



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice

Current state user personas and journey maps

End to end review of IP processes

Development and insights

Prepared by the Service Design & Customer Insights Team

May 2021



1. Context

- 1.1 Customer personas and as-is customer journey maps were tools used to identify service improvement opportunities in the International Protection Process. This was done as part of the implementation of the recommendations of the *Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process* (otherwise known as the Catherine Day Report), specifically Action 3.18 which recommends carrying out an end to end review of the international protection process. The methodology on how the personas and journeys were developed based on evidence are described in section 3.
- 1.2 This report, the user personas and user journeys generated form one part of the overall review carried out under action 3.18. This work should be viewed as one of the inputs to the full end to end review report and considered in the context of the full body of work of the review.

Considerations and limitations

- 1.3 The landscape of the international protection process is a legally complex one. It involves many other organisations, including government departments and NGOs. These bodies provide services to people in the international protection process, which are relevant when from a user journey perspective. While the ‘end to end’ for the purpose of the review is defined as “*from the time an International Protection applicant applies to complete and interview under section 13 (preliminary interview) of the International Protection Act, 2015 at the IPO to the Minister’s Decision under Section 49 (permission to remain) of the International Protection Act, 2015*”, in the journeys developed, some elements outside of this have been included as they impact on those in the process.
- 1.4 The four user journeys developed here each ultimately end in a ‘grant’ decision. Each journey is illustrative of a number of factors affecting people going through the process. These factors are set out in the methodology below. The scope of the review did not encompass what happens once a person receives a final refusal. These journeys are illustrative of the process, NOT of what happens after final decisions have been made.

- 1.5 The variation between a grant and refusal in user experience begins at receipt of the ministerial decision letter. Upon receipt of a refusal the applicant/appellant then could move into either appeal to IPAT, a voluntary return, deportation, or possibly judicial review process, depending on what stage they are at. Apart from appeals to IPAT, these are all out scope of this study.
- 1.6 The aim of the personas and journeys is to show a range of experiences that a customer may face, but they do not capture every experience. Experiences specific to members of the LGBT+ community, victims of torture or human trafficking have not been explicitly represented, nor have experiences specific to unaccompanied minors, aged out minors, and Dublin III cases been included. Many of the opportunities identified from the core journeys however, will be valid for these users but they may also have specific additional needs not identified.
- 1.7 While what has been developed is based on research as described in this report, it is accepted that what has been presented has a level of assumption and may not be fully representative of the lived experience of many applicants. It was also recognised that each applicant's situation is different and that the facts of each individual case are based on the facts presented. The research is intended to capture a general picture of the process for applicants/appellants and from this these personas and journeys will assist in grounding changes to the process in the consideration of the people who are impacted by the decisions made.
- 1.8 Connect the Dots were engaged in order to provide objective research and analysis into the experiences of people going through the International Protection process.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 A customer persona is defined as “a fictional, yet realistic, description of a typical or target user of the product, or service”¹. A persona clarifies who your

¹ See <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/persona/>

users are, their current behaviour patterns, their needs and goals and identifies any issues and pain-points that they are currently facing. Personas help you ask the right questions and answer those questions in line with the users you are designing the service for. A persona is not based on an actual living person but it is based on information about real people via research. Any resemblance to a specific person

- 2.2 For the purposes of this work, the personas created are intended to portray a customer going through the international protection process via the International Protection Office (IPO) and the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT). The personas have been created by conducting user research and other methods of research.
- 2.3 The customer personas we created provide an easy to read, easy to understand description of the target customers in the international protection process in order to truly understand the needs of our customer. They help us turn ‘the customers’ into lifelike people with thoughts, feelings and emotions; this allows us to understand and empathise with our customer and to take a more human-centred approach when mapping out their journey.
- 2.4 We provided each persona with a name and avatar in order to promote memorability; this is important in keeping empathy ‘alive’ whilst taking the persona through the journey and when it comes to turning recommendations into actions. While we can’t create personas for every customer, the creation of multiple personas will help us to develop an empathy for specific user cohorts, which will help us develop better understanding for all.
- 2.5 “In its most basic form, customer journey mapping starts by compiling a series of user goals and actions into a timeline skeleton. Next, the skeleton is fleshed out with user thoughts and emotions in order to create a narrative. Finally, that narrative is condensed into a visualization used to communicate insights that will inform design processes”.²
- 2.6 For the purposes of this work, the customer journey maps are intended to show a customer’s journey through the international protection process. On this journey the customer will have touch points with many units in the International Protection Office (IPO), the Ministerial Decision Unit (MDU) and

² See <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/customer-journey-mapping/>

some customers will pass through International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT). As with the personas, these journeys have been built primarily by research.

- 2.7 Of the customer journey maps that we created, not one is an exact replica of any one person's journey but together they cover a majority of journeys taken; the aim is to show the range of experiences that a customer may face-not every experience.
- 2.8 The customer journey maps create a holistic view of the customers of the international protection process; they tell a story. At each step of a journey, all actions, touchpoints, thoughts, emotions and pain points have been identified. These allow us to uncover gaps in the customer journey and to highlight all issues related to each specific journey. From this, we have been able to identify opportunities that may help to simplify and shorten the international protection process for our users.

3. Methodology

- 3.1 The guiding principle for the development of personas and user journeys was to 'create using data and evidence'. The tools and research methods used in implementing this principle are discussed in this section.

Desk research

- 3.2 Desk research was undertaken to gain a high level understanding of the International Protection Process and the legal framework within which the IPO and IPAT operate, to identify potential sources of information for use in the development of the personas and user journeys and to learn about the broader context in which the process sits. This research included reviewing publications with information on the application process, reports looking into the process and publications and articles on people's experiences of the process. Furthermore, this desk research was undertaken to identify useful sources for published statistical information to support this evidence driven approach.

Engagement with process experts– internal stakeholders

- 3.3 The Business Change team arranged meetings with each business unit and sub unit in the IPO and IPAT in order to carry out an as-is analysis of the international protection process. A member of the Customer Insights Team or Service Design Team shadowed the Business change team for a number of these meetings; specifically meetings with units involved in the processing of applications or those that engage with people in the application process³. The purpose of attending these meetings was to deepen the understanding of how a person's application moves through the IPO and IPAT, the stakeholders involved, interaction points between the user and the IPO and IPAT as well as organisational steps involved in the processing of the application.

Assumption-based Customer Journeys

- 3.4 Assumption-based customer journeys were created initially to visualise information gathered from desk research and engagement with process experts under a framework. Assumption-based journey maps “help you to design an efficient research process by giving you a better idea of who to ask, when, and where, as well as what to ask or observe.”, Furthermore “through assumption-based journey maps, you can challenge your assumptions with solid research.”⁴ By employing this method, areas of interest and gaps in knowledge were identified for further exploration, through user engagement. In addition, assumptions made in setting out the phases of the customer journey were validated and provided a foundation from which to build the user journeys.

User Experience Engagement

- 3.5 Following a competitive process, a company called Connect the Dots was contracted to facilitate engagement with service users who are or have recently been in the International protection process to capture their experiences. Connect the Dots' engagement process included an online survey, 1-1 interviews and a focus group with language translation services. Connect the Dots provided a summary report on the engagement undertaken; this was supplemented by additional information on the experiences of users

³ See – Appendix 1

⁴ See - This is Service Design Doing - Online Companion, August 2018

and further topics and quotes from their engagement. These customer engagement outputs provided an additional source of data from which the customer personas and journeys were developed.

