

2020 - 2026

Wicklow Migrant Integration Strategy



“What’s the best thing about living in Wicklow?” Responses by migrants to Wicklow Integration Survey 2020

Prepared by
Hannah Grene, BarnCat Consulting
HP Inc.
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Executive Summary

County Wicklow acknowledges the contribution which migrants make to our community and affirms our commitment to full participation on an equal basis for migrants and host communities in County Wicklow society, services and local government.

9.2% of Wicklow's residents are non-Irish national. 14% of residents do not identify as White Irish, and 14.9% of Wicklow residents were born abroad. In our recent Wicklow Integration Survey, migrants were just as likely to be in work as non-migrants, but were less likely to participate in activities, such as voluntary and community groups, indicating a need for greater efforts to welcome and integrate new arrivals to our county.

Consultation with service providers, migrant representatives and others with an interest in integration issues led us to develop a set of 32 actions under five different themes, which are summarised below. Full details on each action, including lead agency, resources and timeframe, are included in Section Four of the main report.

County Wicklow Integration Strategy – Summary of Actions	
Initial actions	
1	Establish a County Wicklow Integration Steering Group
	Agree ownership of actions with lead agencies
2	Establish a wider County Wicklow Integration Network
3	Submit national level concerns to the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration and the Immigrant Council of Ireland
For asylum seekers and refugees	
4	Review the actions of this Strategy once the national plans on the replacement for direct provision are made clear.
5	Designate an official in Wicklow County Council who would assist 'new arrivals' (both asylum seekers and refugees) in accessing local authority services and in connecting with other agencies.
6	Consider a scheme to enable citizens to provide a spare room or accommodation to asylum seekers as an alternative to direct provision.
7	Ensure that the recommendations of the Somali Resettlement Evaluation are implemented.
Access to Public Services	
8	Provide mandatory public sector duty training, with a focus on equality and diversity to all public sector staff
9	Provide a welcome pack for all migrants, signposting them to services and activities in County Wicklow
10	Improve the uptake of interpretation and translation services, where they are currently available (Department of Social Protection and HSE)
11	Raise awareness among GPS of interpretation services
12	Review local transport networks to consider the needs of migrants, in particular to serve areas where identified groups of migrants are living.
13	Ask all community groups funded by Wicklow County Council what they are currently doing to promote migrant integration.
14	Make provision in new community funding to prioritise migrant integration initiatives.
Combating Racism and Xenophobia	
15	Promote awareness of the channels for reporting and addressing racism and discrimination.
16	Ensure that people feel empowered and safe to report racist incidents,
17	Ensure that racist graffiti is given highest priority for removal.

18	Discuss the findings of this report with the Joint Policing Committee to determine further actions.
Education, young people and families	
19	Increase anti-racism initiatives in schools.
20	(i) Roll out a Countywide Awareness training programme to combat Racist Rumours, Bullying, Hate speech under Incitement to hatred by building awareness and through equality proofing of Community for a. (ii) Set up anti-rumours awareness training aiming to dispel the widespread myths and misconceptions around the topic of immigration and migrant integration, by providing evidence-based answers and utilising social networks to spread the message of the campaign far and wide. Use Doras Luimni and other Council of Europe cities as best practice using Council of Europe Handbook
21	Improve accessibility and availability of language classes.
22	Improved coordination between schools, youth services and adult learning classes in terms of ensuring that children and their parents are receiving the language supports that they need.
23	Create a network of speakers of other languages who could support migrant children and families in their school integration.
Employment and pathways to work	
24	Provide diversity and anti-racism training to employers.
25	Provide adult guidance and other supports to asylum seekers in advance of their eligibility to work.
26	Provide specific tailored programmes in enterprise and setting up a business for migrants
27	Encourage recent migrants to volunteer while job seeking or awaiting work.
28	Introduce migrants to farming communities
Active civic and cultural engagement	
29	Encourage awareness amongst migrants that everyone has the right to vote (and stand) in local elections (including asylum seekers) and hold a voter registration drive.
30	Encourage representation of migrant associations on local authority policy committees.
31	Encourage local representatives and interested migrants to participate in the migrant-councillor internship scheme.
32	Ensure that interested host community members are aware of opportunities to get to know and befriend migrants
33	Encourage and support intercultural events e.g. Africa Day, and support intercultural activities in existing events e.g. national foods at Wicklow Food Festival.
34	Engage with owners/staff of national cuisine shops (Asian Markets, Polish shops) to teach how to use the different ingredients that they sell.

Introduction

"Difference is of the essence of humanity. Difference is an accident of birth and it should therefore never be the source of hatred or conflict. The answer to difference is to respect it. Therein lies a most fundamental principle of peace: respect for diversity."

John Hume¹

Ireland's increasingly diverse population is cause for great celebration. Migrants contribute to our economy, enrich our cultural life, and perhaps most importantly, expose us to new ways and perspectives.

The EU Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration state that '*integration is a dynamic, two-way process...by all immigrants and residents of Member States*' (Principle 1).² It is vitally important that migrants are integrated as full members of Irish society, with both the privileges and responsibilities this entails. But it is also essential that both host communities, and the many different migrant communities who have made Ireland their home, have respect and understanding for each other's cultures and traditions and are prepared to maintain an open dialogue.

At the national level, policy and actions are set out in the National Migrant Integration Strategy, including that all local authorities should develop a local Migrant Integration Strategy. The National Strategy is the responsibility of the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration, and overseen by a monitoring committee made up of representatives of Government department, State agencies and NGOs.

It should be noted that the National Strategy is due to expire at the end of 2020, and so the County Wicklow Strategy should be reviewed when new national policy is introduced.

The following report was commissioned by Wicklow County Council and will form the basis for their County Wicklow Integration Strategy. It does five things:

1. Provides a summary demographic profile of ethnic minorities and migrant communities in County Wicklow.
2. Discusses migrants which might be particularly vulnerable in County Wicklow, including refugees and asylum seekers.
3. Provides an audit of services that are provided to migrants in County Wicklow, and identifies some possible gaps.
4. Sets out an action plan for the Strategy.
5. Provides recommendation for the implementation, monitoring and review of the Strategy.

Details of the methodology and consultations for this report, and a list of concerns that should be raised at national level are provided in the appendix.

¹From his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in 1998
,<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1998/hume/lecture/>

² These [principles](#) were first formulated in 2004, and reaffirmed in 2014.

Section One: Demographic profile

[Migrants to Ireland] participate in the construction [of Irish society], our children are growing up here. We all want a better Ireland.

Respondent to Wicklow Integration Survey 2020

Census 2016 data

In 2016, 9.2% of Wicklow residents were non-Irish nationals, and 14% of residents do not identify as White Irish. 14.9% of Wicklow residents were born abroad.

Between 2011 and 2016, the population of Wicklow increased by 5.6% to 142,425 people. The proportion of non-Irish nationals decreased slightly. However, the percentage born abroad rose slightly, as did the percentage identifying as non-White Irish. This implies that an increasing number of migrants are settling in Wicklow and becoming residents. We know that at national level, the number of people with dual nationality almost doubled in Ireland between 2011 and 2016, with 63.4% being born abroad.³

Table 1: While the number of non-Irish nationals has decreased slightly, this may indicate a maturing and settling of the migrant population.

