

Applicant Insights: User Journey Review of the International Protection Process

Summary Report





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Introduction

In October 2020, the Irish Government published the Report of Catherine Day and her Expert Advisory Group. This Report made recommendations on how the International Protection Process (IPP) (asylum seeking process) can be improved.

As part of the implementation of these recommendations, a review of the IPP process from beginning to end is being carried out to see how the recommendations can be achieved. One element of the review seeks to gain feedback from people currently in the protection (asylum) process or those who have recently completed the process (within the last 18 months). The aim of this 'User Journey' Review is to understand people's experience of the process as a whole, the International Protection Office [IPO], the International Protection Appeals Tribunal [IPAT], and what can be improved and how.

Following a competitive process, the Department of Justice appointed Connect the Dots to facilitate an engagement process with people who are or have recently been in the IPP. This process included an online survey, 1-1 interviews and a focus group, with language translation services and confidentiality precautions to be detailed in the methodology section of the report. Information about the User Journey that was gathered from participants ranges in content from descriptions of experiences with the IPO and IPAT, to the accessibility of technology, level of legal and other supports, and form and effectiveness of communication throughout the IPP.

The majority of the 100 respondents that took part had applied to the IPP in the last two years, with a large proportion yet to have their IPO in-person interview. Respondents were located across the country, with counties Offaly, Dublin and Wicklow having the highest number of participants. Technology access and comfort, as well as methods of communication with the IPP were mixed. Although individual experiences varied, this report outlines the central themes of feedback, organised within 3 applicant experience types. These areas of participant feedback highlight challenges in 5 core areas: 1) timeframes and delays, 2) interactions with staff, 3) communication and access to information, 4) legal and technical supports, and 5) transparency and objectivity. These areas of difficulty described in the report combine to have far reaching impacts on the lives of IPP applicants.

This summary report describes the participants and outlines the most frequently occurring experiences and areas of feedback. However, further cross tabulation of the data gathered is required to identify findings related to more specific categories of participants.



Methodology

1. Tune In

In order to generate responses and participation in this User Journey Review of the International Protection Process, the Department of Justice sent communications to NGOs, the law society and Direct Provision centres. Social media was utilized by Connect the Dots and DoJ. Information on the review was shared on twitter and many relevant NGOs retweeted the posts, such as the Immigrant Council and Nasc, the Migrant & Refugee Rights Centre (appendix 1). Promotion of the user review gained a large amount of interest as noted in Table 1, 1,089 people opened the Typeform survey (appendix 2).

Views	Starts	Responses	Average time to complete
All Devices			
1,089	663	112	20:15
Desktop			
167	87	13	26:32
Mobile			
917	572	99	19:26
Tablet			
5	2	0	00:00

2. Custom Build

The User Journey Review of the IPP conducted by Connect the Dots was made up of three core elements: survey questionnaire, interviews and a focus group. The initial page of the survey highlighted that all information provided by the respondent would be anonymised (appendix 3). The typeform survey shared online gave respondents the option to complete the survey in full or to provide contact details for an interview or group session with Connect the Dots. All 112 respondents were required to complete the first 8 questions of the survey



(Appendix 2). In question 8, applicants were given the opportunity to continue with the survey or to exit the form and be contacted in whatever method they selected in question 2.

In answer to question 8, 85 continued to give a full response to the survey questionnaire, while 27 chose to be contacted in order to give their insights through one of the means listed in question 2. Of the 27, 15 ultimately scheduled and completed a 1v1 interview, either over the phone or through Zoom (appendix 4).. To ensure language accessibility, interpreters (in languages such as Arabic, Spanish and Pushto) were present during 1v1 interviews if the participant indicated a preference for one in Question 2 above.

Contrary to our initial outreach methodology plans, very few participants were willing to take part in a focus group (with interpreter), perhaps due to the sensitivity of the subject area and reservations in sharing experiences with others. An email was sent following the survey completion, asking if participants would like to take part in a focus group. 5 respondents with a first language of Arabic agreed to participate. On the day of the focus group, 3 participants were in attendance. The focus group session allowed for a deeper analysis into the survey as these participants had already completed the questionnaire in full. The informal nature of the focus group allowed for a flowing discourse which could veer onto other topics useful to the research. However, to ensure the objectives of the research were being met, there were pre-determined questions (appendix 5). A virtual prompt (Miro board) was also utilised to create a structure to the group session, ensuring that each stage of the process was discussed. The meeting was recorded with consent from the group members for analysis. The focus group created a natural method of knowledge gathering about human interaction and everyday life (Cassell and Symon, 1994).

Consequently, this report is based on the feedback from 100 participants, 85 through a survey completion, 15 through interview, and 3 through focus group. Precautions were taken to ensure that all responses were made in confidence that no identifying information would be provided to the Department of Justice or the public. Interviews were transcribed, anonymised and summarized in an excel sheet, appendix 6.