Secondary Research

- 3.6 Secondary research was undertaken to provide quantitative data in order to complement the qualitative research employed and broaden the evidence range from which the personas and journeys would be derived. Administrative data internal to the Department was the primary source used.
- 3.7 A Data Protection Impact Assessment was undertaken prior to data being received by the team. The principle of data minimisation was applied and the data was anonymised. When analysis of the data set was completed, only aggregated information was used in creating the customer personas and journeys.

4. Customer personas development

Prepare file for analysis

- 4.1 A copy of the extract file was used for persona analysis. Columns related to journey analysis were removed from the copy file. The dataset was checked for records outside of the scope of the review and any found were removed to limit the record set to applications made under the International Protection Act 2015.
- 4.2 Records of those under 18 years old and ones indicated as aged-out minors, were removed from the data set. While 20.3% of those pending in the international protection process up to July 2020 are 0 - 17 years old ⁵ (if a minor's journey was to be created it would be founded on and contain significant levels of assumption.) Applications for unaccompanied minors are supported by Tusla, whose processes are outside of the scope of the review. It was felt that sensitivity and procedures that would be required for engagement with minors would not be possible to do within the timeframes of this review. While not represented in these personas and journeys, minors who are dependants on their parent's or guardian's application, or who have an application being considered in its own right would still benefit from improvements to the application process for applications as identified through the customer journeys of adult personas.
- 4.3 High level checks on singular attributes such as gender and nationality of the remaining records were compared with those in the Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process, confirming that the data being analysed was broadly in line with published records.

Analysis

- 4.4 Ideally 3 - 7 is the number of core personas that should be developed⁶. In line with this and the number of assumption based journeys created, 4 personas were developed.

⁵ See Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process - Table 2.2.3, September 2020

⁶ This is Service Design Doing - Online Companion, August 2018

- 4.5 As there are more males in the application process than females⁷, the gender breakdown of the personas followed this and was represented in the personas as 3 male personas and 1 female.
- 4.6 Similarly there are more single applicants pending in the process than there are family units⁸. Therefore, this was represented in the personas as 3 single persons to 1 family unit.
- 4.7 The IPO have an interview prioritisation, which is supported by UNHCR⁹. With consideration to the concept of designing for all from universal design, a persona that would be high on the prioritisation framework was included. Having previously removed unaccompanied and aged out minors, those over 70 and not part of a family group or those with medical priority were considered. As people aged over 70 and not part of a family group are higher on the prioritisation list than those with medical priorities, a persona of age 70+ was included.
- 4.8 From the data set, the top three nationalities were Albanian, Georgian and Pakistani for males and Zimbabwean, Georgian and Nigerian for females. The top two age ranges for these genders and nationalities was also established for consideration, as the personas were being developed.
- 4.9 There was limited information in the data set for those with dependants on their application. However, from the information that was available, Georgian was in the top 5 nationality and Georgian featured in the top three nationalities of both male and female applicants. Therefore, a persona of Georgian nationality was selected to be the one with a family unit.
- 4.10 It was found that of the top nationalities for males and females, Pakistani was the nationality that had the highest number of applicants of both genders over 70. With Pakistani being the nationality in the top 3 of males, male was the gender and Pakistan the country of nationality selected for the 'aged over 70' persona. The *Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support*

⁷ See Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process - Table 2.2.2, September 2020

⁸ See Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process - Table 2.2.5, September 2020

⁹ See

http://www.ipa.gov.ie/en/IPO/Prioritisation_of_International_Protection_Applications_IPO_UNHCR_Notice_2017.pdf/Files/Prioritisation_of_International_Protection_Applications_IPO_UNHCR_Notice_2017.pdf

including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process identifies that 0.7% of people pending in the international protection process as of end of July 2020 are 65+¹⁰. This was broadly in line in the data set and therefore there was a relatively small number of records. To mitigate against creating a persona too similar to that of a real person, this persona was given a marital status of widowed as there were no records matching this specific combination of attributes in the dataset.

4.11 In determining the attributes for the remaining personas, the crossover of most common nationalities between genders was considered. Also factored in was the ratio of male to female, and family to single and the top age ranges per nationality. This resulted in the following attribute (groupings), which were used to build out the personas further.

Persona	Persona A	Persona B	Persona C	Persona D
Nationality	Albanian	Pakistan	Zimbabwe	Georgian
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Male
Age range	18 - 27	70+	28-37	38-47
Family unit	Single	Single	Single	Family Unit

4.12 One or multiples of the attributes per persona in the table above were then used to query the data set to further expand the personas as detailed below:

Persona	Persona A	Persona B	Persona C	Persona D
Nationality	Albanian	Pakistan	Zimbabwe	Georgian
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Male
Family Unit	Single	Single	Single	Family Unit
Age Range	18 - 27	70+	28-37	38-47

¹⁰ See Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process - Table 2.2.3, September 2020

Language	Albanian	English and Urdu	English	Georgian
Reason for seeking protection	Other	Social	Political	Other
Marital Status	Single	Widowed	Single	Married
Religion	-	Muslim	Christian	Orthodox
Profession	Student	Unemployed	Sales Occupations	Building and Construction

Completing the persona template


- 4.13 Having established the basic attribute data for the personas, this information was added to templates for further development. This included using data in publications and articles for quotes from users and other contextual user on the user experience. Through this, the basis for some of the component parts of the personas were derived, but also elements originating from the data extract were reviewed. For example for Persona B, the reason for seeking protection was updated to 'Religious' as details were found in publications that supported this, the data extract also supported 'religion' as a reason for seeking protection for this persona. Another update was made to Persona C. For this persona, a child in the country of origin was added. Evidence of family reunification being of concern was found in the research done but this has not been represented in the personas until that point.
- 4.14 To minimise assumption from the creators within the personas, the personas were presented to the wider Customer Insights and Service Design teams and components of the personas were agreed through discussion of the research by the team. The report from Connect The Dots research was a key input to all of the persona attributes.
- The table below details the component sections of the personas created as part of this work, and contains information on the component purpose and how it was developed:

Persona Component	Purpose	How created
Name and Image	To aid memorability, assist people to remember the users of the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Image was sourced from flaticon.com Name selected through internet search of common first names for a person of that gender from the country of nationality of the persona
Age, Family group, marital status, reason for seeking protection	To portray the personas like real people, based on aggregated information about real people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of the data extract. . Verified and/ or updated using evidence found in publications.
Fluency in English & Vulnerability level	To highlight important factors that may impact a person's ability to engage with the service and something to consider in service design/ redesign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English language fluency: Language used at reception, in the questionnaire and at interview were all considered; all nationality records were used for this. - Vulnerability level was determined by considering the persona's English fluency, age, medical needs indicated, connections to Ireland and it was agreed by value judgement of the team.
Quote	Helps introduce the persona and their context, makes the persona more human and gives a greater sense of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publications were reviewed for user quotes. The sentiment conveyed in these quotes was used as the basis for the ones created.


	who the service is being designed for.	
Technical skills	Assists in considering how to best engage with the person, and how can we facilitate their engagement with us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selected using value judgement of the team and validated from user engagement responses.
Additional Information	Assists in developing out the persona and to consider the resources a persona may have to have to accomplish their goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publications were reviewed for context. - Selected using value judgement of the team.
Goals	What is the persona looking to do? Included to assist in understanding if and how the persona is successful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publications were reviewed for context. - Selected using value judgement of the team
Challenges	What could prevent the persona from achieving their goals? Included to understand what	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publications were reviewed for context - Selected using value judgement of the team

	the potential blockers are.	
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Persona Set



Giorgi






"Circumstances in my country forced us to leave; me, my wife and daughter just needed to escape. You don't have options, you just have to leave"

- Aged 42.
- From Georgia.
- Married with one child.
- Seeking protection for other reasons.