COUNTY WICKLOW - POPULATION DIVERSITY (1)							
Nationality	2011	2016	Change	Place of birth	2011	2016	Change
	%	%	%		%	%	%
Irish	89.3	89.7	0.4	Born Ireland	85.3	85.1	-0.2
<i>(National)</i>	86.8	87.0	0.2	<i>(National)</i>	83.0	82.7	-0.3
Non-Irish	9.9	9.2	-0.7	Born Abroad	14.7	14.9	0.2
UK	28.0	26.6	-1.4	UK	42.9	39.7	-3.2
Poland	20.6	22.4	1.8	Poland	13.1	13.1	0.0
Lithuania	6.3	6.2	-0.1	Lithuania	4.1	3.6	-0.5
Other EU	20.3	25.8	5.5	Other EU	14.4	16.7	2.3
Rest of the world	24.7	19.0	-5.7	Rest of the world	25.5	26.7	1.2
<i>(National)</i>	12.1	11.4	-0.7	<i>(National)</i>	17.0	17.3	0.3
Not Stated	1.0	1.0		Not Stated	0.0	0.0	
Total	100	100		Total	100	100	

Source: CSO Census 2011 and 2016

³ CSO, Census of Population 2016 - Profile 7 Migration and Diversity - Dual Nationalities, 2017. The profile explains that persons may identify as having a dual nationality based on what citizenship they hold, where they were born, where they live or where their parents are from.

Nationals of the UK accounted for over a quarter of non-Irish nationals in Wicklow, and Polish nationals only slightly less. In all, the UK and EU countries accounted for nearly three-quarters of non-Irish nationals in Wicklow, with the remaining quarter coming from the rest of the world. The three largest non-EU national groups are from the US (296 individuals), India (178) and Brazilian (137).

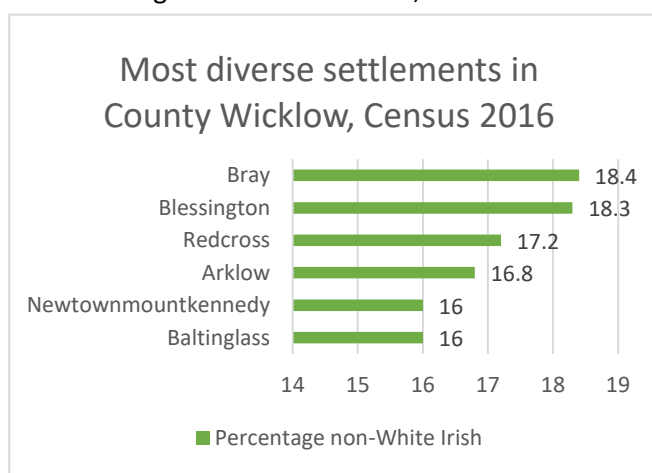
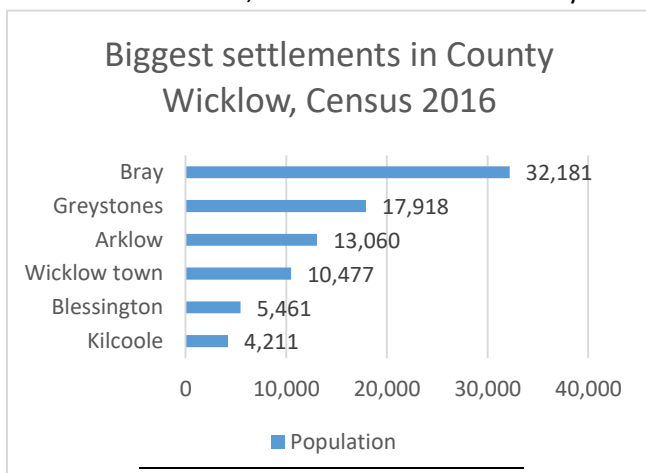
County Wicklow is somewhat less diverse than the national average. 14% of Wicklow’s residents did not identify as White Irish, compared to 17.8% at national level.⁴ Of these people, over 12,000 were White European, over 2,000 were Asian/Asian Irish, nearly 800 were White Irish Travellers, some 500 were Black/Black Irish, and over 1,600 identified as Other. Less than 5% of the population did not identify as White.

Table 2: Population diversity in County Wicklow by ethnicity, language and religion

COUNTY WICKLOW - POPULATION DIVERSITY (2) - 2016						
Ethnicity		Language			Religion	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
White Irish	120,901	86.0	Foreign language spoken 14,893 15.2		Roman Catholic	103,947 73.0
White Travellers	783	0.6	Polish	3,252 21.8	Other Religion	16,867 11.8
White Other	12,116	8.6	French	1,645 11.0	No Religion	18,977 13.3
Black/Black Irish	527	0.4	Spanish	1,120 7.5	Not Stated	2,634 1.8
Asian/Asian Irish	2,298	1.6	Lithuanian	797 5.4	Total	142,425 100.0
Other	1,659	1.2	Other	8,079 54.2		
Not Stated	2,302	1.6	Ability to speak English 14,893 15.2			
Total	140,586	100.0	Very well	8,805 59.1		
Source: Census 2016			Well	3,875 26.0		
			Not well	1,546 10.4		
			Not at all	247 1.7		
			Not stated	420 2.8		

Urban areas in Wicklow are, unsurprisingly, more diverse than rural areas for the most part. Bray has by far the biggest population in County Wicklow, and is also the most ethnically diverse, and Arklow and Greystones are also more ethnically diverse than average.

However, the second most ethnically diverse town is Blessington in West Wicklow, and smaller



⁴ The Census asks respondents whether they identify as: White Irish; White Irish Traveller; Other White; Asian or Asian Irish; Black or Black Irish and Other. This 14% therefore includes White Irish Travellers, who account for 0.6% of Wicklow’s population, as compared to 0.7% at national level, and those who did not state their ethnicity (1.6%)

Baltinglass is also more ethnically diverse than average, whereas Wicklow town in 2016 was slightly less ethnically diverse than the average across the county. Most rural settlements are less diverse, with the notable exception of Redcross, where 17.8% of its 230 residents self-identified as non-White Irish in 2016.

Over half of Wicklow’s Asian/Asian Irish population lived in Bray in 2016, where there is a large Chinese community. In percentage terms, Rathdrum has the largest Asian/Asian Irish population (5.1% of the total population, 85 individuals), largely associated with employment in St Colman’s, a community hospital and residential care facility. Over half of the 527 Black/Black Irish people lived in either Bray or Arklow, with a significant minority (50 individuals) living in Blessington. The proportion of Black/Black Irish people living in County Wicklow in 2016 is 0.4%, significantly lower than the national average (1.4%) and one of the lowest among local authorities (27th out of 31).

In terms of linguistic diversity, 15.2% of residents in the County reported to speak a foreign language. Polish is the most commonly spoken foreign language spoken (21.8%) followed by French (11%) and Spanish (7.5%). It should be noted however that more than 85% report speaking English well or very well, with only 1.7% not able to speak English at all.

County Wicklow remains predominantly Roman Catholic, however with an increasing number of the population practising other religions and a growing number of people stating that they have no religion.

Changes since 2016

Ireland’s next census will be held in April 2022. In the meantime, what can we say about the ways in which diversity may have changed since 2016?

National preliminary data from 2019 show that since 2016, the percentage of non-Irish nationals living in Ireland has risen again. Between 2018 and 2019, the numbers of non-Irish nationals in Ireland increased by 29,100. Again, this does not include dual nationality holders. In our recent survey of Wicklow residents, over 20% of migrants (born abroad) identified themselves as Irish nationals or dual citizens.

Table 4: Estimates show that the non-Irish national population has increased since 2016⁵

Population change 2016-2019	
Nationality	% change
Irish	-1.0
UK	0.1
Rest of EU15	0.3
EU13	0.0
Rest of world	0.7

Population increase 2018-2019	
Nationality	Number
Irish	35,300
Non-Irish	29,100
UK	3,700
Rest of EU15	8,100
EU13	2,700
Rest of world	14,600
Total persons	64,500

⁵ In the tables, ‘Rest of EU 15’ refers to the countries before enlargement on 1 May 2004, (i.e. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Portugal), while EU 13 refers to the 10 countries that joined the EU on 1 May 2004 (i.e. Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia), along with Bulgaria and Romania who joined on 1 January 2007 and Croatia who joined on the 1 July 2013.

Other changes have resulted in greater diversity in County Wicklow since the 2016 census. Three centres for asylum seekers have opened in Bray, Ashford and Wicklow town, accommodating 260 people in total.⁶ 16 Syrian families have also been resettled in County Wicklow in 2020, with a further group of families to be resettled when current restrictions due to COVID-19 have been lifted.

