

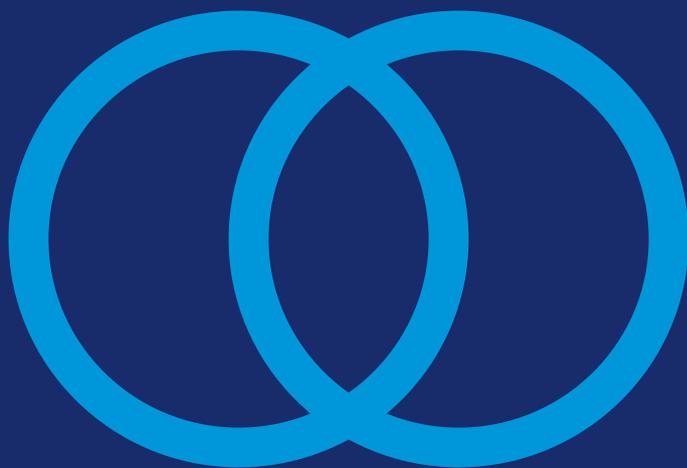
# Keeping it Local

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## Discussion document and proposed actions for Local Authorities on developing local migrant integration strategies

July 2018

Working for **equality**



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actions for Local Authorities  
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# Acknowledgments

Keeping it Local June 2018

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The Immigrant Council of Ireland would like to thank all the Local Authorities that participated in the survey and provided feedback on the draft report. The report was led by Joe O'Brien, Integration Outreach Officer with the Immigrant Council of Ireland, with support from interns Mariaam Bhatti and Catherine Murphy and Integration Team Coordinator Teresa Buczkowska.

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## Foreword



Nothing makes us feel more at home in a new community than developing friendships with people who live there. Anyone who has moved house (not to mention moved country) will have experienced this. Positive interactions between host and migrant communities are

the basis for a welcoming society and an integrated community. As individuals we can all play our part in welcoming new members to our communities, simply by introducing ourselves and saying 'céad míle fáilte!'

It is, however, crucial that we also create and implement policies and structures which make it easier and more likely for such simple and positive social interactions to happen. In Ireland, we have 31 Local Authorities to support integration at the local level. Indeed, one of the greatest assets that Local Authorities have is their connection to local communities.

This document proposes a range of ways in which Local Authorities can promote migrant integration. It recommends practical ways in which Local Authorities can take meaningful action in support of migrants across a number of their areas of responsibility, including social housing, Local Enterprise Offices and customer services generally.

The range of recommendations in this discussion document, among them the development and support of Community Inclusion Open Days, supportive Local

Authority public messaging and communications, and working actively to bring migrants more into the life of local government, is very much to be welcomed.

Engagement with our migrant communities is extremely important in the context of local politics. Local elections, held every five years, play a key role in local politics. Regardless of nationality, anyone who is 18 or over and is ordinarily resident in a local electoral area can vote in local elections. I strongly encourage all migrant communities to participate fully by ensuring they are registered to vote and to avail of their right and opportunity to vote. I would also strongly encourage members of migrant communities to consider putting themselves forward for election to local authorities. Information leaflets on how local authorities are elected are available in 17 different languages on my Department's website.

The National Integration Strategy calls for Local Authorities to update their Local Integration Strategies. The practical recommendations in this document will be particularly helpful to Local Authorities in meeting this challenge. I strongly encourage Local Authorities to adopt the recommendations of this report as part of a living action plan to help communities become friendlier, more welcoming and ultimately more inclusive places for migrants living in Ireland.

**John Paul Phelan T.D.**  
**Minister of State for**  
**Local Government and Electoral Reform**

# 1.

## Introduction

In February 2017 the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality Frances Fitzgerald TD launched Ireland's first National Migrant Integration Strategy called 'A Blueprint for the Future'. The strategy was the first detailed statement of policy on migrant integration since the 2008 document 'Migration Nation'. 'A Blueprint for the Future' details 76 actions spread across various government departments and agencies. There are a number of general recommendations relating to translation and interpretation that relate to all government agencies, in addition six actions specifically mention Local Authorities:

→ 17. Initiatives will be undertaken aimed at increasing the number of migrant representatives in local authority fora, like Public Participation Networks (PPNs) and other representative fora

→ 52. Integration strategies will be updated

→ 53. A Migrant Integration Forum will be established in every local authority area, ideally through existing Public Participation Network (PPN) structures, and will meet regularly

→ 60. Multi-lingual materials on voter registration and on elections will be made accessible and available

→ 62. Local Authorities will take action to have migrant representation on all Joint-Policing Committees

→ 64. Local Authorities will develop and publish their policy on the early removal of racist graffiti in their respective areas

This report focuses on one of those actions, number 52. Under 'Integration in the Community' the plan calls for Local Authorities to update their migrant integration strategies between 2017 and 2020.