Technical skills

- Giorgi is good with technology in general.

Additional information

- Giorgi worked in building and construction.
- He has previous military service.
- His first language is Georgian but he also speaks some Russian.
- He has friends that are in Ireland.

Vulnerability Level

LowHigh

Fluency in English

LowHigh

Goals


- To build a better life for his family.
- To have a happy life.
- To get a job so that he can support his family.

Challenges


- The language barrier may make the understanding of the whole system very hard.
- Getting access to education for his child.

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Ahmed



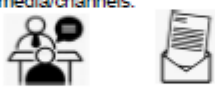
"I suffer from a lot of things as I am old. Coming here it is like starting a whole new life, outside it's quiet, I'm safe. Ireland saved me"



- Aged 71.
- From Pakistan.
- Widowed with no children.
- Seeking protection because of his religion

Technical skills

- Ahmed does not use technology and he is not comfortable with digital media/channels.



Additional information

- Ahmed is an elderly applicant and not part of a family group.
- His first language is Urdu.
- He was a retiree when he left Pakistan.
- He has a second cousin who lives in Ireland.

Goals

- To feel safe and free from harm.
- To live peacefully for the rest of his life.
- To have access to healthcare for his age-related illnesses.
- To get through the IPO process quickly.

Challenges

- Cultural barriers may add to the challenges of understanding the system.
- Accessing healthcare.
- Ahmed has age-related illnesses.

Vulnerability Level

Low High

—————○—————


Fluency in English

Low High


—————○—————

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Romy




"I had no idea of asylum, I had never known of it. I was scared for my life so I ran away. I didn't know where I was going. I ran and came to be in Ireland."



- Aged 37.
- From Zimbabwe.
- Single with one child in Zimbabwe
- Seeking protection for political reasons.

Technical skills

- Romy is used to technology; she is comfortable using email, making phone calls and surfing the internet. However, she is not confident with complex online systems.



Additional information

- Before coming to Ireland Romy worked in Sales.
- Her first language is English.
- She was part of a political party in Zimbabwe.

Goals

- To be free to have her opinion and express her views without fear.
- To live her life to the full.
- To build a network and be part of a community
- To get through the IPO process quickly, to unit with her child under family reunification

Challenges

- Romy did not bring much documentation when she ran.
- She feels like she is running out of time to start a career.
- Her child was 14 when she left, the length of time in the process could impact on their reunification

Vulnerability Level

Low High

—————○—————

Fluency in English

Low High

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Mateo

"I miss my family; my father was killed and I came here because I was threatened. I think about them and I worry"

- Aged 25.
- From Albania.
- Single with no children.
- Seeking protection for Other reasons.

Technical skills

- Mateo is excellent with technology and online systems

Additional information

- Mateo left in the middle of his studies.
- His first language is Albanian.

Goals

- To be safe and have a better life.
- To continue with his studies and to get a job.
- To live his life to the full.

Challenges

- The language barrier may make the understanding of the whole system very hard.
- He can only enter third level education as an overseas student.

Vulnerability Level: Low to High (set to Low)

Fluency in English: Low to High (set to Low)

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5. Customer Journey Development

5.1 From desk research and engagement with internal process experts, four options were identified as core journeys to represent what was in scope. These four options were used in the assumption-based customer journeys that guided the initial phase of user experience research, which in turn formed the basis from which to build out journeys for the personas. The customer journeys were then built through analysis of the data extract and synthesis of the research work undertaken. The four decision paths were:

1. 'grant refugee status - first instance',
2. 'grant permission to remain – first instance',
3. 'grant subsidiary protection at IPAT', and
4. 'grant permission to remain at review'.

Attention is drawn to the fact that these four journeys all end in a grant decision. This should not be taken to say that all journeys end in grants – this is not the case, a majority of cases end with negative decisions. However as our aim is to show the range of things that happen throughout the application and appeals processes, and given that deportation processes are out of scope

of the review, the 4 paths taken here give the best coverage of applicant/appellant experiences.

Data Extract Analysis

- 5.2 A copy of the extract file was used for journey analysis. The dataset was checked for records outside of the scope of the review and any found were removed to limit the record set to applications made under the International Protection Act 2015. As previously discussed with persona development, records of those under 18 years old and ones indicated as aged out minors were not being represented. These records were removed from the data set so as not to skew the data being used for the journeys. We also compared language used in the questionnaire versus the language used in reception and interview.
- 5.3 Columns were also added to capture the number of days between various key dates in the records. Analysis of this data set was completed in stages – number of days from leaving country of origin to application, number of days from S35 interview scheduling to recommendation and the number of days from the recommendation letter to decision letter.
- 5.4 For each of these stages, we calculated median times for all users and the personas. The data was mainly aggregated by nationality. However, age range, interview priority and gender were also used. The number of interview records per application record was also analysed.
- 5.5 It was established that all persona nationalities had records with recommendations types that aligned to the four journey decision paths. The percentage of applicants of that nationality by recommendation and whether or not the country of nationality was a safe country of origin was considered when assigning a persona to a journey decision path.
- 5.6 When compared with the other persona nationalities, the persona Mateo is from what is deemed a safe country of origin. When combined with statistical analysis of the data set, it was felt that a refusal of refugee status and subsidiary protection at IPAT could reasonably happen for this persona. Thus, Mateo was selected for the decision path 'grant permission to remain at review'.

- 5.7 Through desk research, it was known there are people fleeing Pakistan due to religious persecution¹¹. When combined with statistical analysis of the data set, it was felt that a 'grant of refugee status – 1st instance' could reasonably happen for the persona 'Ahmed'. Thus Ahmed was assigned to said journey decision path.
- 5.8 In 2019, 13% of appeals of substantive International Protection Appeals, Subsequent Appeals and Inadmissible Appeals were from people with Zimbabwe as their country of origin¹². Having previously assigned Grant at IPAT to a persona, it was felt that 'grant subsidiary protection at IPAT' could reasonably happen for Romy.
- 5.9 The persona Giorgi, is from a deemed safe country of origin, and was selected to be a family unit. It was noted that a small percentage of records recorded pregnancy potentially impacting the scheduling of interviews; with consideration to universal design principles and of designing for all, it was decided to capture this through Giorgi's journey, whereby his wife would have a child during the application process. This persona was assigned to the remaining decision path, chosen as a representative of 'grant permission to remain, 1st instance'.

Synthesising research

- 5.10 Throughout the process, research insights, quotes and statistics were captured and documented. Synthesising this research involved reframing these into phases under the user journey and themes.
- 5.11 Each persona was given a space for their journey and experiences from the reframed research were attributed to the various personas. Similarly, data supporting timeline generation was pulled to each persona journey development area. Through this, gaps were identified in both the timeline and experiences. Further investigations of published information on user experiences, additional data from Connect the Dots and the work of the Business Change team were pulled into the central area for themed data and

¹¹ See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/11/pakistan-surge-in-targeted-killings-of-ahmadis/>

¹² See International Protection Appeals Tribunal – Annual Report 2019, March 2020
[http://www.protectionappeals.ie/website/rat/ratweb.nsf/page/MXKY-BPHHZE14381411-en/\\$File/IPAT%20Annual%20Report%202019.pdf](http://www.protectionappeals.ie/website/rat/ratweb.nsf/page/MXKY-BPHHZE14381411-en/$File/IPAT%20Annual%20Report%202019.pdf)

into the central location with journey phases, and attributed to a personas journey in order to fill out these gaps.