These vulnerable groups of migrants require particular attention in an integration strategy, particularly given the lack of ethnic diversity in some areas and with regard to some ethnic groups in County Wicklow in the 2016 Census, and their situation is discussed further below.

Section Two: Vulnerable migrants

Migrants come to Ireland for various reasons – for work, to be with family, or in search of a better life. Migrants are not a homogenous group with common experiences, and within particular groups, individuals can experience integration in very different ways. However, it is useful to consider some of the more vulnerable groups of migrants, in order to better plan for consultation and specific integration actions.

Asylum seekers/applications for international protection

Under international law, any person with a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of origin has the right to seek asylum in another country. People who have claimed asylum, but whose claim has yet to be decided, are known as **asylum seekers**, or **applicants for international protection**. People whose situation has already been examined and who have been acknowledged as in need of asylum are known as **refugees**. Refugees have the same rights and entitlements to services as Irish citizens, and can generally apply for Irish citizenship after three years.

Persons who arrive in Ireland, and cannot return to their home country because they fear persecution can apply for asylum in Ireland.

Asylum seekers are often first housed in emergency accommodation centres, and then in longer stay direct provision centres while waiting for their claim to be processed. Their claim may take two years or longer to process. Asylum seekers are given accommodation and food, and a small weekly allowance to cover all other expenses. Asylum seekers are entitled to basic healthcare, to education until 18 (not third level) and some level of English language classes. Since 2018, asylum seekers who are still awaiting a decision after nine months have the right to work.

There are currently two emergency accommodation centres in County Wicklow (the Esplanade Hotel in Bray and Rathmore Holiday Villages in Ashford) and one longer stay direct provision centre (the Grand Hotel in Wicklow town). The distinction is not very clear, since some residents in Bray and Ashford have been there for considerable lengths of time. Residents in Bray and Ashford, however, are liable to be transferred at short notice, either to another emergency accommodation centre, or

⁶ Wicklow previously had direct provision centres in the Warrens in Wicklow town (closed 2008) and Beechlawn in Rathdrum (closed 2009).

to a longer term direct provision centre. This causes difficulties around enrolling children in school, for example.

The use of direct provision has long been criticised as inhumane by NGOs and has been increasingly under fire from international organisations including the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. At local level, service providers are often given little notice of new centres opening, and this creates major issues in proper planning for service provision, care and integration needs of the new residents.

A number of residents in the direct provision centre in the Grand Hotel in Wicklow, and some in the emergency accommodation centres have in fact been granted international protection, or leave to remain in the State, and are therefore entitled to leave direct provision. However, as elsewhere in the country, many of these residents are having difficulty in finding housing, and so are currently forced to remain in the centres.

The news that direct provision is to end in the lifetime of the next government is welcome, but the question of what is to replace it remains unclear. There are likely to be significant housing and integration issues arising, and this must be adequately considered and planned for.

Separate provision is made for children under 18 who have made their way to Ireland without a parent or a guardian and are seeking asylum (known as separated children or unaccompanied minors). After initial assessment, they are placed with foster parents or in supported lodgings. Some separated children are currently resident in Derralossary House in Roundwood, Co. Wicklow.

When separated children turn 18, however, if their asylum application has not yet been decided (aged-out minors), they are expected to enter a direct provision centre- and are not necessarily offered a place in a direct provision centre near where they have been living with foster parents or support.

Refugees

There are two main ways in which one might become a refugee in Ireland. The first is through the asylum process described above. The second is through resettlement by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in agreement with the Irish government. These **programme refugees** are identified by the UNHCR as in need of protection and invited to Ireland by the Irish government.

In 2013, six Somali families were resettled in Arklow under a Refugee Resettlement Programme, with interagency supports available for the first two years. The Somali community in Arklow has since expanded somewhat, due to family reunification, whereby refugees can apply to have their family members join them. A review of the Somali resettlement programme was undertaken in 2018, and underlined a number of ways in which the Somali families are still struggling to integrate.⁷

In 2019, Wicklow received 16 Syrian families under the nationwide Syrian refugee resettlement programme, who are currently living in small groups in Arklow, Wicklow town and Rathnew. A further group arrived in September 2020, and are housed in Delgany, Greystones, Dunlavin and Baltinglass. Wicklow town is also home to one Syrian family thanks to a pilot community sponsorship scheme, for which Wicklow Syria Appeal, a voluntary group in Wicklow town, was the local sponsor.

⁷ Sally Daly, Learning from a Resettlement Project, Somali Families in Arklow: A review of resettlement, reunification and integration, 2018.

Victims of human trafficking

Human trafficking involves the sale, trade and exploitation of human beings for profit. This may be for the purposes of sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, criminal activity, forced begging or forced marriage, and victims may be adults or children. In October 2020, Minister for Justice Helen McEntee said: *“I am acutely conscious that the crime of human trafficking occurs in all countries in the world – and that Ireland is no exception...It is happening and it is not a phenomenon limited to our big cities. The terrible reality is that victims of human trafficking may potentially be hidden in plain sight, in any community in Ireland.”*

The Irish government have launched a new initiative to raise awareness of human trafficking, and to ensure that Gardaí, service providers, customers and the general public are alert to the possible signs of human trafficking. A new website <https://www.anyonetrafficked.com/> gives information about possible signs of human trafficking, and concerns should be reported to the Garda Confidential free helpline on 1800 666 111.

Section Three: Audit of services and supports

Every community has more assets than any one person knows.

Mike Green⁸

As a starting point for the Strategy, an audit of services and supports for integration was carried out. In our consultation, many migrants pointed to difficulties in finding out what supports are available, and many non-migrants wanted to be more active in welcoming newcomers to Ireland, but did not know where to start. The following is a first step towards mapping such supports and activities, as well as identifying gaps and challenges to inform the actions listed in Section Four.

Services and activities are grouped under five themes: access to public services; combating racism and xenophobia; education, young people and families; employment and pathways to work; and community participation. These streamline and echo the ten themes of the current National Migrant Integration Strategy.⁹



Access to public services

*Corresponding national themes: Access to public services and social inclusion;
Health*

Context

The 2014 Irish Human Rights and Equality Act established a **positive duty on public bodies** to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of their employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by their policies and plans.

⁸ A Bank of Ideas, A Guide to Asset Mapping, 2020

⁹ Government of Ireland, The Migrant Integration Strategy: A Blueprint for the Future, 2017-2020.

A positive duty means that it is not enough for a public sector body to avoid direct discrimination; they must also consider what particular barriers specific groups and people may have in dealing with public services and take positive steps to address these.

In our survey, migrants were generally positive about their experiences of public services, often more positive than non-migrants (see Appendix B). However, language difficulties are commonly cited as barriers for people from an ethnic background, as well as unfamiliarity or difficulty in navigating the system.

A large number of suggestions were made by survey respondents with regard to improving services. The most commonly cited were **the need for more Gardaí, and more diversity training for Gardaí**, and the need for **better public transport**, in particular to allow migrants, who may be less likely to have access to car, to access services and activities and overcome isolation. Intercultural training for frontline staff in general was also mentioned by many. These suggestions are addressed in the action plan in Section Four.