This document proposes a set of actions that all Local Authorities can take to ensure they fulfil the requirements under the national plan, with the additional aim of generating informed discussion regarding the development of migrant integration strategies.

There are three core sections to this document:

**1. Review of previous local migrant integration strategies and a review of Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs)**

**2. Results of survey with Local Authorities on local migrant integration strategies**

**3. Key principles and proposed actions for councils to adopt**

This report will outline the current situation with local migrant integration plans in Ireland. It will examine the nature of these different plans and make suggestions on how future plans could be improved. The report also contains the results of a survey with Local Authorities, outlining key issues and challenges, plus what Local Authorities need to develop effective local strategies. Some brief findings from an analysis of the 31 Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) are also included.

It is a huge asset in Ireland to have 31 local governments which can plan and act in tailored ways across the country to help facilitate migrant integration. It is an even bigger asset that 21 of these Local Authorities have previously developed plans to facilitate migrant integration at the local level. Many of these plans carried out significant (albeit dated) consultation processes and produced comprehensive sets of recommendations. This document aims to build on that work but also to address some of the shortcomings in previous strategies. The overarching failure of many previous local strategies has been lack of implementation. The nature of many plans themselves made them very difficult to implement, however underlying these weaknesses was a general lack of resourcing.

This document will also offer general and specific guidance on what Local Authorities could and should include in their local strategies.

## 2.

### Review of previous local migrant integration strategies

There are 31 Local Authorities in Ireland. At the time of publication only three of these Local Authorities had in-date migrant integration strategies. The basis for this document review was Local Authorities which either currently have an in-date strategy or at some stage had a migrant integration strategy. Using this criterion there are a total of 21 Local Authorities which currently have or had some type of migrant integration strategy.

	Local Authority	Key Agencies Involved	Type of plan	Name of plan	Time period or publication date
1	Dublin City	Dublin City Council	Integration Strategy	Integration Strategy	2016-2020
2	Kildare	CKLP and KCC	Integration Strategy	County Kildare Integration Strategy	2014-2019
3	Carlow	IC and Carlow SIM Group	Integration Strategy	Carlow Integration Strategy	2014-2018
4	Kilkenny	CDB, KIF, IC & KCC	Integration Strategy	Uniting the Diverse	2013-2017
5	Westmeath	CDB, WCD, IC & WCC	Integration & Diversity Strategy	Belonging Engaging Valuing	2013-2017
6	Galway County	GRD and GCC	Integration & Diversity Strategy	Integration & Diversity Strategy	2013-2017
7	South Dublin	SDCC with Integration Centre	Integration Strategy	An Inclusive County	2013-2017
8	Waterford City & County	CDB contracted IC	Integration Strategy (For City only)	Waterford City Integration	2012-2016
9	Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	DLR's steering committee & working group	Integration Strategy & Action Plan	The Future is Ours	2012-2015
10	Kerry	CDB	Integration Strategy	Kerry Integration Strategy (informed by NPAR)	2013-2014

11	Limerick City & County	CDB, LCC & IWG	Integration Strategy	Integrating Limerick	2010-2012, 2013
12	Donegal	DCC, CDB & Peace	Diversity Plan	Donegal Diversity Plan	2011-2013
13	Clare	Inter-agency	Service Co-Ord Strat	Integrated Strategy for the Coordination of Services to the Immigrant Communities in County Clare	2009-2012
14	Wicklow	CDB and WCC	ARD	Recipe for Harmony (informed by NPAR)	2009-2011
15	Longford	CDB, LWL, EDI Centre, LCR Ltd	Intercultural Strategic Plan	Living Together in Longford (informed by NPAR)	2008-2011
16	Cork City	CCC, CCC Partnership	Integration Strategy	Connecting Communities (informed by NPAR)	2008-2011
17	Cavan	CCC & Peace	Integration Framework	Face Value. An Integration Framework for County	2010
18	Roscommon	CDB	Intercultural Strategy	An Intercultural County (informed by NPAR)	2007-2010
19	Wexford	CDB & WCC	Research report with proposed actions	Merging Cultures in the Model County for County Cavan	2008
21	Mayo	MIA	Report with actions	Building a Diverse Mayo	2006
22	Louth	LCC contracted IC	Integration strategy	Recommendations: Louth Integration Strategy	2014-2019 Not adopted

Key Abbreviations: CDB=County Development Board, IC=Integration Centre, MIA=Mayo Intercultural Action, LWL=Longford Women's Link, LCR=Longford Community Resources, IWG=Integration Working Group, WCD=Westmeath Community Development, KIF=Kilkenny Integration Forum, CKLP=County Kildare Leader Partnership, SIM=Social Inclusion Measures.

## THE VARIETY OF PLANS

The nature of these documents varies considerably and this report defines 'migrant integration strategy' reasonably loosely in order to list and acknowledge significant publications which included specific aims regarding the social inclusion of migrants. This includes a number of Anti-Racism and Diversity (ARD) plans coming from the National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPR) 2005-2008.