- 5.12 In addition, the personas were further iterated and validated through feedback from members of the Customer Insights and Service Design teams and from Connect the Dots, based on their customer engagement.

Customer Journeys set

- 5.13 The journeys developed are of the as-is customer journey, they visualise the actions, thoughts, and emotions that customers experience while interacting with the current business processes and services in the International protection Process. Their focus is on human experiences; illustrating the story of personas through a sequence of steps, to provide an outside-in perspective on the International Protection Process.
- 5.14 Each journey map represents a single persona experience without mapping if/then scenarios, loops, or decision trees. Each journey includes a section with details of the persona whose journey is being mapped and sections with actions, touchpoints, thoughts and feelings and pain points.
- 5.15 The intention of these is to help identify opportunities to improve customer experiences; such as provide the right content at the right time in order to improve the customer's emotional journey, to highlight potential obstacles in the journey, to then help mitigate these or to identify users' needs and implement ways to potentially satisfy these needs. The journeys are also useful in identifying, through comparison with the other analysis streams, where opportunities to improve customer experience, align with opportunities to improve staff experience and to deliver on the other recommendations of the Catherine Day Report.

In addition to the data set analysis as previously described for the creation of user journeys, as part of the current state analysis, the review team also analysed the average end-to-end processing times, for a negative decision at all stages of the protection process and for a positive recommendation at IPO 1st instance stage to the final decision issued. This was done using data points provided by the IPO and the IPAT for 2019 (pre-Covid) and 2020¹³. The

13 Note on data sources for end-to-end processing times:

impact of the pandemic on processing times cannot be ignored here, and therefore this introduces an element of unpredictability into the dataset. The figures presented here and used in the journeys are therefore reflective of the processing times in recent years, and don't give any indication of current or future processing times.

5.16 For negative decision at all stages of the protection process and based on an average of 21.75 working days per month:

- In 2019 it took on average 15.7 months (1.3 years) for an application to be processed in the IPO, and 7.2 months (0.6 years) in the IPAT. When PTR Review and MDU times are added a total of 31.5 months, or 2.6 years.
- In 2020 for negative decision at all stages of the protection process in, it took 17.3 months (1.4 years) for an application to be processed in the IPO, and 7.2 months (0.6 years) in the IPAT. When PTR Review and MDU times are added a total of 37.7 months, or 3.1 years.

5.17 For a positive recommendation at IPO 1st instance stage to the final decision issued by the MDU and based on average of 21.75 working days per month, in 2019 and 2020, it took on average 20 months (1.7 years).

5.18 The journeys presented are broadly in line with these timeframes and variances in them should be attributed to the individual journey presented. The timelines shown do not represent the average processing times, instead they illustrate a range of timeframes experienced by users over recent years.

IPO 1 – IPO 3, IPO Co-ordination Unit, IPO average of Quarterly median case processing times- **all case's**, from receipt of application to S39 report finalised, 2019/2020, report produced by RAU, Feb 2021, IPO 4: Times provided by IPO PTR unit, Dec 2020, Recommendations issued: Times provided by IPO Recommendations & Decisions Unit, Jan 2021
Applicant: has up to 15 working days (0.7 months) to appeal the RS and/or SP IPO recommendation
IPAT 1-4: Average Appeal timeline provided by IPAT Corporate Affairs Unit, 2019 & 2020 key processing times (appeal received, file copied, file copied & assigned to Tribunal member, appeal assigned to decision issued)
PRT Review: Average times provided by PTR Review Unit, 2019 & 2020, Jan 2021
MDU: Average times provided by IPO Co-ordination Unit, Feb 2021
IPO 3: All grants at first instance are subject to ASG Pulse checks. ASG checks are completed on 'non-security check countries' however security checks are completed by Northern Ireland Security Service (NISS). A Recommendation letter is not issued until these security checks are provided by NISS. Average processing times are provided by IPO Section 22 Unit, Feb 2021



Giorgi

- 42 years old, married with a child and from Georgia.
- Giorgi is here with his wife and daughter. He does not speak any English but he is comfortable with technology.

- Goals:**
- To build a better life for his family.
 - To have a happy life.
 - To get a job so that he can support his family



6 days since leaving home 7 days since leaving home 322 days since leaving home 384 days since leaving home 459 days since leaving home