Some current activities and supports

- The Citizens Information Service provide support to help people navigate systems, and as with other Citizens Information Services across the country, have a direct line to the Immigrant Council of Ireland for immigration issues. The Citizens Information Centre in Arklow has a part-time Polish volunteer information provider, and a Community Employment Scheme part-time receptionist in CIC Bray can speak Russian and Moldovan/Romanian, helping to interpret where necessary. The Citizens Information Centre in Arklow have also built up a relationship with the resettled Somali refugees in the town. In Wicklow, the Citizens Information have been active in fielding queries from the residents of the Grand Hotel, and on one occasion, visited Rathmore in Ashford to provide an on-site information session.
- Wicklow Welcomes, a network of Wicklow residents established to welcome direct provision residents, have been key in linking residents of the Grand Hotel and Rathmore in Ashford to the services they require, including putting together a welcome pack with information when the Grand Hotel first opened as a direct provision centre.
- In December 2019, Wicklow Primary Care Service launched a Service Improvement Initiative to improve the health and social care support provided by the HSE and partners to residents of the Grand Hotel direct provision centre in Wicklow town. This made a number of recommendations, including the recruitment of an Intercultural Health Coordinator. A Grand Hotel Inter-agency meeting was held in February 2020.
- As mandated by national policy, the Health Service Executive, and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection have access to in-person and over the phone interpreting services; however implementation can be patchy, and other services do not have this access (see below).
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Gaps and challenges

- Interpretation services are not readily available to all services – for example, Citizens Information Services, the Wicklow Child and Family Project, and Springboard do not have budget for them. While GPs have access to interpretation services, there are reports that

many do not use it, finding it too difficult to access. Several service providers report that interpretation is provided by a family member, raising confidentiality concerns, and often children, sometimes in circumstances where a child's involvement is not appropriate (e.g. parent-teacher meetings, or medical appointments).

- Finding a GP who can take on new medical card patients is a challenging process. GPs must be applied to individually, and as most are not taking on new patients, three rejections must be obtained before an application is made to the HSE, which then assigns the patient to a GP. Some vulnerable migrants, particularly refugees, have arrived in Wicklow with some very urgent health needs, and this delay in obtaining healthcare is of great concern.
- Asylum seekers and refugees have also, almost by definition, experienced high levels of trauma. There is little in the way of specialised trauma services available.
- A number of respondents felt that, in order to ensure that vulnerable migrants did not 'fall through the cracks', roles with a specific focus on migrants or ethnic minorities might need to be created within particular services. This might not be a full-time role, but an individual member of staff who is specifically trained to deal particularly with queries from migrant or ethnic minorities.
- Several service providers indicated the need for more staff from migrant/ethnic minority backgrounds.
- In their recommendations to local authorities planning integration strategies, the Immigrant Council of Ireland have urged service providers to record and collate statistics on the ethnicity of their service users, for better information on particular vulnerabilities for example. However, some service providers noted a reluctance on the part of their staff to gather such information, as it might seem irrelevant to the query at hand, or even evidence of discrimination. This is a question which merits further discussion and clarity.



Combating racism and xenophobia

Corresponding national theme: Promoting intercultural awareness and combating racism and xenophobia.

Context

The Black Lives Matters protests in Ireland following the killing of George Floyd in the States have served to highlight the prevalence of racism and xenophobia in our society. In the 2019 Progress Report on the National Migrant Integration Plan, the Minister of State for Equality, Immigration and Integration, David Stanton, asked that a 'greater energy and focus' for the 'remainder of the Strategy' be given to actions combating racism and xenophobia, and actions to support integration and social cohesion at the local level.¹⁰ However, the State provides few official statistics on racism and hate speech in Ireland, with reporting largely left to NGOs. The Irish Network against Racism reports a doubling of reports of racism in the first quarter of 2020, compared to the same quarter in

¹⁰ Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration, The Migrant Integration Strategy Progress Report 2019.

2019, with reports of offensive online and media comment particularly high.¹¹ In our County Wicklow Integration survey, **over one third** of migrants report having experienced hostility or suspicion, or verbal abuse, on the basis of their ethnicity or nationality. This rises to about **one half** for people of Asian or Black African ethnic origin, regardless of whether they are migrants or not.

Two recent international bodies have examined Ireland's approach to anti-racism in 2019 and found it severely lacking. Both the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), and the United National Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) have urged Ireland to publish a new national action plan against racism, with CERD finding that the National Migrant Integration Strategy was 'not comprehensive enough'.¹² The current Government have committed to publishing a new national anti-racism plan within their term of office.

Some current activities and supports

- A Certificate in Building Capacity and Enhancing Leadership in Intercultural Understanding and Diversity has been run recently by IT Carlow at the Wicklow campus in Claremont. This four day course was open to all public body workers, with a similar course running in previous years. While the earlier course was well attended, the more recent course had less than ten participants. Participants praised the content of the course, but some felt that it was perhaps too abstract, needing more practical content on how to interact with service providers of another culture. The section on Public Sector Duty was noted as particularly useful.
- In April 2019, 40 candidates for the upcoming Wicklow County Council elections signed an anti-racism election protocol. This was part of a national campaign run by the Irish Network Against Racism (INAR), but the local event was taken on the initiative of a local candidate.
- In order to address problems such as the racist graffiti in Bray (mentioned below) a new and active '[Bray for Love](#)' group has been established to: 'spread love and tolerance, celebrating our shared humanity and ensure our town remains a great place to live and to visit.'

Possible gaps and challenges

- Many service providers stressed the need for more widespread and where appropriate, mandatory, intercultural training. As one service provider put it: *Often, you end up doing the work [with vulnerable migrants] without training. You learn as you go along, but that's not good enough.*
- Intercultural awareness needs to be promoted not just between the dominant Irish group and ethnic minority communities, but between different ethnic minority communities also. Tensions, discrimination and racism can arise between different ethnic groups, and there can also be resentment between migrants with different entitlements or status, for example.

¹¹ Irish Network Against Racism, Media Release: Racism Figures Double Last Year's, Friday 1st May 2020, available at: <https://inar.ie/media-release-racism-figures-double-last-years/>

¹² UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding observations on the combined fifth to ninth reports of Ireland, 23 January 2020.

- Some service providers reported that ethnic minority individuals, particularly young people, experiencing verbal abuse were reluctant to call it out, preferring not to ‘rock the boat’ and in some cases, feeling that this was the least of the problems they had to contend with. The current Black Lives Matter movement provides an opportunity to call out racial abuse as completely unacceptable under any circumstances.
- Many migrant representatives and survey respondents highlighted the recent racist graffiti in Bray, often targeting individuals by name, as expressed here by one respondent: *Possibly a small minority of people in Bray show inarticulate but worrying hostility through graffiti etc., towards our new neighbours.* Many respondents felt that Bray was generally welcoming of their diverse population, but that such a public representation of the views of an extreme minority was a serious cause for concern.



Education, young people and families

Corresponding national theme: Education. NB: The national level theme includes provision of adult language classes, but does not have a specific focus on young people and families. I have addressed adult English classes under Employment and pathways to work below, to leave more space for considering youth and families, but that is up for debate.

Context

Supporting families, and younger or second generation migrants is key to a successful integration process. The Immigrant Council of Ireland reports that local authorities found developing events for children and young people among the most effective actions in their integration strategies, because adults were then also more likely to engage.¹³ For many people, settling and having a family in Ireland leads to greater integration in the community, but it can also be lonely and isolating for families without support.

Some current activities and supports

- A range of services and supports for children and their families are run by the HSE, Tusla and through Service Level Agreements with local organisations in County Wicklow.
- Co. Wicklow Children and Young People’s Services Committee (CYPSC) brings together a wide range of agencies who provide services to children and their families to improve outcomes for children through more effective integration of existing services and interventions at local level.
- Tusla’s ‘Meitheal’ approach, whereby relevant agencies and supports can be brought together with parents and, where appropriate, children, is being rolled out in East Wicklow by the Prevention Partnership and Family Support [PPFS] Steering Committee which is a

¹³ The Immigrant Council of Ireland, Keeping it Local: Discussion document and proposed actions for Local Authorities on developing local migrant integration strategies, July 2018.

subgroup of Co. Wicklow CYPSC. While this is not specific to migrant populations, it has been particularly useful in addressing the complex needs of individual members of migrant communities.

