Health Strategy, published in 2018, seeks to improve issues related to the health of ethnic minorities living in Ireland including refugees. In August 2019, the Department of Justice and Equality published National Standards for accommodation offered to people in the protection process which set out minimum standards that are also intended to be applied to EROCs.

- Develop a framework and strategy for the implementation of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme: An implementation framework would ensure that resettlement in a local community is implemented in a consistent and sustainable way. This framework and strategy should include proposed guidelines for implementation in local areas, timelines, indicators and associated budget lines. It should also outline roles and responsibilities and signpost follow on supports.
- Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation tool for resettlement support programmes: A monitoring and evaluation tool would support the development of an evidence base and inform best practice for resettlement support programmes. This would ensure that outcomes are monitored, best practice collated, and the experience and expertise of resettlement support workers is not lost when programmes end.
- Develop a toolkit and training for community resettlement support staff: Training conducted on a national basis would ensure implementing partners are not 'reinventing the wheel' in their implementation of the programme as well as provide consistency for children and families availing of their services. A toolkit could provide guidance, examples of good practice and methodologies for consulting with refugee children and young people about how best to meet their needs through the programme.
- Review the effectiveness of the information provided to refugee parents and children, both accompanied and unaccompanied, on services available to them: Refugee parents and children should be informed prior to arrival, on arrival and on an ongoing basis about the range of supports and interventions that are available to them. These supports relate to the education system and related supports, the health service including mental health services, family support, childcare, community integration and youth services so that they know what to expect and can make informed decisions. To ensure this information is relayed effectively, it should be updated on a regularly based on feedback from the families themselves.
- Provide all stakeholders working with refugee children with access to appropriate training courses. Training courses should be provided in relation to the impact of war, displacement and trauma

on children; the challenges of resettlement; and intercultural and anti-racism awareness. These stakeholders should include staff of EROCs, resettlement support staff and those working with unaccompanied minors. In addition, professionals working in mainstream primary care and education services need to receive this training so that they are sufficiently equipped to be able to identify issues and intervene or make referrals, especially after resettlement programmes have been concluded.

## ► Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres (EROCs)

- The minimum standards outlined in the National Standards for accommodation offered to people in the protection process should apply to EROCs including provision of own-door accommodation for families, which includes private living space and food preparation facilities, access to appropriate indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and activities in the EROC for children and young people. The management team in each EROC should include a Reception Officer with a QQI level 7 (social care background or equivalent) and skills to identify and respond to residents with special reception needs.
- Children and young people should be facilitated to engage in recreational activities with their peers in the local community.
- Staff in EROCs should receive appropriate cultural awareness and anti-racism training prior to commencing their work in the centre and have access to Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- Consideration should be given to resettling families directly into communities upon arrival rather than spending time in the EROC, as happens under community sponsorship.
- The HSE should develop a programme and implementation plan to develop cultural competence in primary care and specialist mental health services that includes guidance and a training programme for staff on appropriate interventions and support for refugee children and families.
- Resource the HSE to fulfil its commitment in the Second National Intercultural Health Strategy 2018 – 2023 to '[p]rovide intercultural awareness training to all relevant staff and take into account the needs of staff who work with a diverse population'.
- The HSE and Safetynet should collect and collate statistics regarding the outcomes of health assessments to inform plans for providing health services for refugee children and young people and their families.
- Primary care and mental health service staff should receive intercultural communication skills training including training on how to work with interpreters. Interpreters should have access to training on the particular issue that is being addressed (for example child welfare and protection or mental health issues).

## ► Health

- Refugee children should have access to dental assessments upon arrival by a qualified dentist. These assessments should inform the development of a treatment plan.

## ► Education

- Amend the Health Act 2007 to ensure that the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) can inspect supported lodgings where separated children are often placed when they arrive into Ireland.
- Examine possible models for provision of formalised support to accompanied and unaccompanied refugee students as they undergo transitions within the educational system, similar to the Supported Transition model (Scanlon & Doyle, 2018). Under the model, the young refugee is placed at the centre of the transition process, by building natural circles of support within their community supported by external agencies.
- Provide tailored education programmes through Education and Training Boards (ETBs) for refugee young people in need of support, for young people with little or no previous formal education and for young people in need of pre-immersion intensive English as an Additional Language (EAL) support. To achieve this ETBs should be resourced to employ a number of suitably skilled teachers who would be responsible for the development of appropriate language provision and induction resources and for teaching students both during and after school hours.
- Review existing teacher training and CPD that is available to teachers working with refugees in relation to the specific needs of refugee children – including trauma-sensitive training and the impact of their experiences on their education and learning; equality, diversity and anti-racism training; and how best to support their learning of EAL. High-quality EAL training should be identified and sourced for teachers and education