Journey Phase	Journey to Ireland + 6 days	IPO 1 + 1 day	IPO 2 + 317 days	IPO 3 + 62 days	IPO 4 to Final Decision + 75 days	Final Decision
	Application to the IPO and preliminary interview		Completes Questionnaire	Attends personal interview	Receives IPO recommendation and waits for ministerial decision letter	Receives ministerial decision letter with declaration
Actions	Giorgi gathers his belongings and papers and travels to the airport in Georgia with his wife and daughter. He flies to Ireland. Giorgi is anxious about leaving his home country but hopeful that Ireland will provide them all with a better future. On arrival at Dublin airport, he presents to the Border Management Unit and answers questions and completes the Section 13(2) preliminary interview. He travels to Baleskin Accommodation Centre, which was organised for Giorgi and his family.	Giorgi travels to IPO by taxi and waits in reception to be seen. He answers questions from the IPO staff via a translator and hands over all the documents that he and his wife have. Giorgi is given lots of booklets, leaflets, notices and the questionnaire with a prepaid envelope. He feels overwhelmed by all this information. He signs the important Notice on conditions with application and information given in IPO reception. He then has to have his fingerprints taken and completes his Section 15 interview via a translator, which is for the application for International Protection. This takes approximately one hour. He has his photograph taken for a Temporary Residence Certificate card (TRC), which he receives soon after. This card is valid for 3 months. Giorgi then gets a taxi, organised by IPO, back to his accommodation.	Giorgi reads through the information booklet and speaks to other Georgians in the centre, about the questionnaire. He answers the questionnaire himself and returns it using the prepaid envelope, within 30 days. He moves from Baleskin Accommodation Centre to an accommodation centre in a rural location. Here he asks friends about how to apply for the allowance and how and when he can start working. He gets a PPSN and a Public Services Card. Giorgi is frustrated as he has been waiting for some time for his interview date so he phones the IPO customer service desk for an update, with the help of a friend for translation. His wife has become pregnant and he has found a job so he sends that information into IPO, on advice from a friend. Giorgi asks his friend to translate his interview letter, when it arrives. He has to postpone his interview, which he does using the interview confirmation slip because child care is needed for his daughter and his wife has an antenatal appointment on that date. When he receives a new date for his interview, he fills in the confirmation slip and he is now able to sort childcare. He speaks to the centre manager about how to go about traveling to his interview. He renews his TRC card, with advice from other people in the accommodation centre. After eight months, he applies for labour market access.	Giorgi travels to the interview with his heavily pregnant wife and they both check in for the interview. He is feeling nervous about the interview now. Giorgi answers interview questions for over three hours and hands in additional documents. He has to wait another three hours for his wife who is interviewed. They travel back from interview and check in on their daughter as soon as they arrive back to the centre. While he waits for the IPO decision, his wife gives birth to a son. They notify the IPO after being advised by a friend to do so. He also renews his TRC card and labour market access permission during this time.	Giorgi receives his recommendation letter, refusing refugee status and subsidiary protection and is granting permission to remain. He gets a copy of his English translated questionnaire, appeal information, interview notes and country of origin information (that isn't publicly available). He uses Google Translate to try and understand the letter and the accompanying documents, but needs to get help from his friend to make sure that he understands what is written in the letter. He is frustrated having to keep asking people to help him translate correspondence from the IPO. He is very relieved to learn that he and his family can stay in Ireland. He waits for the final decision.	Giorgi receives his ministerial decision letter, refusing refugee status and subsidiary protection and granting permission to remain. He reads the letter and gets help again from a friend, to make sure he understands what the letter is telling them. He is relieved but confused because his son is not included in the letter. He speaks to the centre staff and his friends about moving out of the centre and registering their permission.
Touchpoints	<p>ISD business units: 1 Other Government services/agencies: 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Justice External 	<p>Documents: 12 Staff members (in person): 4 Physical journeys: 2 Other Government services/agencies: 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation Reception External 	<p>Documents: 20 IT service transactions: 3 Other Government services/agencies: 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation Customer service centre External 	<p>Documents: 4 IT service transactions: 3 Physical journeys: 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-interview Interview External 	<p>Documents: 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation External 	<p>Documents: 9 Other Government services/agencies: 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation External
Customer Thoughts and emotions	<p>Anxious - Giorgi feels that there is no turning back for himself, his wife and his child.</p> <p>Hopeful - they are leaving all that they know for a better future.</p>	<p>Tired - they have been travelling for 6 days with long periods of waiting. This has been very difficult for their daughter, she is young and doesn't understand what is happening, she cries frequently and not sleeping.</p> <p>Stressed - Giorgi feels that his family are depending on him. This is a strange country and he doesn't speak the language.</p> <p>Overwhelmed - he has been given so many papers and told of lots of things he must do, he wants to do this right.</p>	<p>Stressed - Giorgi is stressed because he wants to do the questionnaire right; he had been told about legal aid but doesn't know what to do for it, he feels he must do the form quickly so it helps with their application.</p> <p>Frustrated - he is annoyed and frustrated as he is waiting with no information.</p> <p>Anxious - he gets more and more anxious, feeling he is to blame for no information, it's affecting his sleep. He is happy to hear about their interview date but worries about it.</p>	<p>Nervous - Giorgi hopes that the interview will go well; they have been here nearly a year and spent most of the time waiting for this.</p> <p>Shell-shocked - Giorgi is shell-shocked, he wasn't expecting the interview to be like this.</p> <p>Helpless and isolated - he feels that the person interviewing him doesn't believe him and he doesn't know what to do or what else he can say.</p>	<p>Frustrated - Giorgi is frustrated to have to continue to ask people to help him understand the information he receives from the IPO.</p> <p>Relieved - he is relieved to have news and wants to move on as quickly as he can.</p> <p>Confused - he doesn't know why they don't have permission to remain status in Ireland yet.</p> <p>Annoyed - his frustration is turning to anger as they are waiting again with no information and no certainty as to when things will change for them.</p>	<p>Happy - he is relieved that they finally have their declaration.</p> <p>Confused - he thought they could just move on with their life now but he is finding this difficult. His son isn't included in the letter and they have to register their permission and he doesn't know why.</p>
Customer Painpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giorgi is given a lot of information all at once and doesn't fully understand it. • Not all the information Giorgi is given, is in a language he can understand. • It's a long day having to wait to be seen and interviewed, especially with a young child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has to complete this difficult questionnaire at the same time as settling in with his family and he can't speak or read English. • Feels like he has no support in completing the questionnaire. • Has to rely on and trust other people in the centre to help him and give him advice. • The questionnaire is long and confusing, there is no accompanying guidance. • Some people who have come after them getting an interview, but no information on when they'll be interviewed. • Not knowing how long they will be waiting for their interview to be rescheduled. • Giorgi doesn't get legal advice at this stage. The leaflet about legal aid wasn't in Georgian and he didn't know what to do. He doesn't know that it was possible to ask for an extension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is based in a rural location; they will be travelling for a long time to get to and from the interview. • Not ready or didn't know that the interview would have very tough questioning. • Feels like he has no advocate/inspector to ensure transparency/correct operations, where there is no legal representation. • Interview is 3 hours for Giorgi and another 3 hours while his wife is interviewed. This is particularly difficult for them, as they have a young child and a baby. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having an update or information from the IPO. The Customer Service team don't tell him anything tangible as to when he should head back. • Doesn't understand the letter that he received and the accompanying documentation. While he has learned some English, the language used in operations, where there is no legal representation. • Giorgi doesn't have any of the information leaflets given to him in reception anymore and doesn't know what ones he is missing. He doesn't try to replace them as they were not all in Georgian and they were too complex. • With long wait times and no information, Giorgi doesn't trust the IPO to get back to him anytime soon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't know when he will hear about status for their son who was born during his application process. • Giorgi doesn't fully understand the process and the differences between PTR and refugee status and what it means for him and his family. Therefore, he hasn't been able to make an informed decision on whether or not he would like to appeal the decision. • They were unaware of their son's application being separate as he was born during the process; they don't know how long it will be until his application is finished. 	



Ahmed

- 71 years old and from Pakistan.
- Ahmed is a widower, he and his wife never had children. His first language is Urdu and he speaks some English.
- He doesn't use technology. He has a second cousin who lives in Ireland.

- Goals:**
- To feel safe and free from harm.
 - To live peacefully for the rest of his life.
 - To have access to healthcare for his age-related illnesses.
 - To get through the IPO process quickly.



1091 days since leaving home 1092 days since leaving home 1353 days since leaving home 1479 days since leaving home 1658 days since leaving home