- NGO Crosscare (the Vault, East Wicklow Youth Services) have run a weekly youth group for the Somali teenagers in Arklow for the past two years. The group has allowed them to improve their spoken English, as well as develop other skills and celebrate their own culture. The group had put together a short film called 'Somali Arklow', which can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnixyR2Qil4>
- The Africa Society of Wicklow have received some funding to do some intercultural education in schools. While this has had to be converted into other activities during Covid, this is a useful initiative on which to build.

Possible gaps and challenges

- Some service providers noted that, for some migrant families, the male partner was sometimes out working long hours while the female partner might be at home alone or with small children. Particularly in families with strong patriarchal norms, this meant that the stay at home partner might be very isolated, with little English or connection to the outside world.
- Several participants expressed concerns with the adequacy of supports available to schools and students in schools, particularly in terms of language support. While there are good language classes for adults with the Wicklow Education and Training Board (see following section), the supports for younger learners of English as a foreign language are limited. Particularly for older children and teenagers arriving in Wicklow with little or no English, and in the case of some refugees who may have had little or disrupted education in their country of origin, entering school with their age cohort as they are expected to do is immensely challenging.
- The difficulty of engaging with young migrant women from some cultures was noted. One migrant representative noted that in her culture, adolescent girls would not be comfortable participating in sports and other activities with boys, and felt that there was a need for separate activities for girls.



Employment, language supports and pathways to work

Corresponding national theme: Employment and Pathways to work

Context

At national level, while most migrants are in employment, many of them are overqualified for the work that they perform, and migrants are over-represented in low-paid, precarious employment.¹⁴

For asylum seekers, although they have had the right to work since 2018 if their claim has not been processed within nine months, many of them struggle to get work, citing not only discrimination but confusion and uncertainty among employers regarding their employment status. People of Black African descent report discrimination in access to work at three times the level of the general population.¹⁵ In our Wicklow Integration Survey, migrants were just as likely to be currently in work as the general population, but slightly more likely to have lost their jobs during Covid-19 restrictions.

Local authorities reported to the Immigrant Council of Ireland that employment focused initiatives were some of the actions which proved to be least effective in their integration strategies. While the recession that occurred in the lifetime of many integration strategies played a part, language barriers, lack of recognition of qualifications and restricted work rights were also mentioned by local authorities as reasons for the ineffectiveness of such initiatives.¹⁶ In our Wicklow Integration Survey, employment supports were one of the few services about which migrants were less positive than non-migrants.

Current activities and supports

- County Wicklow has a good range of both formal language classes, provided by the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB), and informal volunteer-led conversation classes, run using the Fáilte Isteach approach by the Bray and County Wicklow Partnerships.
- The entitlements to KWETB language classes vary according to status. Asylum seekers are eligible for literacy and language classes offered at levels 1-3. Those who have been in the system for nine months or longer can apply for other adult education programmes offered by KWETB FET Services. Resettled refugees are offered two years or more intensive English language classes, between 10 and 20 hours a week and are eligible to apply for places on FET programmes offered by KWETB. Eligibility can depend on the programme guidelines and individual circumstances. Information and advice is available from KWETB Adult Guidance and Information Service.
- In general, KWETB can accommodate everyone who wishes to avail of language and literacy classes, with a rolling intake during the year. There has been a large increase in the numbers availing of services in recent years, with more levels on offer, and a wider range of programmes.
- The Fáilte Isteach classes are run by the Bray Partnership in three locations (two in Bray and one in Kilcoole) and by the County Wicklow Partnership in two locations (Wicklow town and Arklow), and are open to all comers. Since these are informal classes, numbers tend to fluctuate. Fáilte

¹⁴ Migrant Rights Council of Ireland, *All Work and Low Pay: the Experience of Migrants Working in Ireland*, 2015.

¹⁵ Philip O'Connell, 'Why are so few Africans at work in Ireland? Immigration Policy and Labour Market Disadvantage', *Irish Journal of Sociology*, June 2019; Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 2017.

¹⁶ The Immigrant Council of Ireland, *Keeping it Local: Discussion document and proposed actions for Local Authorities on developing local migrant integration strategies*, July 2018.

Isteach groups can play an important role in facilitating integration. For example, in Bray the Fáilte Isteach group invited the community Gardaí in to meet the group – particularly useful for groups of migrants from countries with a less positive experience of law enforcement. Currently, the Fáilte Isteach classes by the Bray Partnership are being run online over Zoom, and conversational English support is being provided on a one-to-one basis to Syrian refugees by County Wicklow Partnership.

- In terms of employment supports, both the Bray and County Wicklow Partnership offer supports to people on the Live Register, and the Wicklow Local Enterprise Office offers training and advice to self-employed persons. Many noted that migrants were particularly likely to be entrepreneurial, although there is sometimes the possibility that some migrants are more likely to be self-employed due to discrimination and difficulty in accessing paid employment.
- KWETB also offer various courses, and the Local Enterprise Office runs events and training for those who wish to start or expand their business.

Gaps and challenges

- The need for general intercultural training for English language tutors and volunteers in particular was noted by several service providers.
- Migrants with a combination of language and literacy needs presents a particular challenge for education services. For instance, many of the Somali adults who came to Arklow in 2013 had not had formal schooling, and were not literate in their own language. Other migrants may be literate, but in a different script (such as Chinese or Arabic). One migrant representative noted that when she attended KWETB training, the class was geared towards those who were already familiar with the Roman alphabet, whereas she and her family needed support to learn the alphabet as a starting point.
- Diversity and representation of ethnic minorities in the staff of local services in Wicklow (as elsewhere in Ireland) is low. The National Migrant Integration Action Plan states that *'proactive outreach and support measures be undertaken....to increase the number of persons from an immigrant background working at all levels in the civil service and wider public service'*.¹⁷



Community participation

Corresponding national themes: Political participation; Volunteering; Sport; Integration in the community

¹⁷ Government of Ireland, The Migrant Integration Strategy: A Blueprint for the Future, 2017-2020.

Context

The theme of active citizenship and community participation covers a broad range of activities including political participation, volunteering, sport, culture and the celebration of diversity.

Political participation by migrants and ethnic minorities at national level remains low. A recent publication by the Immigrant Council of Ireland showed that approximately 3% of local election candidates were of migrant origin, and accounted for less than 1% of those elected.¹⁸ In Wicklow, two Black women ran in the local elections, Anne Waithira Burke in the Bray Municipal District, and Chantel Kangowa in the Arklow Municipal District. While both are well established in their communities – Anne Waithira Burke has lived in County Wicklow for 15 years, while Chantel Kangowa grew up in Rathdrum - both women have spoken about their experiences of encountering racism during their campaigns.¹⁹

Migrants tend to be well represented in voluntary activities, sport and cultural activities. Wicklow Volunteer Centre note that they have many active migrant volunteers. Volunteering can be a very positive integration experience, and for direct provision residents, it can have the added benefit of supporting their job applications (once they have been in the system for nine months, they are permitted to work), and applications for leave to remain.

In our Wicklow Integration Survey, a large number of respondents pointed to the need for more social spaces, particularly those which don't centre around alcohol (especially for migrants who do not drink or for younger people), and those that are outdoors, given the pandemic (seats and picnic benches in green spaces, parks, housing estates etc.).

Some current activities and supports

- The Immigrant Council of Ireland have piloted a Councillor-Migrant Internship Scheme in five local authorities in the previous administration. One internship took place in Wicklow County Council, with Anne Waithira Burke (originally from Kenya) shadowing Councillor Joe Behan. As mentioned above, Anne Waithira Burke then ran in the May 2019 local elections for the Labour party.
- County Wicklow has an active Volunteer Centre, and the Tidy Towns committees have been particularly good at attracting and embracing migrant involvement, particularly from the direct provision centre in Wicklow town. Tidy Towns has the advantage also of being a volunteering opportunity which does not require more than basic English.
- The County Wicklow Library Service encourage and support library usage by new communities, and are currently in receipt of funding for an experienced environmental

¹⁸ Immigrant Council of Ireland, Strength in Diversity: The Experience of Migrant Candidates in the 2019 Local Election, April 2020.

