

# Impact Report

## 2017

Working for equality





### Vision

Our vision in the Immigrant Council of Ireland is of a society that is fair, respects human rights and diversity and is committed to everyone, including people from a migrant background, having the opportunity to fulfil their potential.



### Mission

The Immigrant Council of Ireland is a human rights organisation and Independent Law Centre. We support and advocate for the rights of immigrants and their families and act as a catalyst for public debate, legal and policy change.



### Values

The values which inform and drive the work of the Immigrant Council are:

- We are rights based, supporting justice and equality for all
- We respect and support the empowerment of migrants, working in solidarity
- We embrace and promote diversity and inclusion
- Gender equality is central to our work
- We work in partnership and collaboration to achieve our goals
- We are innovative in our approaches and value an evidence-based approach
- We practice good governance

# The Immigrant Council was founded in 2001 and is the leading voice in securing improved rights and protections which benefit Irish citizens, migrants and their families.

The organisation provides three tiers of support to migrants:



**1.**

**Our primary support is a helpline which provides over-the-phone advice on all immigration queries. The helpline answered more than 3,000 calls in 2017.**

**2.**

**The second tier of support is when a telephone call is deemed insufficient and we need a face-to-face meeting to provide a deeper level of support.**

**3.**

**The third and most in-depth support is provided by the lawyers in our Independent Law Centre, which takes between 50 and 100 cases per year.**

In addition to our service provision, the organisation also undertakes substantial research and activity in the areas of anti-trafficking, anti-racism and integration.

## INFORMATION SERVICE

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In 2017 our dedicated staff answered

# 3,000+ helpline queries



## 20mins

On average we spent approx. 20 minutes per call = 60,000 minutes = 1,000 hours = 143 working days!

## 60mins

Repeat calls and follow-ups can take 3 times longer



A call involves listening keenly and recording details for later follow-up

## 128

Different nationalities contacted us



The drop in numbers (compared with last year's 139) demonstrates that service users are becoming empowered to be self-reliant in accessing and understanding their rights and entitlements.

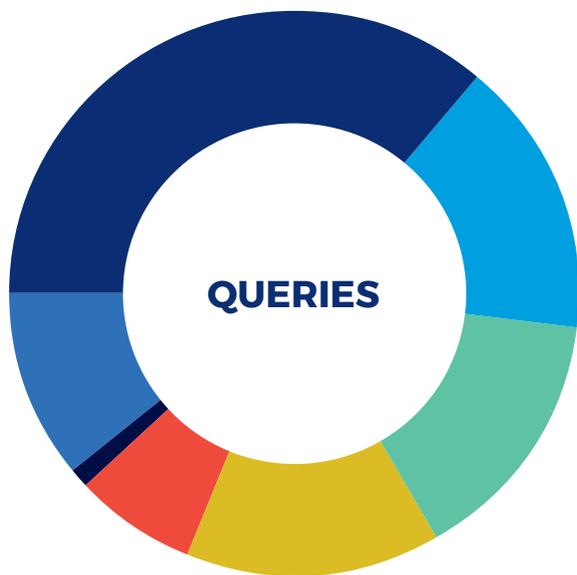
## 303

Queries came from outside of Ireland



We actively engaged with over 128 nationalities, most of whom reported success in their applications. Our services seek to demystify immigration issues and empower migrant communities to self-advocate so they can access their rights.