Nine Local Authorities had not developed a migrant integration strategy prior to the publication of this report. However some of these began the process of developing plans while this report was being written.

The level of ownership and involvement of Local Authorities in the 21 documents examined also varies widely. There were very few where the plan in question was largely driven and owned by the Local Authority – the Dublin City Council plan being an example of an exception. Most plans were multi-agency efforts with County Development Boards and/or the Integration Centre being key partners in 13 of the 21 plans. Partnership companies were also key stakeholders in some plans. However, the County Development Boards and the Integration Centre have both ceased operations in recent years. Some plans were almost 100% driven by the NGO sector with one of the earliest plans 'Building a Diverse Mayo' from 2006, being largely a project of Mayo Intercultural Action albeit partly funded by Mayo County Council.

## STRUCTURES OF THE PLANS

The structure of the plans varied widely. Some provided considerable baseline data and policy context while others gave virtually none. Comprehensive consultation processes with migrant communities were evident in a selection, whereas others detailed little or no consultation with migrant communities. A key finding from the basic structural analysis of the strategies is that they lacked one or more of the following:

- an adequately detailed action plan
- actions with assigned responsible organisations/ departments where organisation/ department had accepted responsibility for action

- actions with completion timelines
- clearly stated oversight and reporting mechanisms for the whole strategy

Some of the challenges of implementation arise where responsibilities are assigned very broadly (e.g. HSE) or when they are assigned to NGOs where it is not clear if the NGOs in question had the capacity to execute these responsibilities.

## COMMON SUBJECT THEMES

There were some common subject themes among the strategies. An analysis was conducted of the approximately 400 planned targets or recommendations for action from the 21 examined strategies. The single clearest and most common recommendation was actions on the provision of **English language supports**. Of the 21 strategies examined, 16 recommended various actions related to English language supports.

**Public awareness raising and holding or supporting intercultural events** were mentioned in 14 of the 21 strategies.

**Intercultural, diversity awareness or anti-racism training for public services** was mentioned in 13 of the 21 strategies. This sometimes related to public services generally and sometimes the Local Authority.

**Encouraging reporting and data collection of racist incidents** was mentioned in 12 of the 21 strategies, although in many of these cases it was not clarified if this related to the Local Authority or an external body and if so, who that external body might be.

**Supporting political engagement and voter registration** was also mentioned in 12 of the 21 strategies although only two of these specifically mentioned encouraging or supporting migrants to actually run for local election.

**Entrepreneur and business supports** for migrants were referred to in 11 of the strategies.

**Employment supports** for migrants which were mentioned in 10 of the 21 strategies examined.

Supports, models, training on **interpreting and translating** for services were mentioned in nine

of the strategies. This indicates a clear need that could perhaps be addressed centrally.

Facilitating **improved migrant representation in local decision making bodies or consultative groups** was mentioned in eight of the strategies. Strategic Policy Committees, Joint Policing Committees and Public Participation Networks (PPNs) were specifically mentioned. Since 2014 PPNs now offer additional opportunities.

Using **sport** to engage migrant communities was also mentioned seven of the strategies.

**Intercultural training for businesses** was mentioned in six strategies.

**Access and barriers to social housing** was mentioned in six strategies, with immigrant homelessness mentioned in two.

Promotion of **interfaith dialogue** and events is mentioned in five strategies.

**Specific measures for the Roma community** were mentioned in four strategies.

Other areas mentioned included:

- Better engagement between An Garda Síochána and migrant communities
- More accessible information provision by public services, including especially the Citizens Information Service
- Development of local migrant integration forums/ networks
- Support the capacity building and resourcing of migrant leaders and migrant organisations
- Resourcing implementation of the strategy
- Encouraging interfaith dialogue
- Specific measures for Roma needed (four strategies)
- The need to address access to 3rd level education for migrants
- Avoidance of ghettoisation in housing provision

- Supporting migrants to engage with media and monitoring for fair media representations
- Greater use of library services (three strategies)
- Revised anti-social behaviour policies for Local Authorities
- Better recognition of qualifications
- Greater diversity awareness in schools
- Key role identified for Primary Care Teams
- Diversity training in pre-tenancy courses
- Importance of including migrant communities in St Patrick's Day celebrations
- Encouragement of migrant involvement in and setting up of Residents' Associations
- Develop local welcome packs

## LOCAL AUTHORITY POWERS AND ACTIONS PROPOSED

While the various strategies had different drivers and stakeholders it is notable that two of the most commonly proposed actions were in relation to areas Local Authorities have no direct statutory responsibility. For English language supports the key responsibility lies with the local Education and Training Boards (ETBs). For employment supports the key responsibility lies with Intreo. Intreo is a service of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and is a single local point of contact for all employment services and supports for both jobseekers and employers.