¹⁹ The Irish Times, 'Labour conference hears of "online bullying" faced by candidates, 9 November 2019, available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/labour-conference-hears-of-online-bullying-faced-by-candidates-1.4078176> ; East Coast FM, 'Chantel Kangowa from Rathdrum speaks to Declan Meehan, 2 June 2020, available at: <https://www.eastcoast.fm/podcasts2/podcasts/the-morning-show/episode/chantel-kangowa-from-rathdrum-speaks-to-declan-meehan/>

educator to lead groups of children (target groups include New Irish, direct provision centres and Traveller children) and a programme to encourage parents to use the library service with their children (Kildare and Wicklow, target groups include New Irish, Traveller community, people with literacy needs and residents of direct provision centres).

- The Wicklow Public Participation Network (PPN) provides a channel by which community and voluntary groups can input into local policymaking. While they have limited migrant representation at present, this is a very positive avenue to explore for increased civic participation by migrant groups and communities.

Gaps and challenges

- The percentage of non-Irish nationals on the voting register for local elections is 4.3%. Compared to other local authorities, this is somewhere in the mid to low range when we compare to the demographic make-up of the population as a whole, but means that migrants are underrepresented by a factor of two on the voting register.²⁰
- It is important to remember that community participation should not just be about participating in the dominant community culture, but also about expressing and maintaining one's own culture, customs and beliefs. The review of the Somali resettlement programme recommended, for example, that a community prayer space be found for the Somali families to assist in their integration - 'acknowledging that access to one's own culture and customs is key to a sense of belonging in a new environment'.²¹

²⁰ Immigrant Council of Ireland, *Strength in Diversity: The Experience of Migrant Candidates in the 2019 Local Election*, April 2020, p8.

²¹ Sally Daly, *Learning from a Resettlement Project, Somali Families in Arklow: A review of resettlement, reunification and integration*, 2018.

Section Four: Actions

The world can only be grasped by action, not by contemplation. The hand is the cutting edge of the mind.

Jacob Bronowski²²

Following the audit of services and supports, a wider consultation process was undertaken, to the extent possible given Covid-19 restrictions. An online Wicklow Integration Survey was open to everyone living in County Wicklow in September 2020, and gathered over 670 responses. Following a number of one-to-one conversations with representatives of migrant associations, we held an online conversation between migrant representatives, service providers and local officials, and others with an interest in integration issues.

The actions that follow are therefore based on discussions and suggestions taken from these consultations, as well as the previous interviews with service providers. They will be submitted for consideration by Wicklow County Council, who will work with those service providers and agencies mentioned to establish ownership of each action.

Initial actions					
	What?	How?	Lead agency	Resources	Timeframe
1	Establish a County Wicklow Integration Steering Group	Recommendations in Section Five of this report.	<i>Wicklow County Council</i>	CC&SD	Q2 2021
2	Establish a wider County Wicklow Integration Network	Recommendations in Section Five of this report.	<i>Integration Steering Group</i>	CC&SD	Q2 2021
3	Submit national level concerns to the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration and the Immigrant Council of Ireland		<i>Integration Steering Committee</i>	Appendix C of this report.	Q2 2021
For asylum seekers and refugees					
	What?	How?	Lead agency	Resources	Timeframe
4	Review the actions of this Strategy once the national plans on the replacement for direct provision are made clear.		<i>Wicklow County Council/Integration Steering Group</i>	Catherine Day advisory report available here , Government report due by end 2020.	2021

²² Jacob Bronowski, *The Ascent of Man*, 1973.

5	Designate an official in Wicklow County Council who would assist 'new arrivals' (both asylum seekers and refugees) in accessing local authority services and in connecting with other agencies.	It is suggested here that this be an officer within the housing department, as this department will have the greatest interaction with new arrivals.	<i>Wicklow County Council</i>		2021
6	Consider a scheme to enable citizens to provide a spare room or accommodation to asylum seekers as an alternative to direct provision.		<i>Wicklow County Council</i>	The Irish Red Cross, who coordinated an appeal for offers of accommodation for programme refugees.	2021
7	Ensure that the recommendations of the Somali Resettlement Evaluation are implemented.		<i>Wicklow County Council/Integration Steering Group</i>	Somali report	2021
Access to Public Services					
	What?	How?	Lead agency	Resources	Timeframe
8	Provide mandatory public sector duty training, with a focus on equality and diversity to all public sector staff	Public Sector Duty Act	<i>Wicklow County Council</i>	IHREC tools A new e-learning tool specifically on the public sector duty should also be available in 2021.	2021
9	Provide a welcome pack for all migrants , signposting them to services and activities in County Wicklow	Distribute this pack to new residents in direct provision centres (and in the housing system which will success it), and to newly arrived resettled refugees.	<i>Wicklow County Council/Citizens Information Services</i>	The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration list national resources here At local level, the services mapped in this report are a starting point. Further information	2021

				can be sourced from the Citizens Information Service and the Wicklow Volunteer Centre.	
10	Improve the uptake of interpretation and translation services, where they are currently available (Department of Social Protection and HSE)	Include awareness of interpretation into public sector duty training for relevant staff	<i>Department of Social Protection, Health Service Executive</i>		Ongoing
11	Raise the issue of interpretation with the GPs at their Wicklow network meeting (may be suspended during Covid).		<i>Health Service Executive</i>		
12	Review local transport networks to consider the needs of migrants, in particular to serve areas where identified groups of migrants are living. Some specific examples cited in the research include:	Provide a stop for Direct Provision centres – and KWETB centre	<i>Wicklow County Council/Local Link</i>		2021
13	Ask all community groups funded by Wicklow County Council what they are currently doing to promote migrant integration.	Could be done as a question on a funding report, or as a separate survey.	<i>Wicklow County Council Community Section</i>		2021 - 2026
14	Make a provision in new community funding to prioritise migrant integration initiatives		<i>Wicklow County Council Community Section</i>		
Combating Racism and Xenophobia					
	What?	How?	<i>Lead agency</i>	Resources	Timeframe
15	Promote awareness of the channels for reporting and addressing racism and discrimination.	In particular, promote awareness that anyone experiencing or witnessing a racist incident can report it to the Gardaí and Wicklow County Council and it can be prosecuted.	<i>Joint Policing Committee; An Garda Síochána; Wicklow County Council</i>		Ongoing

16	Ensure that people feel empowered and safe to report racist incidents	Increase awareness of the availability of Ethnic Liaison Officers to support victims in this process.	<i>An Garda Siochana</i>		Ongoing
17	Ensure that racist graffiti is given highest priority for removal	The National Migrant Integration Plan states that each local authority should have a policy on the removal of racist graffiti	<i>Wicklow County Council</i>		Ongoing
18	Discuss the findings of this report with the Joint Policing Committee to determine further actions.	The largest category of suggestions gathered by the Integration Survey concerned the Gardaí - the need for more Gardaí, and further diversity training.	<i>Wicklow County Council; Joint Policing Committee</i>	Trainee Gardaí do receive some diversity training in Templemore Garda College, and a number of Gardaí around the country are trained as Ethnic Liaison Officers. Would be important to connect with these officers in County Wicklow.	Ongoing
Education, young people and families					
	What?	How?	<i>Lead agency</i>	Resources	Timeframe/Status
19	Increased anti-racism initiatives in schools	The Yellow Flag anti-racism and diversity programme provides an eight step award scheme The Football Association of Ireland do Show the Red Card to Racism workshops in schools. Africa Society of Wicklow envisage some intercultural schools activities.	<i>CYPSC/Wicklow County Council</i>	See www.yellowflag.ie Show the Red Card resources: http://theredcard.ie/teachers/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nde7ClxNUXo	Sept 2021 for new Yellow Flag Schools Red Card resources online during Covid.
20	To roll out a Countywide Awareness training programme to combat	Set up anti-rumours awareness training aiming to dispel the	<i>SICAP under the LCDC oversight</i>		Invite both SICAP providers to