## Our helpline answered questions on many and varied issues. The most common were about:



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**35%**

Family reunification

**16%**

Visa & permit queries

**15%**

Citizenship

**15%**

Residence status

**7%**

Immigration

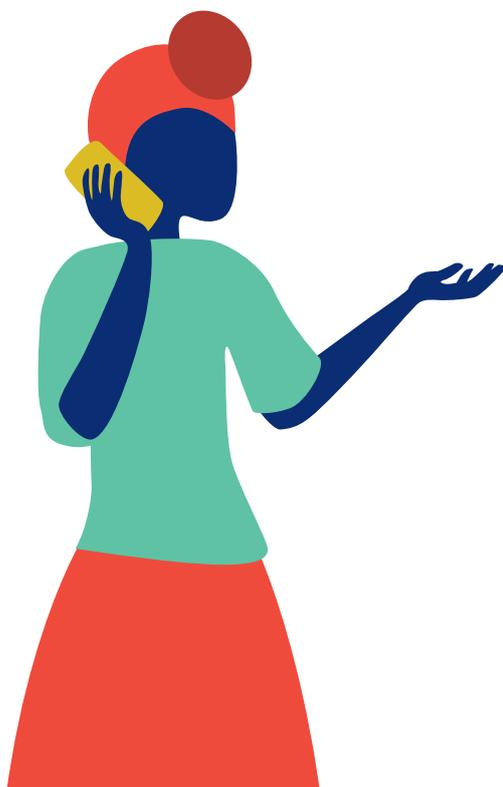
**1%**

International protection

**11%**

Other

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Impact on children

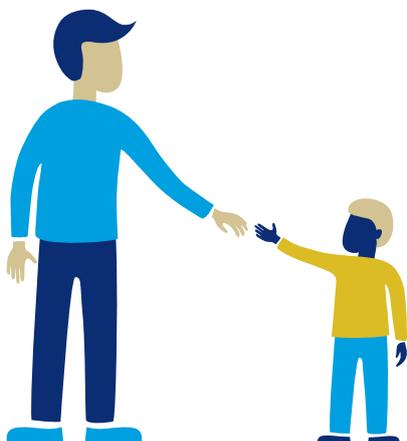
**We support and empower people to complete applications and follow up with relevant State bodies, so they can claim their rights. Our service engages all family members concerned in the processes, including children.**

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## 60 cases relating to children in 2017

We provided legal advice, including in some cases full representation, in more than 60 cases relating to under 18s. The type of cases included:

1. Applications for citizenship
2. Applications for residence status of a child in care
3. Family reunification applications for unaccompanied under 18 refugee
4. Challenging deportation orders
5. Support to access rights and entitlements, including, for example, access to education grants



**A small number of these cases involved over 18s, but related to rights which were not addressed properly when they were children e.g. appropriate residence status.**

## Testimonials

“

We would like to thank you for helping us with our visa appeal, and we are so happy to let you know that they granted my visa to Ireland. Thank you very much! Hope you will help more people like me.

“

Hi Colin just wanted to say thanks for your help yesterday with our enquiry. Really appreciate your help in this matter...not only yesterday but always.

“

All in all, the Immigrant Council has been a research source to treasure. As you noted, the Council is a charity organisation, so a charity donation seems appropriate - and I'll offer what I may.

“

First of all, I'd wanted to let you know how delighted and grateful X and Y were with their contact with your colleague, Colin. What they spoke about most was his kindness. And now, just since yesterday, I know that Y has got Stamp 3 and both are so happy and very relieved that she cannot be 'sent away'. They are expecting their first baby in early May and Colin has told them that after that he will work on getting her Stamp 4.