For multi-agency plans like those driven by the former County Development Boards this was a natural approach. However it may be useful for Local Authorities, when developing action plans of current or future migrant integration strategies, to be clear about the level of control and power they have over some planned actions. For example the various aims listed in the 21 plans could be loosely broken into three categories:

- Areas where Local Authorities have a direct statutory remit and responsibility e.g. social housing provision, library services, local electoral register

- Areas where Local Authorities have a level of secondary responsibility or can play a support role in various ways either by promoting through communications channels, use of facilities or grants
- Areas where Local Authorities have little or no level of responsibility (in areas where HSE, Intreo, the Gardaí or the ETB have primary responsibility)

The interagency approach initially driven in some counties by the former County Development Boards (CDBs) could in theory have been taken up the successors of the CDBs – the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) which were established in 2014 after the CDBs were abolished. However an analysis of the Local Community and Economic Plans (LECPs) which have since been developed by the LCDCs has shown this has not happened to a significant extent, to date. Anecdotally some Local Authorities involved in the survey for this report indicated that some LCDCs struggled to get key stakeholders around the table for the already agreed LECPs. Direct findings from the survey support this and raise serious questions about what kind of monitoring and driving body is best suited for the local migrant integration strategies.

#### ANALYSIS OF LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLANS

CDBs were clearly key drivers in the development of 10 previous local integration plans. However the CDBs were abolished in 2014 and where appropriate the work of the CDBs came under the remit of LCDCs. Each Local Authority is required to establish an LCDC. The aim of the LCDCs is to develop, co-ordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development.

The membership of LCDCs includes members of the Local Authority; Local Authority staff; representatives of public bodies which provide services in the area; representatives of local community interests; local community representatives; and representatives of publicly funded or supported local development bodies. The majority of members must be from the non-statutory sector.

The main function of an LCDC is to prepare, implement and monitor the community elements

of the six-year LECP. It must consider the economic elements of the plan in order to enhance co-ordination with the community elements and ultimately integrate the two, but it does not have a role in deciding on the economic elements. It has a general role in seeking to ensure effectiveness, consistency, co-ordination and avoidance of duplication between the various elements of Local Authority activities in the community.

The LECP must be consistent with the local development plans made by the elected members and with the regional spatial and economic strategies.

For the purposes of this report a textual analysis of the 31 LECPs was undertaken. Migrant issues and migrant integration issues did not feature strongly in most LECPs. Five LECPs made no mention of migrants in their plans. Overall LECPs were not used as well as they could be to provide a support framework and guidance document to facilitate migrant integration at Local Authority level. Most mentions of migrants were minimal, relatively superficial with few clear targets or goals. Migrants were most often listed with other categories of people under general and broad social exclusion actions. Very few Local Authorities integrated specific migrant issues and actions into their LECPs. Meath, Longford, Louth, Kilkenny, Laois and Kerry showed reasonably good integration of migrant issues into their LECPs.

## 3.

### Results of survey with Local Authorities on local migrant integration strategies

In 2017 the Immigrant Council of Ireland contacted each Local Authority on at least three occasions with a request to complete 10 survey questions relating to current or past migrant integration strategies. Local Authorities were asked about effective aspects of their strategies, key challenges and why some had not developed any migrant integration strategy to date. (The full set of questions is available in Appendix 1.)

Prior to responding to survey questions, a number of Local Authorities noted the people involved in previous strategies had moved on and were either no longer working in that particular Local Authority or were working in a different department.

#### RESPONSE RATE

A total of 21 of the 31 Local Authorities responded to the survey. Not every responding Local Authority responded to each question. This was expected as many of the questions were only relevant to those which had in the past or currently had a migrant integration strategy.

#### KEY CHALLENGES TO MIGRANT INTEGRATION

As key service providers and actors at the local level, Local Authorities were asked what they thought were the key challenges to migrant integration.

**Language barriers** were cited as the most common challenge with 10 respondents mentioning this issue. This was followed by eight respondents mentioning employment. These were the two stand-out themes, but other common issues raised included:

- lack of expertise, 'communication methodology' or staff training in Local Authorities to effectively engage with migrant communities and resources to develop same
- the difficulty with the indigenous population believing migrants represent competition for resources in the areas of education, health, housing and employment
- physical lack of appropriate housing

- the need for clearly defined roles and responsibilities in terms of who is driving migrant integration at a local level

- tackling racism and discrimination

Other challenges of note mentioned by individual respondents were:

- proximity to services and transport issues
- lack of departmental guidance and direction
- the difficulty in getting multi-agency buy-in

#### EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIES

On a scale of 0 – 10 Local Authorities were asked to rate the effectiveness of their strategies, if they ever had one. Of the 13 responding Local Authorities which did/do have a strategy the following nine answers were provided: 8, 4, 7, 7, 7, 8, 3, 5 and 'indeterminable'. When asked to detail what aspects were most effective there were eight answers in total. Common themes running through these eight answers were the effectiveness of:

- events or projects which engaged directly with migrants
- linking with and consulting with organisations and groups in the area
- developing events for children and young people – which meant that adults also engaged more

Local Authorities were also asked which areas of their strategy were least effective. This elicited more responses and more detailed responses than the question on effective aspects. Common themes in terms of ineffective aspects of the strategy were:

- employment focused initiatives. The recession followed the publication of some strategies, but also language barriers, lack of recognition of qualifications and restricted work rights were also mentioned as reasons for ineffectiveness in this area

- lack of monitoring and resourcing were cited here as reasons for poor delivery
- difficulty in getting migrants to attend events and programmes
- difficulty in getting stakeholder organisations (including state bodies) to attend meetings and get involved in the strategy
- inter-organisational politics and power plays

### EVALUATION AND CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

Local Authorities were asked to name the key challenges to implementation of their migrant integration strategy. Two key themes dominated the 10 responses to this question:

- lack of adequate resourcing for the strategy
- difficulty engaging stakeholder organisations to participate in the strategy and attend meetings or events

Government policy in relation to restricted rights to work was mentioned by one respondent. It was notable that three respondents mentioned there was virtually no implementation of the strategy.

Local Authorities were also asked if they had ever conducted an evaluation of their strategy. Of the 12 responses to this question, 10 said no evaluation had been conducted and two responded that there was 'ongoing' or 'annual' evaluation.

### ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE AND IMPACTFUL STRATEGY

Local Authorities were asked what they thought were the key elements of an effective and impactful strategy. There were some very clear and consistent responses on this question:

- 10 respondents outlined the importance of an inter-agency approach including involvement of migrant groups
- Clear achievable goals, targets and timeframes and/or monitoring processes were mentioned by eight respondents

- Sufficiently high levels of buy-in, commitment and prioritisation by implementing partners was mentioned by five respondents and two other mentioned that civil society should be better resourced to be able to engage effectively

The following points were mentioned by three respondents:

- A focus on education and employment
- Adequate resources to facilitate implementation
- Effective communication with migrant groups

Other noteworthy individual comments included:

- To explore the potential to pilot an 'Intercultural Quality Mark' in one urban centre in the county
- Opportunities for shared learning of cultures and traditions within the community
- Celebrating cultural diversity through fun and community based activities and events
- Clearly assigned responsibilities for implementation

### KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Local Authorities were asked which organisations they thought should be involved in the successful implementation of a local migrant integration strategy. A wide variety of organisations were mentioned. Local, state-provided services dominated these lists, followed by NGOs. Sports partnerships got particular mention by six respondents. The following were mentioned on multiple occasions:

*PPN members, ETB, DSP, HSE, LAs, Local Partnership companies, religious groups, Tusla, Local Development companies, NGOs, resource centres, migrant groups, residents groups, sporting organisations, the Gardaí, Citizens Information Services, schools and colleges, implementers of SICAP programmes and Fáilte Isteach.*

### WHY NO STRATEGY?

Local Authorities which have never had a migrant integration strategy were asked why this was the case.

Two Local Authorities suggested that no strategy had been developed due to the low number of migrants in the county area.

Two Local Authorities also indicated they had been doing significant work to facilitate migrant integration despite the lack of a strategy – including document translation, cultural events and a resettlement programme. The LEADER<sup>1</sup> programme was also identified as funding work in this area.

<sup>1</sup> LEADER is a State managed rural development fund, run by the Department of Rural and Community Development <https://drcd.gov.ie/about/rural/rural-development/leader/>

Two Local Authorities mentioned a lack of resources with one also citing a lack of a directive from central government.

An additional Local Authority mentioned the large number of new programmes and structures such as LCDC, LECP, LEADER and SICAP placed a strain on resources.

One Local Authority mentioned the Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) group had been assigned responsibility to progress a strategy, but that it had not happened.

## 4.

### Key principles and proposed actions for Local Authorities to adopt

#### RECOMMENDED KEY PRINCIPLES

These key principles would underpin the development and implementation of effective local migrant integration strategies

- **Prioritise** the support, facilitation and encouragement of very localised interaction between Irish, non-Irish people and local community groups. The Implementation Report of the Communities Integration Fund 2017<sup>1</sup> has some good examples
- **Dedicate** significant time to building and retaining buy-in and active involvement from key local partners and migrants
- **Assign** adequate resources and specific responsibilities to ensure implementation and monitoring

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.integration.ie/en/ISEC/4%20CIF%202018%20Launch%20-%20CIF%202017%20Implementation%20Report%20FINAL.pdf/Files/4%20CIF%202018%20Launch%20-%20CIF%202017%20Implementation%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

- **Set** clear actions and indicators of progress, particularly in areas where the Local Authority has full competence
- **Integrate** actions outside the direct remit of the Local Authority's core functions into the Local Economic and Community Plans, with oversight by the Local Community Development Committees

### Proposed migrant integration actions for Local Authorities

#### SOCIAL HOUSING

The provision of social housing is one of the key functions of Local Authorities in relation to societal and community integration as a whole and thus is key for migrant integration.