	<p>Racist Rumours, Bullying, Hate speech under Incitement to hatred by building awareness and through equality proofing of Community for a.</p>	<p>widespread myths and misconceptions around the topic of immigration and migrant integration, by providing evidence-based answers and utilising social networks to spread the message of the campaign far and wide. Use Doras Luimni and other Council of Europe cities as best practice using Council of Europe Handbook</p>	<p><i>committee (Goal 1. Community Development and Goal 2 Life Long Learning resourcing).</i></p>	<p>be part of the Newly Established Committee 'The Wicklow County Integration Steering Group for the predevelopment of the roll out of the Rumours strategy under the below time frame and resourcing under Action 1 of the Strategy.</p> <p>2021 -2022. SICAP engagement strategy to connect communities in preparation for Anti Rumours Programme</p> <p>2022 <u>ongoing</u> under SICAP and the New Social Inclusion Local Development Programme 2023 targeting the delivery of the training to community leaders under the Community Rumours Programme</p>
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					inclusive of adopting the Council of Europe Handbook in their constitutions or and terms of reference.
21	Improved accessibility and availability of language classes		<i>KWETB: CYPSC</i>		
22	Improved coordination between schools, youth services and adult learning classes in terms of ensuring that children and their parents are receiving the language supports that they need.		<i>CYPSC</i>		2021 - 2026
23	Create a network of speakers of other languages who could support migrant children and families in their school integration.	Would need to be properly resourced	<i>CYPSC</i>		2021 - 2026
Employment and pathways to work					
	What?	How?	<i>Lead agency</i>	Resources	Timeframe/Status
24	Provide diversity and anti-racism training to employers.		<i>Local Development Companies/SIC AP</i>		
25	Provide adult guidance and other supports to asylum seekers in advance of their eligibility to work	Currently, asylum seekers are permitted to work after nine months in the system, but supports to enable them to find work could be implemented sooner.	<i>SICAP; KWETB</i>		
26	Provide specific tailored programme in Enterprise and setting up a business for migrants		<i>LEO/SICAP</i>		2021

27	Encourage recent migrants to volunteer while job seeking or awaiting work.	Migrants are more likely to succeed in their job search if they can provide Irish references. Information on volunteering and the link to pathways to work can be included in the welcome pack .	<i>Wicklow Volunteer Centre</i>	Wicklow Volunteer Centre can provide a record of a volunteer's activity at their request for a potential employer.	2021 - 2026
28	Introduce migrants to farming communities	Some migrants in our survey are interested in farming opportunities, whereas farms are often short-staffed.	<i>CWP/IFA</i>		2021-2026
Active civic and cultural engagement					
	What?	How?	<i>Lead agency</i>	Resources	Timeframe/Status
29	Encourage awareness amongst migrants that everyone has the right to vote (and stand) in local elections (including asylum seekers) and hold a voter registration drive.	The Immigrant Council of Ireland provide voter registration workshops.	<i>Wicklow County Council</i>		2021 - 2026
30	Encourage representation of migrant associations on local authority policy committees.		<i>Wicklow County Council and County Wicklow PPN.</i>		2021-2026
31	Encourage local representatives and interested migrants to participate in the migrant-councillor internship scheme.	Women and Diversity in Local Government Programme	Wicklow County Council	Immigrant Council Of Ireland are currently launching the second phase of this programme	Q2 2021 – 2026
32	Ensure that interested host community members are aware of opportunities to get to know and befriend migrants	Encourage the organisations listed to register to https://www.i-vol.ie/	<i>Wicklow Volunteer Centre</i>	Wicklow Welcomes Bray Refugee Solidarity (contact Ismay Dunne ismaydunne@hotmail.com) Respond Support refugee	Ongoing

				befriending programme (contact naomi.fitpatrick@respond.ie)	
33	Encourage and support intercultural events e.g. Africa Day, and support intercultural activities in existing events e.g. national foods at Wicklow Food Festival.		<i>Wicklow County Council/LCDC</i>		2021 - 2026
34	Engage with owners/staff of national cuisine shops (Asian Markets, Polish shops) to teach how to use the different ingredients that they sell.		<i>Integration Steering Group</i>		2021 - 2026

Section Five: Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The following are recommendations by the researcher for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the County Wicklow Integration Strategy. It will be for Wicklow County Council, in consultation with the LCDC, to decide how to act on these recommendations.

At time of writing (October 2020), an application to the National Integration Fund for an Integration Project Worker is pending. If successful, the primary role of this individual, to be housed within the SICAP programme in County Wicklow, would be to work with the Somali families in Arklow, who have been identified as in need of intensive support. However, wider actions to support the implementation of this Strategy have also been written in to the application, and these are taken into consideration below. The way forward should be reviewed following the decision on that application.

Implementation

1. The first step will be to establish a **County Wicklow Integration Steering Group**. This could be based on the Interagency Stakeholder Group established to support the Somali families in Arklow, to which the Integration Worker would also report if the application to the National Integration Fund was successful. In view of the broader remit of the Integration Strategy, however, the PPN Development Worker and the SICAP coordinator in Bray Area Partnership should also be invited to join this group. It is important that both Partnerships, as implementers of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 be actively involved. A County Councillor might also be invited to sit on the group. A migrant representative should be elected to sit on this Stakeholder/Steering Group, through the County Wicklow Public Participation Network, as described at point 3 below. Finally, the Sports Partnership should be included in this Group or in the wider Network described below.
2. This Steering Group, led by Wicklow County Council, should coordinate the first step of agreeing with agencies their role in implementing of the actions listed in the Integration Strategy. Once agreed, each lead agency will be responsible for implementing the agreed action, with the support and oversight of the Steering Group.
3. Migrant representation should be drawn from nominated leaders of migrant, intercultural or integration groups registered with the County Wicklow Public Participation Network. Migrant associations and groups should be encouraged to register with the PPN, and leaders of registered groups should be encouraged to put themselves forward as the PPN representative on the Integration Stakeholder Group, but also on other public policy forums, including the LCDC, the Joint Policing Committee, Strategic Policy Committees etc. If the National Integration Fund application is successful, 10% of the Integration Project Worker's time is designated to support build migrant association capacity to participate through the PPN.
4. Finally, a wider **County Wicklow Integration Network** should be established. All of migrant, intercultural groups on the PPN should be invited to join this group, but it should also be open to

interested stakeholders and individuals. A list of those who wish to be further involved in the implementation of the Strategy will be provided by the researcher to Wicklow County Council. The Network would serve as a channel for dialogue and consultation with various migrant communities, to publicise events and opportunities for integration, and to promote actions in the wider community. It might be run along the same lines as the recently established Disability Network in County Wicklow.

Monitoring and review

1. The term of the Strategy specified in the call for tenders is five years – that is, 2020-2025, or more likely, 2021-2025. However, the Integration Strategy and the overseeing Stakeholder Group **must be flexible** enough to respond to current events. These include:
 - a. the Government White Paper on ending direct provision, scheduled to be published before the end of 2020
 - b. the commitment by the current Government to produce both a new National Migrant Integration Plan, and an anti-Racism Plan during their term of office.
 - c. the need to adapt actions to suit varying levels of restrictions during the pandemic.
2. The Stakeholder Group should review **all of the actions twice yearly** to monitor progress and check relevance. If actions are deemed to be overtaken by events, they should be replaced by more relevant actions. New actions should be added in response to events, or as other actions are completed. If there is a delay in completing a specific action, the Stakeholder Group should liaise with the lead agency, to determine the cause of the blockage and to re-assign or re-design the action accordingly.
3. Wicklow County Council Community section should report, on behalf of the Stakeholder Group, to the social inclusion sub-committee of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).
4. The researcher developing this report (Hannah Grene, Barncat Consulting) offers a **free follow up day** one year after each project is completed. In this case, Wicklow County Council is invited to take this up either one year following submission of this report (October 2021), or one year after publication of the approved Integration Strategy. This day can be used to facilitate a discussion with the Stakeholder Group and/or the wider Integration Network, to review progress on the Implementation Strategy.
5. Finally, there are opportunities for **peer learning** between County Councils. Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation are hosting an initial conversation between local authorities in the South East region in early November. There is a real opportunity for learning in terms of what has worked well for different local authorities, and it would be very positive if an ongoing dialogue were established.