professionals in schools that receive refugee students (including EROC schools). All teachers should be provided with specific training in initial teacher training colleges as well as ongoing issue-based CPD to develop effective EAL provision and practice. While there are some supports available, it is important to build awareness of these resources with teachers. A review of existing resources would identify any gaps.

- The support of EAL students should be considered as a whole-school approach and should be planned for and organised based on students' needs. This should apply to intake/registration procedures, assessment of English language, first language literacy and previous education, class/ year placement, organisation of EAL support in class and on a withdrawal basis, parental and community involvement. There is scope both for EAL on a withdrawal basis - which should be organised in a way that maximises learner progress - as well as in-class support provided by all subject teachers. Resources that support the acquisition of subject specific vocabulary and academic writing skills for EAL learners should be prioritised and provided to all schools. Teachers should be supported with specific, practical and subject-specific resource material and training.
- Where a school is part of the School Completion Programme (SCP), the Home School Community Liaison Officer should play a key role in supporting parents, including support in integrating into the school community, involving refugee parents in school-based activities and organising language and conversation classes for parents. The SCP should also provide supports for students to help them integrate into school and to support them through before and after school activities.

- In cases where mainstream education options are not appropriate for post-16 EAL learners with significant gaps in their formal education, alternative education options (such as Youthreach, Apprenticeships, Community Training Centres) should be explored as possible options and these alternatives should be resourced to work effectively with EAL learners.

- Professional guidance counselling should be made available at various stages so that young people from refugee backgrounds and their families are able to make informed decisions about their education options.

- Ensure that schools with a high concentration of pupils requiring EAL are aware that they can continue to apply for, and are provided with, Additional Allocations for Schools with High Concentrations of Pupils that require Language Support (EAL) in accordance with the procedures set out in the primary school staffing schedule for the 2019/20 school year. Where this might be refused, it is important that schools know that they can make an appeal to the Independent Post Primary Teachers Appeals Board for additional resources where they meet the stated criteria.

- Education information packs translated into the relevant languages should be made available in EROCs to ensure that children, young people and their parents receive sufficient information on the education system, available supports, pathways and progression routes to allow them to make informed decisions.

- Allocate additional resources from Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) budgets to schools and educational services in which programme refugees/relocated

asylum seekers are enrolled and ascertain whether funds allocated in this way are recoupable from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

- Review guidelines and policies on the assessment and intake procedures for refugee, migrant and EAL students to ensure that there is a consistent approach to helping children both academically and socially across educational services at all levels. This should include the *Guidelines on intercultural education in the primary and post-primary settings*, published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and the range of resources by National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) to support the inclusion of children from all backgrounds in education. Guidance on how to monitor and assess EAL learners' progress in order to review placement, resource allocation and teacher support should also be included.

- Schools should receive funding to enable them to access interpreting support where necessary. Children and young people whose first language is not English should be supported to access mother tongue supports so that they can acquire/maintain oral and written proficiency.

## ► Community Integration and Family Support

- Consult with refugee children and adults following their resettlement in the local community on how the resources allocated to the resettlement programme can best be utilised to meet their needs.

- The IRPP should develop and provide resettlement workers and intercultural workers with

additional guidance and support in fulfilling their roles in supporting orientation and integration. Provide additional opportunities to learn from good practice in integration from peers in other counties and in other jurisdictions.

- Provide dedicated resources and supports to child and youth organisations to work with refugee young people to enable them to develop and build friendships in local communities. Ensure that provision is made in resettlement budgets for anti-racism work to be carried out within local communities.

- Facilitate access to youth services for young refugees both during their time in EROCs and following resettlement. Ensure that a representative of youth work services is included on the various Interagency Working Groups/Committees.

- Support language acquisition and integration of parents with young children by introducing ways to support their English-language acquisition alongside their children (such as Parent and Baby/Toddler groups with EAL element).

- Provide tailored supports to parents to access education, training and employment which can foster inclusion and allow them to provide economic security for their children.