Journey Phase	Journey to Ireland + 1091 days	IPO 1 + 1 day	IPO 2 + 261 days	IPO 3 + 126 days	IPO 4 to Final Decision + 179 days	Final Decision					
Actions What does the customer do?	Ahmed travels by illegal passage to Europe and Ireland via Iran and Turkey. When he gets here he makes contact with members of the Pakistani community in Ireland. It takes Ahmed a long time to get to Ireland and similarly takes him quite a while to contact the IPO.	Ahmed travels by taxi to the IPO and waits in reception. Here he has his Section 13 (2) interview, which is conducted by IPO reception staff and answers all the questions in English and hands over his out-of-date passport, which is the only document he has. Ahmed is given lots of booklets, leaflets, notices and the questionnaire with a prepaid envelope, he is confused by all these papers. He signs the Important Notice on conditions with application and information given in IPO reception. He then has to have his fingerprints taken and completes his Section 15 interview which is for the application for International Protection; this takes approximately one hour. Ahmed is quite tired by now. He has his photograph taken for a Temporary Residence Certificate card (TRC), which he receives soon after. This card is valid for 3 months. Travel and accommodation are arranged for Ahmed by staff; he goes to Baleskin accommodation centre.	Ahmed reads the information booklets and contacts the Legal Aid Board to try and get a solicitor as he needs some help. After a short time in the Baleskin Accommodation Centre, he moves to an accommodation centre near a small town and sends in his completed change of address form. While he waits to get legal advice, he speaks with a volunteer group that comes into the centre and gets help filling out his forms, as he is feeling quite stressed about filling it in himself. They inform him that he is able to request an extension of time to return the questionnaire, which he applies for. He then contacts people for the supporting documentation that he needs for his application and he sends it off. While waiting for a date for his interview, Ahmed gets allocated a legal representative. He also makes contact with and meets up with his relative that lives in Ireland. When the interview letter comes with the date, he completes the confirmation slip and sends it back, he is feeling hopeful now. He gets advice on getting public transport to the interview and applies to the welfare officer for funds to travel by public transport. Ahmed's TRC card needs renewing during this time which he does with the help of centre staff.	Ahmed travels to the interview at the IPO in Dublin by public transport. When he gets there he waits to check in for the interview - there are other people trying to check in as well. He speaks with his legal representative who is present for the interview and answers the interview questions in Urdu through a translator. He is relieved that the interview was shorter than he had heard but exhausted after all the travel and the interview itself. Ahmed waits for the IPO recommendation.	Ahmed receives a letter with recommendation to grant refugee status and accompanying supplementary information. He is so relieved to know that he is not going to be sent back to Pakistan; he tells friends and relatives all about the recommendation. He speaks to his legal representative and waits for final decision.	Ahmed is so happy to receive a letter with decision to grant refugee status and accompanying declaration document, he tells his relative the good news. He then registers his permission after getting advice on how and where to do so.					
Touchpoints What parts of the service /or important connected services do they interact with?		Documentation • 63 page questionnaire (to be returned in 3 weeks/15 working days) & a prepaid envelope • Information Booklet for Applicants for International Protection - in Urdu • Customer Service Leaflet - in English • Access to Labour Market notice (Addendum No 1) • Safe Countries of Origin notice (Addendum No 2) • Refoulement notice (Addendum No. 4) • Dublin Regulation Booklet (information regarding fingerprints) • Data Protection Form-GDPR Privacy Notice • Legal Aid notice • Important Notice in English - original given to Ahmed after he has signed it. • Copy of IPF1 Section 15 Form - the information that was recorded in the system from his S15 interview - in English • TRC card	Reception • Waiting area • Staff member conducting Section 13(2) interview • Staff member taking fingerprints • Staff member conducting Section 15 interview • Staff member who arranges accommodation and transport to accommodation for Ahmed	Documentation • 63 page questionnaire (in Urdu) • Booklets, leaflets, notices as given to Ahmed in Reception • Confirmation of extension of time for return of questionnaire • Change of address form • TRC Card renewal form, sent by post • New TRC card valid for 6 months, received by post • Invitation to interview letter • Interview confirmation slip	External • IPAS staff - involved in Ahmed's move to a different accommodation centre • IPAS centre manager and staff in the new accommodation centre • Department of Social Protection - allowance PPSN, medical card, welfare officer • Legal Aid Board • Legal representative • Volunteer group	Pre-interview • Waiting area for interview • Reception staff - check in for interview	Interview • Interviewer - Panel member • Translator	Documentation • Grant Refugee status recommendation letter	External • Friends and relatives • Volunteer group • Legal representative	Documentation • Ministerial decision letter • Declaration	External • Relatives • Volunteer group • Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB)
IPO Documentation IPO External		Documents: 12 Staff members (in person): 4 Physical journeys: 2	Documents: 18 IP service transactions: 2 3rd party participants: 2 Other Government services/agencies: 4	Staff members (in person): 4 Physical journeys: 2	Documents: 11 3rd party participants: 2	Documents: 2 3rd party participants: 1 Other Government services/agencies: 1					
Customer Thoughts and emotions What is the customer thinking and feeling?	Scared - afraid of being returned to Pakistan. Hopeful - he feels things might be okay. The staff were friendly and helpful; they arranged transport and accommodation.	Confused - Ahmed is confused by all the information and documentation he has been given. Hopeful - he feels things might be okay. The staff were friendly and helpful; they arranged transport and accommodation.	Stressed - he is very stressed about filling out the questionnaire; it is really confusing. Thankful - he is thankful to the volunteer group for sharing information and giving him a little help. Hopeful - Ahmed is happy to receive his invitation letter for the interview. Apprehensive - some people in the centre have been waiting much longer than him for an interview date, he doesn't know why and he doesn't want them to think he is skipping them.	Relieved - he heard that the interview was going to be 3 hours long but it was much shorter. Happy - he will make it on time to catch the transport back to the accommodation centre. Exhausted - after another long day, he forgot to bring his medication and finds the journey back is uncomfortable.	Relief - he will be safe in Ireland for the rest of his days. Worry - but this turns into stress and self doubt, he is waiting for nearly 6 months with no correspondence.	Joy - he is finally at peace and he can relax knowing that he won't be sent back to Pakistan. Anxiety - Ahmed is anxious of the unknown, he has been looked after in the accommodation centre for so long and has to come to rely on that.					
Customer Painpoints What issues or barriers does the customer experience	• Age-related medical issues • Needs access to healthcare.	• Receives a lot of information all at once. • It is a long day for a vulnerable applicant.	• The questionnaire is difficult to complete; the questions are confusing. There was no guidance for it, which prevented him from being able to complete it on time. • He has to wait to get legal advice but there isn't enough time to do this and get the form back on time, even with the extension. • Getting documentation is difficult, he is depending on other people sending information to him. • He doesn't have his supporting documentation in time to send back with his questionnaire; he doesn't know if this is ok, until he speaks with his legal representative. • Without the information and help of the volunteer group, Ahmed would have left some of the questions on the questionnaire blank and he would not have known to ask for an extension. • On top of the questionnaire, he also has to fill in forms for social welfare, medical card etc. • Ahmed doesn't use technology so he cannot check websites for information, he depends on the paper documents that are given to him or what people tell him.	• It is another long day, especially for an elderly man. • Ahmed got most of his information about the interview from what he heard in the centre. • Ahmed is waiting for 4 months after the interview with no correspondence from the IPO. During this time he has no idea how long it will be until he has word. The more time that goes by, the more stressed he becomes.	• Scared, frustrated and stressed, Ahmed doesn't know why it is taking so long to get his final decision, he is scared that maybe he won't get it and that he will be returned to Pakistan • Another wait to find out if he can stay.	• Unclear if he will get his passport back; he needs his expired passport to apply for a new one. • He needs help to register his permission. • He needs support integrating into the community. He doesn't know who will help him integrate into the community.					



Romy

- 37 years old and from Zimbabwe.
- Romy is single and has a daughter back in Zimbabwe. Her first language is English.
- Romy is used to technology, she is comfortable using email, making phone calls and surfing the internet. However, she is not confident with complex online systems.

- Goals:**
- To be free to have her own opinion and express her views without fear.
 - To have her daughter join her, here in Ireland.
 - To live her life to the full.
 - To build a network and be part of a community.
 - To get through the IPO process quickly.