Appendix A: Consultation and methodology

It is the one who lives in the house who knows where the roof leaks.

African proverb

Work on developing a new Integration Strategy for County Wicklow began in March 2020, following an open call for tenders by Wicklow County Council, which was won by Hannah Grene, Barncat Consulting.

Over 20 interviews with service providers took place in March, with a mix of face to face (pre-lockdown) and phonecalls (post-lockdown). Given the continued Covid-19 restrictions, it was agreed to postpone further consultation until September 2020. An interim report, based on the service provider interviews, together with a literature review and analysis of CSO 2016 data was presented in June 2020.

In September 2020, a small number of interviews with representatives of migrant groups were carried out face-to-face. As restrictions were imposed again, however, it was decided to forego further in-person consultation. An online survey, open to all County Wicklow residents, was run in September 2020 and gathered over 650 responses (see below for methodology). An online consultation between service providers, County Councillors, migrant representatives and individuals was held on 20 October 2020 and 25 people attended. Breakout groups on each of the five identified themes came up with a broad range of actions for potential inclusion into the Strategy.

List of consultations

The following associations and organisations participated in our consultation, and we would like to thank representatives and staff for giving their time and their energy to assist in developing the Strategy. We would also like to thank the service providers, County Councillors, direct provision residents and other migrants and non-migrants with an interest in integration issues who participated in our online focus group discussion, and the 673 individuals who took the time to complete our survey. Your input is very much appreciated.

African Irish Society of Wicklow

Arklow Springboard Family Support Centre

Bray Area Partnership

Bray Refugee Solidarity

County Kildare LEADER Partnership

County Wicklow Children and Young People's Services Committee

County Wicklow Partnership

County Wicklow Public Participation Network

Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation

Health Service Executive

Immigrant Council of Ireland
Irish Refugee Council
Kildare-Wicklow Education and Training Board
Kilkenny County Council
Polish-Irish Educational Association
Respond Housing Agency
Southside Chinese Residents' Association
The Vault, East Wicklow Youth Services
Waterford County Council
Wexford County Council
Wicklow Citizens Information Centre
Wicklow Volunteer Centre
Wicklow Welcomes
Wicklow County Council

Appendix B: Wicklow Integration Survey 2020

Methodology

The survey was carried out in September/October 2020 and gathered 673 valid responses, representing 37 different nationalities. It was available in five language versions (English, French, Polish, Chinese and Arabic) and all responses were translated and combined before analysis.

For the purposes of comparison, migrant was defined as someone who did not identify as White Irish or White Traveller AND was not born in Ireland. Migrant thus includes here people who are Irish by naturalisation, but does not include second generation migrants. By this definition, 40% of those responding to the survey were migrants, and 60% non-migrants.

Amongst non-migrants, 93% identified as White Irish, 3% as White European, 0.7% as Asian Irish (3 respondents) 0.4% (2 respondents) as Black Irish and 0.25% (1 respondent) as Traveller. The remaining 2.65% preferred not to say or left this field blank.

Amongst migrants, 43% identified as Asian/Asian Irish, 28% as White European, 9% as 'White other' and 9% as Black/Black Irish. There was a particularly high take up amongst the Chinese community in Wicklow, thanks to the efforts of community members to disseminate this on WeChat in particular. 5.5% identified themselves in other ways, including Latinx, Mestizo, Somali, Syrian white and White American/Native American. 4.5% preferred not to say or left this field blank.

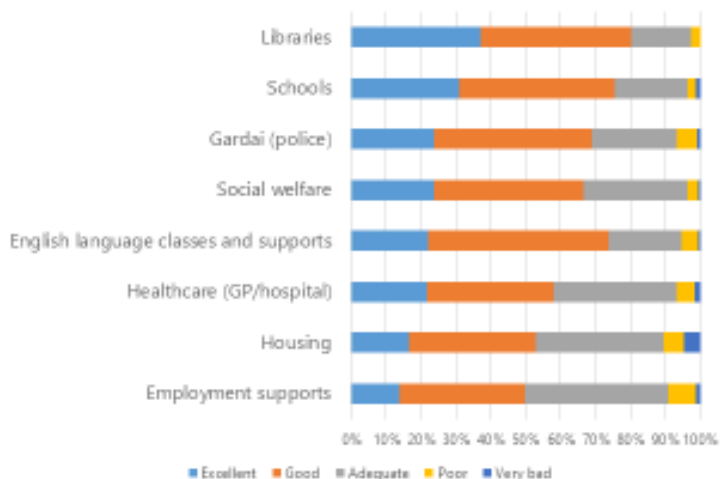
Far more women (72%) than men (27%) answered the survey. However, since this rate was similar for both migrants and non-migrants, weighting was not applied.

Findings

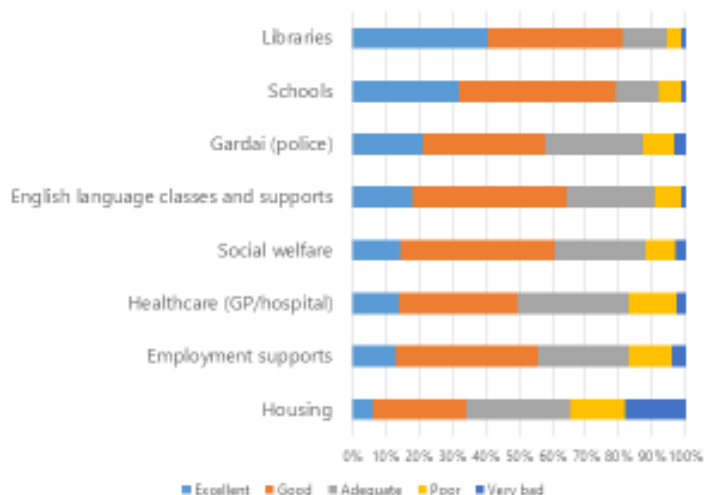
The findings of the survey have been referenced throughout the Strategy, and form the basis for many of the actions planned. The following table gives a snapshot of migrants' experiences of services in County Wicklow, compared to non-migrants.

Migrants are **more positive** about healthcare services, housing and social welfare, but **less positive** about employment supports than non migrants.

Migrants' experience of services



Non-migrants' experience of services



Appendix C: Concerns at national level

During our consultations with service providers, migrant representatives, elected local representatives and others with an integration issues, many issues were raised which can only be addressed on a national level. While these issues cannot be directly addressed in our strategy, it is important that they are duly recorded and taken into consideration at national level.

We have therefore compiled this brief record of observations, suggestions and concerns at national level, and will submit these to the Immigrant Council of Ireland (as a campaigning NGO) and to the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (as the primary Government contact point).

On vulnerable migrants

- End direct provision (mentioned by many in our Integration Survey)
- It is a concern that nationally, there are not many trauma services or supports for survivors of war. (with the exception of Spirasi, an NGO which caters to survivors of torture).

On access to public services

- Expand the number of services for whom interpretation is funded (e.g. Citizens Information)
- Increase budgets for translation of written materials
- Make public sector duty training mandatory for public servants.

On combating racism and xenophobia

- Produce a strong and properly resourced national plan against racism
- Improve racist incident reporting and publicly report statistics on prosecution of racist incidents
- Ensure better media representation of people of colour in Ireland

On education, young people and families

- More supports across the school system to introduce and integrate foreign-born parents

On employment, language supports and pathways to work

- Ensure better recognition of non-Irish qualifications