While three categories of citizenship status (Irish, EEA and non-EEA) are offered in social housing application forms this does not capture the complexity and diversity of migrant populations in Ireland nor the increasingly reality of more migrants becoming Irish

citizens. Recommendations in the area of social housing are as follows:

1. Record and collate data on ethnicity and nationality of social housing applications including unsuccessful applications and those presenting as homeless
2. Record data on ethnicity and nationality of people currently in social housing stock. Survey for additional/ specific information
3. Develop allocation policies to ensure a mix and balance of ethnic and national groups in estates and streets
4. Develop policy to tackle racially motivated anti-social behaviour in social housing. See Immigrant Council of Ireland report on racially motivated anti-social behaviour in social housing<sup>2</sup>

## LIBRARY SERVICES

Library services are best placed among all Local Authority services to facilitate and encourage intercultural interaction, dialogue and learning. Library services across the country have been at the forefront of Local Authority efforts in migrant integration with various creative and collaborative local initiatives but there are key actions that all library services can take:

5. Record and collate data on ethnicity and nationality of current and new members – new application forms to be developed if necessary
6. Membership drive among immigrant communities if data indicates proportionately low levels of non-Irish users for the local area. Compare membership information to CSO Census 2016 data for the area
7. Stock take of materials available in languages of key migrant groups in the local area (based on available CSO data). Improve collection of materials as necessary in consultation with local migrant groups
8. Stock take of materials available for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students
9. Formally write to all primary and secondary schools in the area asking how the library service can assist and support English language and mother tongue needs of students

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/sites/default/files/2017-10/AR%202016%20Taking%20Racism%20Seriously%20-%20social%20housing.pdf>

10. Formally write to ESOL service in the local ETB and local Fáilte Isteach group to ask how the library service can assist and support their services

## ELECTORAL REGISTER

Electoral rights in Ireland for non-Irish citizens are comparably strong and inclusive. The right to vote in local elections is the most inclusive in the European context with all nationalities allowed to vote and run in local elections. This policy is an excellent opportunity to bring migrants more into the life of local government, local communities and indeed local politics. However, awareness of these rights and registration levels among non-Irish nationals is low.

The 2016 ESRI Monitoring Report on Integration<sup>3</sup> showed considerable discrepancies in the number of non-Irish people registered with Local Authorities and the number of non-Irish people over the age of 18 living in that Local Authority. For example, in 2011, more than one in five, 21.8%, of over 18s in Fingal were non-Irish, however only one in 12, 8.7%, of those on the 2016/17 electoral register for Fingal were non-Irish. There is a discrepancy range of between 6% and 15% across all Local Authorities. Using the 2016 Census as a baseline for the number of over 18s resident in a county, the key recommendation in this area is:

11. Develop and implement localised action plans to increase voter registration among non-Irish citizens before local elections. These would include a nationality analysis of electoral divisions or (ideally) 'small areas' (CSO Census 2016) in a Local Authority area to identify the communities or estates where high percentages of non-Irish citizens reside. These areas should be targeted in person by Local Authority officials with a view to informing people of their rights and increasing the number of people on the electoral register.

This recommendation is seen as particularly important as it will also help to address the underrepresentation of migrants among the population of elected councillors in Ireland. Of the 949 councillors in Ireland only three are migrants or from a migrant background.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.esri.ie/publications/monitoring-report-on-integration-2016/>

## RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

All Local Authorities will engage and support Residents' Associations in various ways. Residents' Associations are in a unique position to engage with migrants in their area. They are situated at a very localised level where people have tangible and clear common interests. Many people first engage with their immediate locality via a Residents' Association. Thus, Residents' Associations should be seen as an invaluable tool in promoting migrant integration at a very local level. Suggested actions:

12. Local Authorities to develop and communicate simple policies to support Residents' Associations to engage with migrants in their catchment area.
13. Survey the profile of the members of Residents' Associations and their committees with a view to encouraging more reflective representation in diverse communities.

## INTERCULTURAL SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

14. Many Local Authorities run grant application processes for small community grants. A separate intercultural small grants scheme should be set up by each Local Authority as a means of targeted, ring-fenced support for facilitating more public intercultural events providing opportunities for people of Irish and other cultures to interact. For example, minority groups could be supported to hold open public celebrations of key dates or events in their cultural calendar, supported to get involved in St Patrick's Day celebrations or get involved in street fests in their immediate locality.

## PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Local Authorities are in very influential positions regarding the messages they communicate to the public. Each Local Authority has at least several thousand followers on social media.