# 144 legal cases were opened by the Independent Law Centre



**45 were provided with full legal representation, the remainder were provided with general support**



**We acted in 5 High Court cases**

**25**

**Survivors of human trafficking were given legal representation and advice**

**3**

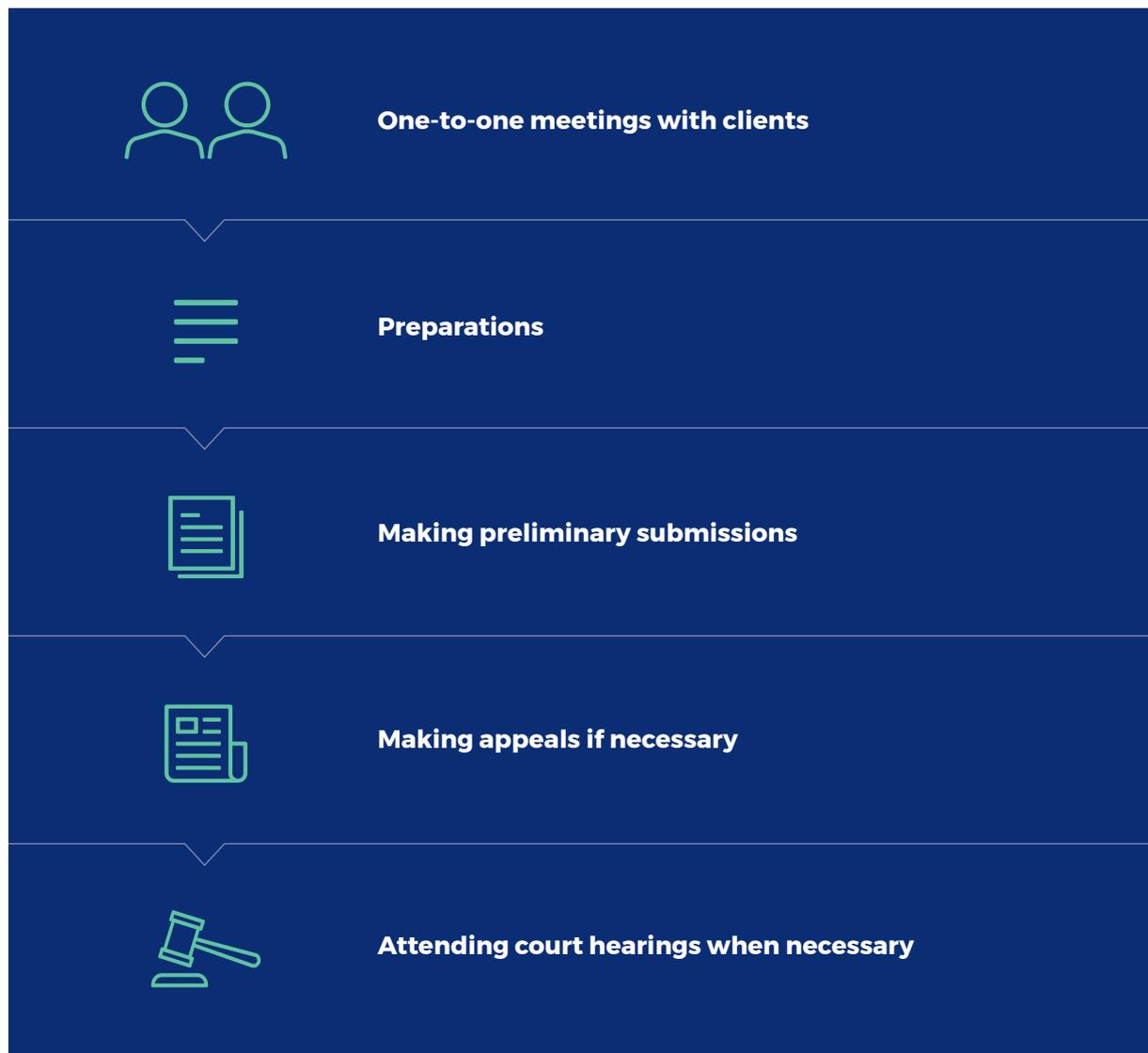
**We issued High Court proceedings in three separate cases related to trafficking**



**We provided legal representation to children in 11 cases relating to minor refugees applying for family reunification and regularisation of immigration status.**

# The legal team in our Independent Law Centre is professional, selfless and committed to pursuing justice for our clients.

Most cases involve many hours of:



## Testimonials

“

I just wanted to thank you for the support you are giving young people in our care with their family reunification applications. It has been a great assistance to us and especially for the children.

**Tusla social worker**

“

I would like to thank you for your support and valuable assistance in relation to obtaining David's\* stamp 4 permission to remain.