- Tailored family support programmes should be developed for refugee parents to support them in adjusting to parenting in a new context. This could be done through the Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Programme or Family Resource Centres that link in with EROCs at a local level.

## ► Future Research

- Longitudinal research should be carried out to examine the experiences of child refugees and their outcomes over time across a range of dimensions including health, education, child welfare, social inclusion and integration.
- A robust evaluation of the Irish reception and resettlement models for refugees should be conducted. This should be conducted in the context of international best practice evidence with a particular focus on the rights and needs of children.

## Children's Rights Alliance members (as at September 2019)

22q11  
Ag Eisteacht  
Alcohol Action Ireland  
Amnesty International Ireland  
An Cosán  
ASH Ireland  
AslAm  
Assoc. for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD)  
Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI)  
ATD Fourth World – Ireland Ltd  
Atheist Ireland  
Autism Network Ireland  
Barnardos  
Barretstown Camp  
Bedford Row Family Project  
BeLonG To Youth Services  
Care Leavers' Network  
Catholic Guides of Ireland  
Child Care Law Reporting Project  
Childhood Development Initiative  
Children in Hospital Ireland  
COPE Galway  
Cork Life Centre  
Crosscare  
Cybersafe  
Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service  
Dental Health Foundation of Ireland  
Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, UCC  
Disability Federation of Ireland  
Down Syndrome Ireland  
Dublin Rape Crisis Centre  
Early Childhood Ireland  
Educate Together  
EPIC  
Extern Ireland  
Focus Ireland  
Foróige  
Future Voices Ireland  
Gaelscoileanna Teo  
Good Shepherd Cork  
Home-Start National Office  
Immigrant Council of Ireland  
Inclusion Ireland  
Independent Hospitals Association of Ireland  
Institute of Guidance Counsellors  
Irish Aftercare Network  
Irish Association for Infant Mental Health  
Irish Association of Social Workers  
Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway  
Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)  
Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)  
Irish Foster Care Association  
Irish Girl Guides  
Irish Heart Foundation  
Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO)  
Irish Penal Reform Trust  
Irish Primary Principals Network  
Irish Refugee Council  
Irish Second Level Students' Union (ISSU)  
Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children  
Irish Traveller Movement  
Irish Youth Foundation (IYF)  
Jack & Jill Children's Foundation  
Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice  
Jigsaw  
Kids' Own Publishing Partnership  
Lifestart National Office  
Mecpaths  
Mental Health Reform  
Mercy Law Resource Centre  
Migrant Rights Centre Ireland  
Mothers' Union  
Mounttown Neighbourhood Youth and Family Project  
Museum of Childhood Project  
MyMind  
National Childhood Network  
National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA)  
National Parents Council Post Primary  
National Parents Council Primary  
National Youth Council of Ireland  
Novas  
One Family  
One in Four  
Parentstop  
Pavee Point  
Peter McVerry Trust  
Rainbows Ireland  
Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)  
Realt Beag  
Respond Housing  
SAFE Ireland  
Saoirse Housing Association  
SAOL Beag Children's Centre  
Scouting Ireland  
School of Education UCD  
Sexual Violence Centre Cork  
Simon Communities of Ireland  
Social Care Ireland  
Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
Sonas Domestic Violence Charity  
Special Needs Parents Association  
SPHE Network  
SpunOut.ie  
St. Nicholas Montessori College  
St. Nicholas Montessori Teachers' Association  
St. Patrick's Mental Health Services  
Step by Step Child & Family Project  
Suas Educational Development  
Teachers' Union of Ireland  
Terenure Rugby Football Club  
The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children  
The Prevention and Early Intervention Network  
The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway  
Traveller Visibility Group Ltd  
Treoir  
UNICEF Ireland  
Youngballymun  
Young Social Innovators  
Youth Advocate Programme Ireland (YAP)  
Youth Work Ireland

### Disclaimer:

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# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALLIANCE

Uniting Voices For Children

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Founded in 1995, the Children's Rights Alliance unites over 100 members working together to make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child. We change the lives of all children in Ireland by making sure that their rights are respected and protected in our laws, policies and services.

**7 Red Cow Lane  
Smithfield, Dublin 7  
Ireland**

**Ph: +353 1 662 9400  
Email: [info@childrensrights.ie](mailto:info@childrensrights.ie)**

**[www.childrensrights.ie](http://www.childrensrights.ie)**

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