15. At a minimum Local Authorities communicate supportive public messages on key dates reflecting important cultural celebrations for migrant groups, for example:

→ January or February (dates vary) Chinese New Year

→ 17 March St. Patrick's Day

→ 21 March The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

→ First day of Ramadan and the celebration of the end of Ramadan (Eid-al-Fitr) – different dates every year. In 2019 the first day of Ramadan is the 6 May and Eid-al-Fitr is 4 June.

→ End of May Africa Day

→ 20 June World Refugee Day

→ October or November (dates vary) Diwali – Hindu festival of lights

→ 18 December International Migrants Day

→ National holidays or other key dates of home countries of key migrant groups in the Local Authority area

## LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICES

Employment is one of the key drivers of effective migrant integration and so Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) are in excellent positions to support the creation of new self-employment opportunities for migrants. LEOs should take specific actions to ensure people from a migrant background living in their area are getting the most from the service:

16. Collect data on nationality and ethnicity on LEO service users.

17. Survey non-Irish and Irish LEO service users regarding their specific needs, including challenges they encounter.

18. Develop and implement specific courses and training for ethnic entrepreneurs to address specific needs as identified.

Action 47 of the National Migrant Integration Strategy states the following: 'Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) will continue to undertake targeted initiatives to engage with migrant prospective entrepreneurs in line with local need. The LEO Centre of Excellence in Enterprise Ireland will promote best practice activities in this area amongst all LEOs nationally.'

## PUBLIC SECTOR DUTY ASSESSMENT AND STAFF & COUNCILLOR TRAINING

Under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, all public bodies in Ireland have responsibility to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of their employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by their policies and plans.

19. Each Local Authority carries out an assessment of the equality and human rights issues of relevance across all functions.

20. Training is provided to frontline staff, key managers and all local elected public representatives (councillors) on the Public Sector Duty and interculturalism.

## COMMUNITY INCLUSION OPEN DAYS

Local Authorities can do much to facilitate migrant integration by adapting their services, communicating key messages, developing policies, providing grants and carrying out staff training. At its simplest form, migrant integration means migrants feeling at home and part of the local community in which they live. In order for this to happen, people living in a small specific geographical area who do not usually interact with each other need to be brought together.

21. Community inclusion open days are not a new concept, happening through a variety of channels and contexts already, but should be introduced more widely. Community inclusion open days can be facilitated by the Local Authority, take various formats and would be based in distinct and small geographical communities such as a particular small town, village, small suburb or estate. Crucially the open days would have representatives from as wide and inclusive a range of local clubs, businesses, services, schools and community groups as possible. The open days need to be social, family friendly events and buy-in needs to be built with key local partners, with outreach conducted in advance with locally resident migrants. The open days would serve several functions:

- An opportunity for migrants and other residents to meet representatives of the gathered groups and network
- A social and family friendly event where people can mix and socialise

- Provide an opportunity for surveys or discussion forums to be carried out with:
  - represented groups to see what they can do to help include a wider diversity of people and acknowledge efforts
  - with migrants to ascertain what would help them feel more at home in the local community

## INCLUDING MIGRANT VOICES AND PERSPECTIVES IN THE STRATEGIES AND PLANS OF ALL LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNCTIONS

22. Senior management in Local Authorities should ensure strategy development across all the functions of the council includes the voices and perspectives of migrants. Opportunities should be sought in all public consultation processes to make new connections and develop existing links with migrant communities e.g. strategies in the areas of library services, arts and culture, heritage, sports, Local Area Plans and in particular the LECP.

## LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES (LCDCS) AND LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLANS (LECPs).

Under Section 36 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, each Local Authority must establish a LCDC and may establish more than one such committee if the Minister approves. The aim of the LCDCs is to develop, co-ordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development.

The membership of LCDCs includes members of the Local Authority, its staff, representatives of public bodies which provide services in the area, representatives of local community interests, local community representatives and representatives of publicly funded or supported local development bodies. The majority of members must be from the non-statutory sector.

The main function of an LCDC is to prepare, implement and monitor the community elements of the six-year LECP. It must consider the economic elements of the plan in order to enhance co-ordination with the community elements and ultimately integrate the two elements but it does not have a role in deciding on the economic elements. It has a general role in seeking to ensure effectiveness, consistency, co-ordination and

avoidance of duplication between the various elements of Local Authority activities in the community.

In this context there is also an important role for the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) of the Department of Rural and Community Development to play a significant role in supporting local actions to promote migrant integration. The SICAP is managed by LCDC's nationally.

Most county LECPs were first drafted for the period 2016-2021. Unfortunately, when such plans were being drafted migrant integration issues were not as prominent at a national and certainly not at a local level. As the analysis in this report shows migrant integration issues are generally poorly addressed in LECPs.