**Tusla social worker**  
**\* Name changed**

“

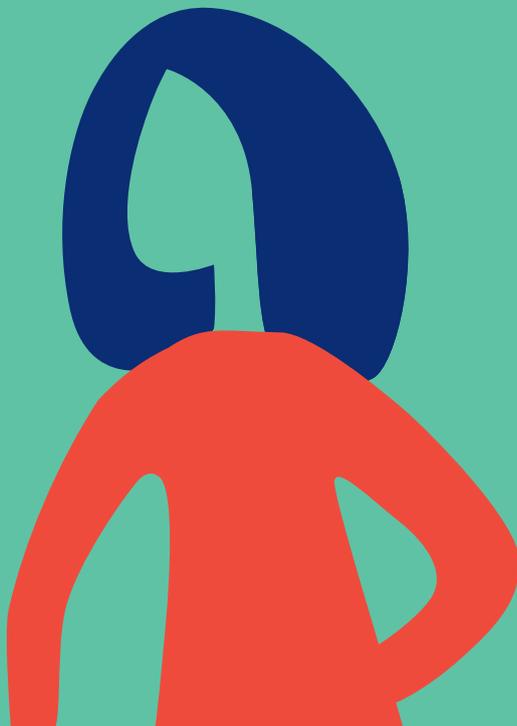
Thanks a million for your precious time and explaining each and every bit to me. It was very helpful, I really appreciate this.

**Client, victim of trafficking**

“

I got the letter from immigration. Without your help this wouldn't have been a success. I am delighted they have come back with a positive answer. I thank you for every help and support.

**Client**



# The Immigrant Council of Ireland provided expert input at a number of European conferences:

- **Delivered keynote at Law Society TRAILIM project conference for immigration and asylum lawyers: Future of Immigration and Asylum Policy/Law**
- **Delivered panel input at EU Migration Forum on Child Migration in Ireland in Brussels**
- **Delivered keynote at AIRE Centre/UCC Child Law Clinic Separated Children in Judicial Proceedings: Recourse to EU and International Mechanisms conference**
- **Delivered input at 17th Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons Conference in Vienna 'Identification of Victims of Trafficking and Immigration Permissions': GRETA (the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings) conference**



Expert contributions help to influence and shape debate on policy changes at local, national and international levels including at European level.

**We partnered with Transport for Ireland and Dublin City Council to run the largest anti-racism campaign in the country. This included 1,500 posters which generated social media shares and discussions across the country.**



## ANTI-RACISM

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Transport for Ireland reported 234m passenger trips nationwide, 117m in Dublin. The message reach for this anti-racism campaign is huge. This keeps the issues alive and helps share the positives of diversity to the society.



## Testimonials

“

I was offered an empty seat in the LUAS today by a local Irishman who was standing next to his child. The anti-racism poster was put up next to the seat he offered. I'd like to think that the poster had something to do with his kind gesture... The poster made me feel welcome as a foreigner, and I thought it was important to write in to you about this.

**Passenger on the LUAS**

“

I've seen your picture on the Luas whilst traveling with my 6 year old son. Naturally, the jelly babies caught his attention and he asked what the poster was about. It was the perfect example to explain this ongoing issue to him and he really understood it. As a parent, I want to thank you for making it a little bit easier to explain this.

**Email from a Parent**



**Providing people with the knowledge and skills to advocate for their own rights leads to empowerment and equality. With very limited resources the Immigrant Council provides training and support to migrant leaders and individuals so they can advocate for themselves and others within their community.**



## EMPOWERMENT

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**16**

**Migrant Leaders recruited and an Academy training programme commenced**

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**2**

**Focus groups held on Language and Migration reaching 25 people**

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**6**

**Outreach sessions provided on human trafficking to 110 residents in 2 Reception Integration Agency accommodation centres**

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**1**

**Integration and training session delivered to 15 survivors of trafficking on the rights of victims and opportunities to undertake education and training**

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**In addition to the legal aid support provided to individual victims of trafficking, the Immigrant Council of Ireland also advocates for changes in State policy and law to better protect these victims.**