11 days since leaving home 12 days since leaving home 431 days since leaving home 683 days since leaving home 700 days since leaving home 733 days since leaving home 942 days since leaving home 1015 days since leaving home

Journey Phase	Journey to Ireland + 11 days	IPO 1 + 1 day	IPO 2 + 419 days	IPO 3 + 252 days	IPO 4 + 17 days	IPAT 1 + 33 days	IPAT 2 + 209 days	IPAT 3	IPAT 4 to Final Decision + 73 days	Final Decision
Actions What does the customer do?	Romy is weary when she arrives into Dublin airport and presents to the Border Management Unit at the airport. She answers questions and completes her Section 15(2) preliminary interview. She is relieved when emergency accommodation and transport are arranged for her.	Romy travels to the IPO from emergency accommodation via taxi and waits in reception. She answers questions from the IPO reception staff and hands over her birth certificate. Romy is given lots of booklets, leaflets, notices and the questionnaire with a pre-filled envelope. She is overwhelmed by all this information. She signs the important Notice on conditions with application and information given in IPO reception. She then has to have her fingerprints taken and completes her Section 15 interview, which is for the application for International Protection. This takes approximately one hour. She is feeling a little emotional after it as she feels her interaction with the staff member didn't go so well. She has her photograph taken for a Temporary Residence Certificate card (TRC), which she receives soon after. This card is valid for 3 months. Romy travels back to her emergency accommodation via taxi.	Romy reads the information booklet she received at reception and contacts the Legal Aid Board and waits to get legal advice. She contacts her family and friends back home for data to support her application and she returns the questionnaire, days after applying at the IPO, using the prepaid envelope. She is frustrated after finding out that she could have applied for an extension on her questionnaire. She moves from the emergency accommodation centre to an accommodation centre in a village. There, she makes contact with an NGO and speaks to friends and other people in the centre about their experiences. Romy contacts the customer service centre for her original documents so that she can open a bank account and she needs them for her course that she starts through her local college. Whilst she waits for the date of her personal interview, she speaks to her legal representative and renews her TRC card. She is feeling powerless, because she can't get any information on her interview date and her legal representative hasn't been responding to her. When Romy receives her interview letter, she completes the confirmation slip and gets advice from the centre staff on getting transport to the interview. She then applies to the welfare officer for funds to travel there via public transport. After eight months, she applies for labour market access and renews her TRC card again.	Romy travels to the interview and checks in, she speaks with her legal representative while in the waiting room. She anxiously answers all the questions in the interview and travels back from the interview by public transport. Whilst waiting for the IPO decision, she receives a 'call back' for another shorter interview. She speaks with her legal representative again and applies to the welfare officer for funds to travel to the callback interview by public transport. She is stressed by all the travel and the added callback interview. Yet again, Romy travels to the callback interview, checks in and answers all the questions in the interview and travels back to the accommodation centre via public transport. She renews her labour market access permission, TRC card and waits for the IPO decision letter.	Romy receives refuse refugee status, refuse subsidiary protection, refuse permission to remain, recommendation letter and accompanying documentation. She is shocked and confused by this decision as she gave her all. She contacts the NGO for advice and tries to contact her legal representative. She also renews her TRC Card.	Romy gets legal advice and requests her legal representative to submit her appeal. She is feeling anxious as this is her last chance, she hopes her legal representative does a good job answering the questions on the forms. She also renews her TRC Card.	Romy receives and reads the notification of her hearing date letter and speaks with her legal representative who will be able to attend the hearing, which she is really grateful for. She sends the legal representative her new supporting document. Romy looks into how to get to the IPAT offices and applies to the welfare officer for funds to travel to the hearing by public transport.	Romy travels to the hearing in the IPAT offices by public transport and signs in for the hearing at reception. Whilst waiting in the hearing room, she greets her legal representative. Romy answers all the questions at the hearing and travels back to the accommodation centre by public transport. She is upset because the questioning was really difficult and she can't stop thinking about her daughter. She renews her TRC Card.	Romy receives and reads the IPAT decision letter confirming the decision to affirm the refugee status decision and set aside the subsidiary protection decision. She is concerned while she waits for the final decision letter.	Romy receives and reads the ministerial decision letter and declaration. She is so relieved. She makes an appointment to attend GNIB to register her permission. She also applies for a travel document. Romy contacts the NGO for help on moving out of the accommodation centre and applying for family reunification.
Touchpoints What parts of the service or important connected services do they interact with?	Department of Justice • Border Management Unit (BMU) staff External • Member of the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) • Transport to accommodation • International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) accommodation centre staff	Documentation • 63 page questionnaire (to be returned in 3 weeks/15 working days) & prepaid envelope • Information Booklet for Applicants for International Protection • Customer Service Leaflet • Access to Labour Market notice (Addendum No. 1) • Letter of Origin notice (Addendum No. 2) • Refusal/notice (Addendum No. 4) • Dublin Registration Booklet (information regarding fingerprints) • Data Protection Form (GDPR Privacy Notice) • Legal Aid notice • Important Notice - original given to Romy after she has signed it • Copy of IPAT Section 15 Form - the information that was recorded in the system from her 15(1) interview - in English • Temporary Residence Certificate (TRC) card	Documentation • 63 page questionnaire Booklets, leaflets, notices as given to Romy in Reception • TRC Card renewal form - extant PDF and sent by email • TRC Card renewal acknowledgement email • New TRC card valid for 6 months, received by post • Labour Market access application form • Labour Market access information in the booklet • Labour Market access acknowledgement email • Invitation to interview letter • Interview confirmation slip External • IPAS staff - involved in Romy's move to a different accommodation centre • IPAS centre manager and staff in the booklet • Department of Social Protection • Family and friends back home • Friends in the centre who are further along in the application process • Local college • Legal Aid Board • Legal Representative	Pre-interview • Waiting area for interview • Reception staff - check in for interview Documentation • Call back interview notification • TRC Card renewal form - extant PDF and sent by email • TRC Card renewal acknowledgement email • New TRC card valid for 6 months, received by post • Labour Market access renewal application form External • Legal Representative • Taxi from centre to/from connecting public transport • Public transport services to/from Dublin • Department of Social Protection - welfare officer	Documentation • Refuse refugee status, refuse subsidiary protection, refuse permission to remain, recommendation letter • Copy of the recommendation • Copy of the report • Copy of her completed 63 page questionnaire • Quantity of Origin information and references, not publicly available • A copy of the permission to remain PIR Report • Information on voluntarily return to country of origin External • NGO • Legal Representative	Documentation • Appeal information booklet • Appeal form Documentation • Acknowledgement of receipt of appeal letter • Notification of appeal accepted letter External • NGO • Legal Representative	Documentation • Notification of hearing date letter External • Legal representative • Welfare officer • Public transport operator's website	Pre - Hearing • IPAT staff member - sign in for hearing Hearing • Member of Tribunal • Presenting officer Documentation • TRC Card renewal form - extant PDF and sent by email • TRC Card renewal acknowledgement email • New TRC card, valid for 6 months - received by post	Documentation • IPAT decision letter External • NGO	Documentation • Ministerial decision letter • Declaration External • NGO • GNIB Department of Justice • Immigration Service Delivery (ISD) - Travel Document Section
Customer Thoughts and emotions What is the customer thinking and feeling?	Overwhelmed - there is a lot of information to take in. Worried - she feels she may not have said the right thing in the short interview. Emotional - she feels that her interactions with some of the staff did not go so well, but she is hopeful that the interview will be soon and that she will be reunited with her daughter.	Powerlessness - Romy was told that the interview would be in the next 6 months, but the wait has been far longer than that. She can't get any information, despite her best efforts and her legal representative hasn't been responding to her. Frustration - The IPO didn't tell her about the possibility of an extension and she has been either given wrong timescales or none at all.	Anxious - Romy has heard bad things about the interview. Stressed - her interaction with the IPO staff hasn't been good so far and she has a long distance to travel. She is worrying about her interview and making it on time to her transport to and from the IPO. Confused - Romy doesn't feel safe in her country, so she doesn't understand why she would be sent back there. Dejected - all the time she has spent away from her daughter, all for nothing.	Shocked - Romy thought that she would be granted protection here in Ireland. She feels she gave everything and did everything that was asked of her. Confused - Romy doesn't feel safe in her country, so she doesn't understand why she would be sent back there. Dependent - continued waiting with no idea as to her future and no certainty on when she will know.	Grateful - Romy has a legal representative to help with her appeal. Mixed emotions - she is happy that she will have a hearing, but she is worried. She can't see why they would grant protection this time when they didn't the first time around. Upset - she didn't feel listened to, she felt that a member of the Tribunal was pushing their thoughts and opinions on her. The questioning was really difficult and she can't stop thinking about her daughter. Intimidated - she really wasn't expecting it to be so formal. Exhausted - it has been a long, emotional day, what with all the waiting and travelling and questioning.	Relief - Romy has a decision on her appeal. Concern - Romy is again waiting to get her final letter. She doesn't know how long she will be waiting. She is worried that the next letter may be a change in decision and stresses about what this could mean. Stress - she is again uncertain about her future and that of her daughter and has no information on how much longer she will have to wait.	Mixed emotions - Romy is so happy when she receives her letter. However, her initial happiness is replaced with overwhelming feelings of frustration and powerlessness. She has to register her permission, find somewhere to live and start managing money and paying bills again etc. Relieved - she can now apply for family reunification which means that her daughter will be able to come and live with her, at last. Stress - she is again uncertain about her future and that of her daughter and has no information on how much longer she will have to wait.			
Customer Painpoints What issues or barriers does the customer experience	There is a lot of information to take in in one day. Long day for Romy. Romy hasn't had positive interactions with staff. Her first experience of the IPO impacts on her feelings of and trust towards the organisation.	Only finds out that she could have requested an extension for the questionnaire after sending it in. IPO will not return the original documents/takes a couple of emails from the NGO. Romy is left in limbo waiting for a date for her interview.	Is up early to get to Dublin and has to leave interview early to make her transport back. The interview feels like an interrogation. The travelling back and forth twice for her interview. Being given a male interviewer when she asked for a female interviewer. Worry over transport.	The decision letter is confusing and legalistic; she has to contact a NGO to be sure she understands it and what it means for her. She doesn't understand why the information she provided was not sufficient for a positive decision. Deciding whether to appeal, if she does appeal, it means more time without her daughter.	Not knowing how much longer this process will take. Not knowing how her appeal will impact on her going to college.	Romy was not asked if the hearing date was suitable for her; she had college commitments that she has had to cancel, in order to make it to the hearing.	Another long day of travel and answering questions. Being dealt an unprepared solicitor; may tip the balance towards an appeal being lost. She has little information on what to expect of the hearing.	Has no indication on how long she will be waiting to get the next letter. She doesn't know what will happen if the next letter sent the grant letter because they have changed the decision to grant her refugee status. She can't start family reunification yet, she worries that her daughter will be too old for reunification if this takes too long.	Romy has been given very little information on what to do next.	