23. LCDC's integrate local actions on migrant integration into current or future LECPs. LCDC's have the mandate to set and monitor actions in areas not necessarily directly within the powers of the Local Authority, for example in areas such as education and employment. Thus, while Local Authorities are best placed to implement proposed actions in areas directly under their own powers, LCDCs are best placed to set and monitor the implementation of actions required by bodies external to the Local Authority.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR OTHER BODIES

*As noted earlier in the report, some areas many previous local migrant integration strategies attempted to address were outside of the core competences of Local Authorities, in particular the areas of English language supports and employment. While library services (English language supports) and Local Enterprise Offices (self-employment) have key roles to play, other state agencies are primarily responsible for these areas, namely local Education and Training Boards (ETBs) via their ESOL supports and local Intreo offices for their employment support services. Both bodies need to develop national strategies to ensure local services are engaging effectively and appropriately with migrants in their area. Local Sports Partnerships should also be required to evidence efforts they, and particularly their members, have made to engage with and support migrant communities. Local primary and secondary schools should also be encouraged and supported to develop and implement policies to assist in the integration of migrant parents and children in the local community.*

## Conclusion

At the time of writing only three of the 31 Local Authorities in Ireland had in-date migrant integration strategies. Nine have never had any such strategy. This document aims to provide some guidance and inspiration on how Local Authorities can react swiftly and effectively in developing action plans or strategies. This report also provides a selection of specific proposed actions which could form the basis of a local migrant integration action plan and which all Local Authorities should adopt (for more

see Appendices 2 & 3). Core to all the proposals is the need for Local Authorities to use the full extent of their functions, events and consultations in a targeted way as opportunities to engage with migrants in their area. Actions 14 (Intercultural Small Grants scheme) and 21 (Community inclusion open days) are seen as particularly important in bringing people together at a very local and interpersonal level.

# 5.

## Appendices

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### Appendix 1



Survey questions for Local Authorities

1. Please provide the name and timeframe of the most recent migrant integration strategy that your council has been involved in. If your council has never had such a strategy please go to Question 7.
  2. On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0=totally ineffective and 10=fully effective how would you rate the impact of your council's most recent migrant integration strategy?
  3. Which areas of the strategy were/are most effective? Why?
  4. Which areas of the strategy were/are least effective? Why?
  5. What challenges did/do you face in implementing the strategy?
  6. Has an evaluation been undertaken of any previous or current strategy? If so can you please reference this document
  7. What do you think are the key challenges for migrant integration in your council area?
  8. In your view what would be the key elements of an effective and impactful strategy?
  9. Can you identify the key actors and groups that need to be involved in successfully implementing a local migrant integration strategy?
  10. If your council has never developed a migrant integration strategy can you outline why this was the case?
- 

### Appendix 2



Suggested processes in developing a local migrant integration strategy

- **Develop a demographic profile for your area**
    - Use CSO SAPS data, break down to at least Electoral Division level
    - Compile a comprehensive list of stakeholders, such as migrants, migrant groups, PPN members, sporting organisations, schools, state services, community groups etc. Ask them who they feel is important and grow your list
  - **Consult and engage**
    - Widely, in different formats and locations
    - Tailor questions per stakeholder group (community group, state service, migrant)
    - Use consultation process to elicit views and ideas but also to develop relationships, identify allies, stock take ongoing or previous activities
    - Questions
      - Community groups (what are you doing to help, what would you like to do to help if you had more support, what kind of support, etc.)
      - Migrants (the positive, what makes you feel at home, what could be improved upon to help make you feel more at home)
    - Read previous integration strategies
  - **Identify resources and allies to assist with implementation**
  - **Drafting - prioritise areas for action in conjunction with migrants**
    - What can the council do?
    - What do local communities need to do? How can they be supported to do so?
    - What areas are best suited to the LCDC?
    - Develop clear indicators of progress, timelines and specific agencies/ departments and positions within those agencies/ departments to lead on implementation and monitoring of actions
  - **Develop an ongoing engagement strategy – setting up and developing Migrant Integration Forums**
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**Appendix 3**

Some previous or current local migrant integration strategies

**Limerick**

<http://doraslumni.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/IntergratingLimerick2013-2016.pdf>

**Carlow**

<http://www.carlow.ie/wp-content/documents/uploads/Carlow%20Integration%20Strategy%202014-2018.pdf>

**Dublin City**

<http://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/content/Community/SocialInclusion/Documents/DCC%20Integration%20Strategy%20Final%20PDF.pdf>

**Kerry**

<http://ciarrai.ie/en/allservices/communityenterprise/kerryintegrationstrategy2010-2012/thefile,4581,en.pdf>

**Donegal**

<http://www.donegalcdb.ie/media/wwwdonegalcdbie/content/peaceiii/pdfs/DonegalDiversityBooklet.pdf>

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[immigrantcouncil.ie](http://immigrantcouncil.ie)



Immigrant  
Council of  
Ireland

2 St Andrew Street, Dublin 2, Ireland  
Information Service (01) 674 0200  
Administration (01) 674 0202

 /ImmigrantCouncil  
 @immigrationIRL