**Lead partner in European Commission funded transnational project launched (involving 6 international partners) exploring best practices in the implementation of legal measures targeting demand for human trafficking for sexual exploitation**

**1**

**Event organised to discuss GRETA findings on Ireland’s treatment of trafficking victims involving representatives from 2 international organisations, 5 NGOs and 8 State agencies**

**1**

**National project on increasing access to safe, appropriate and gender specific accommodation and integration opportunities for trafficking victims involving 4 NGOs and 1 State agency successfully completed**

# ANTI-TRAFFICKING

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The Immigrant Council of Ireland adopts a gender-specific approach to our anti-trafficking work. We place the voices and experiential knowledge of trafficked women at the centre of this work. The reports and training toolkits we developed in 2017 were based on direct input from victims, through interviews and focus groups. Input from women surviving trafficking also provided a basis for the training we delivered and played a central role in our policy work at national, European, and international level, all of which was aimed at improving the protections available to victims of trafficking, in particular women trafficked for sexual exploitation.



## The Immigrant Council of Ireland keeps all immigrant issues alive and generates ideas and solutions that positively shape policy.



We contributed to 2 Committee meetings on the Government's National Migrant Integration Strategy



We contributed to the European Institute of Gender Equality's legal analysis of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive from a gender perspective, which will inform EU anti-trafficking policy in the coming year



We participated in 2 EU Civil Society Anti-Trafficking Platform meetings



We attended and promoted our strategic goals at political party national conferences

# The Immigrant Council of Ireland made multiple submissions to Government Departments and assorted State agencies on the issues of immigration law and policy, anti-racism, anti-trafficking, integration and child migration:

## 3

**Submissions made:**

- to U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons Report
- to the Department of Justice and Equality on the National Women's Strategy 2017-20
- to the UN Committee on the Convention Against Torture on Ireland's compliance

## 4

**Research reports launched:**

- Hidden Struggles: Refugee Women in Europe
- Taking Racism Seriously: Social Housing
- Language and Migration
- Ireland Country Report: Trafficking Victims Seeking Asylum



SHARING & IMPROVING EXPERTISE

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**27 trainings delivered to more than 250 people, including those from a migrant background, information service providers, social workers and lawyers.**