Constraints

5.19 The scope of research for the persona and journey map development was limited by Covid-19 and the timeframe for delivery. Under circumstances without these constraints, further development of the personas and journeys could incorporate additional research such as observation and ethnography. Such research would add further qualitative data and would provide an additional perspective on the applicant experience. Incorporating additional research into future persona and journey development, will by its nature bring further rigor to the final outputs.

Scope for further research

5.20 Further research could be done into the experiences of people who may have specific additional needs or who have complex immigration cases.

5.21 The scope of this work did not include experiences of people's transition into other ISD processes such as registering permissions, voluntary return and deportation. Development of system maps for ISD (including the IPO) would enable greater visibility of dependencies across business areas. It would also enable awareness of handovers and connections that could be impacted by, or targeted for, service improvements.

5.22 In addition, the scope of the review did not extend to connected services to the international protection process. Research undertaken in collaboration with the connected services could identify opportunities for improvement in areas of crossover or dependency between the international protection application process and these services.

6. Insights

The below summarises the key insights derived from all aspects of the user experience.

- 6.1 Insight:** People in the application process are not just living with uncertainty on the decision of their application but uncertainty on what to expect of the application process, how long it will take and how to get help and supports. The uncertainty experienced is a constant and negatively impacts a person's wellbeing.
- 6.2 Insight:** The process can put a lot of mental strain on a person and can be re-traumatising. This is compounded by the length of the processing time for some applications.
- 6.3 Insight:** People in the application process wait for extended periods of time with no communication from IPO and IPAT. They also experience difficulties in receiving application status updates and requested information.
- 6.4 Insight:** The language of questionnaire, information booklets, letters and website content, is legalistic and often confusing.
- 6.5 Insight:** There are a range of supports available to applicants through NGO's, legal aid and the IPO customer service team. However, it was found that in some instances, people in the application process depend on other actors in the

application process or people who have experienced the process for key information.

- 6.6 Insight:** The Dublin-centric set up causes difficulty for some people in engaging with the application process, particularly for IPO interviews and IPAT hearings. In some cases a person has to pay for travel upfront which can be difficult on a small allowance. In addition, for some people, there is a lot of travel involved in getting to interviews/hearings.
- 6.7 Insight:** There can be an inconsistency or lack of clarity on what support or options are available to people in the application process and how to access them. Some people struggle with completing what is required of them in the specified time frames and are not aware of what they can or should do. For example, knowing to request an extension of time to return the questionnaire.
- 6.8 Insight:** If a person misses key correspondence, doesn't understand it or if their interview or hearing is cancelled, it can rapidly increase the length of time that they spend in the application process.
- 6.9 Insight:** People have been given information that is vague or in some instances inaccurate. They

have also experienced delays in their application without explanation, and they haven't been provided with timelines.

6.10 Insight: If a person has a child while their application is being processed, the person must wait on a decision to be made on this child's application. This delays the person leaving the international protection process despite having received a Ministerial decision letter.

6.11 Insight: Some people have concerns over their handwriting and would prefer to have a digital questionnaire, feeling it would be easier to complete.

7. Conclusion and next steps

- 7.1 Actions taken to speed up the application process will unquestionably impact positively on the experience of those in the process. However, it is vital that in tandem with this, efforts are also made to improve the communication with, and information provided to, those in the application process. It is felt that continued engagement with the people in the process will be key in bringing change to the application process in a human centred way.
- 7.2 This report and all reports created for the end to end review will be submitted to the Programme Board.
- 7.3 The insights and findings in this report have been fed into the one overall report on the International Protection process end to end review. The research and insights derived here have been used throughout the overall end to end review process in order to develop a holistic

understanding and in order to develop one overall set of recommendations.

8. Publications and articles used as sources

A significant number of publications were reviewed and considered in order to gather multiple perspectives to feed into the user journeys. As the journeys are an amalgamation and synthesis of all available evidence, it would be infeasible to directly reference where any of the publications used. For completeness however, all sources are listed below.

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Appendix 1

Engagement with process experts – internal stakeholders met

IPO	IPAT
Reception	Appeals Registration Unit
Dublin Unit	Appeals Scheduling, Reception and Hearing Management
Scheduling and Arrangements	Tribunal Registry
Customer Service Centre	Appeals Processing Unit
Case Processing	
Permission to Remain	
Non-cooperation	
Recommendations	
Presenting	
Review of Permission to Remain	
Ministerial Decisions Unit	
Coordination unit	