**3**

**Racism in Social Housing trainings (45 people)**

**4**

**Anti-racism workshops (48 people)**

**13**

**Political participation trainings reaching 150 people**

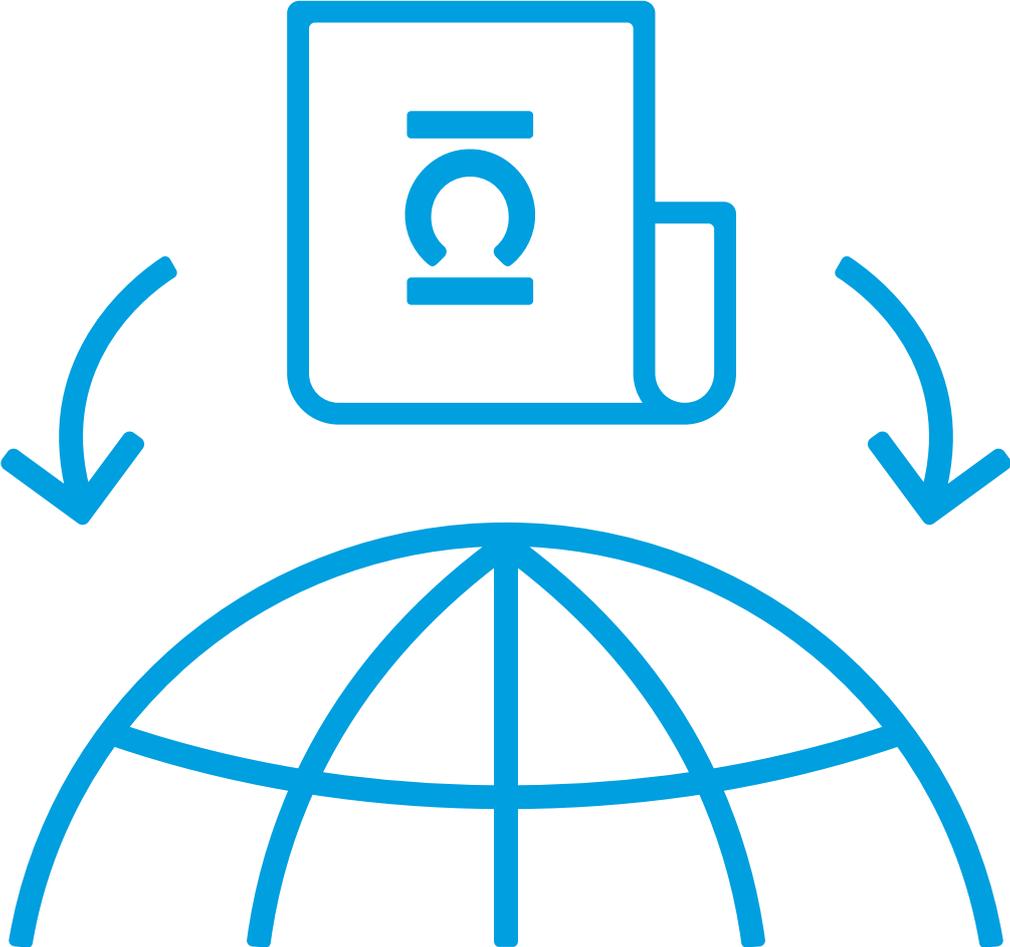
**1**

**Local Integration training in collaboration with OSCE (31 local council staff)**

**6**

**Fáilte Isteach 'train the trainer' sessions on migrant political participation reaching 100 people**

**We partnered with the International Court of Justice – Brussels, to deliver child rights training to 20 lawyers in Ireland and strategic litigation training to 21 lawyers from 7 EU Member States.**



## Voices of participants

“

The idea to engage migrants and also asylum seekers in political activities to improve their knowledge of democratic law and civic participation seems to me a really great step forward. It will make the life of all people of Ireland better and more equal. I hope to take part in further activities provided by the Immigrant Council.

**Political training participant**

“

The internship scheme has had a personal impact on my life in that I now have a clear picture of how the local democratic structures work. Whatever local problem I might have, I now know which office to go to. I also now know all the influential people in Dundalk, which has also enhanced the process of my integration into mainstream Irish society.

**Participant of a political internship scheme**



**SHARING & IMPROVING EXPERTISE**

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**4**

**Roundtables organised on 'strategies for legal change', 'survivor participation in campaigns', 'networking', and 'coalition building' relating to our anti-trafficking work, with 60 participants from civil society, sector and state officials**



**1**

**Training was provided to Gardaí from Templemore on the work of the Immigrant Council, the early identification of victims of trafficking, and the importance of early legal intervention**



**2**

**Training sessions provided to Detectives from the Garda National Protective Services Bureau on the work of the Immigrant Council, the early identification of victims of trafficking and the importance of early legal intervention**



**1**

**Training provided through the European Asylum Support Organisation to frontline international protection professionals from across Europe on trafficking in human beings**

**SHARING & IMPROVING EXPERTISE**

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**3**



**Training sessions provided to 57 Reception Integration Agency (RIA) accommodation centre managers and department of social protection staff on best practices in assisting and supporting victims of trafficking in order to ensure safe, appropriate and gender specific accommodation for female victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation**

**2**



**Multi-stakeholder roundtable discussions organised with 33 participants from 4 NGOs and 6 State agencies on gender specific accommodation for victims of trafficking and training toolkits for increasing awareness around the special needs of trafficking victims in the asylum process**

**MEDIA COVERAGE**

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**200+**

Media hits in 2017



**16,018**

Facebook followers on 31 December 2017



**8,880**

Twitter followers on 31 December 2017



**immigrantcouncil.ie**



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