3. Make Impact

Quantitative survey data is presented using graphs and charts which identifies demographic and general information about the participants in the *About the Participants* section of the report. Key themes were identified when undertaking the calls and zoom interviews. These themes were used to code the open-ended survey questions. *IPP Experience & Feedback*, sees a deeper dive into analysis of qualitative and quantitative data according to each theme identified. Discussion and quotes from the focus groups were used to reinforce the key themes which were identified through the interviews.



4. Concluding

As a next step we sent the individuals transcript and personalised letter of participation (appendix 7) to each participant and ultimately everyone will receive this final report. A feedback survey was also sent to those that wanted to give feedback over how they felt this process went and an email with a list of support services and resources for those who shared their sensitive and often emotionally challenging stories (appendix 8)..

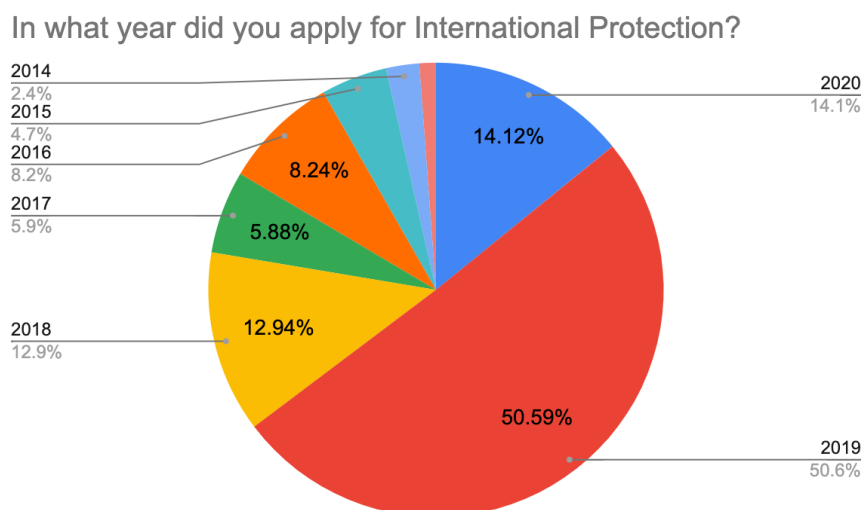


Results

The results are divided into two subsections. The first reviews demographic and general information about the participants, including the year they first applied for protection, the status of their IPP application, their location and accommodation type, as well as their access to, and comfort with, technology. The second section shifts to participant experience and feedback relating to the specific steps of the IPP process. This latter section incorporates more diverse forms of participant feedback taken from 1-1 interviews and focus groups.

About the Participants

Of the 85 respondents who completed the survey in its entirety, 64.7% had applied for International Protection within the last two years (2020 & 2019). A narrow majority of 50.6% of respondents applied in the year 2019 alone and a significant portion (35.3%) had first applied in 2018 or earlier.

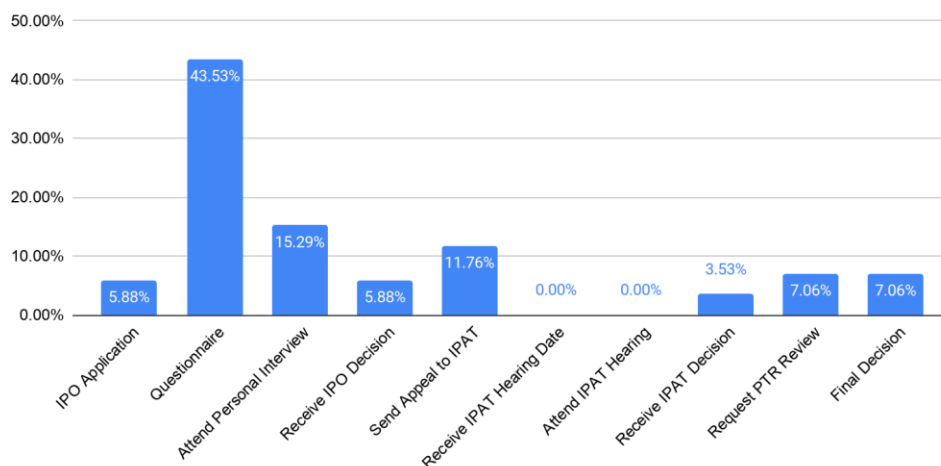


As was repeatedly noted by applicants one-on-one interviews, Covid-19's impact on IPP operations in 2020 appears to have delayed face to face interactions between applicants and the IPO and IPAT. This was reflected in the plurality of the 100 survey respondents (43.5%) identifying as at Step 2 of the IPP process, having submitted their Questionnaire to the IPO, but not yet attending a Personal Interview. Just over half of respondents had attended the IPO



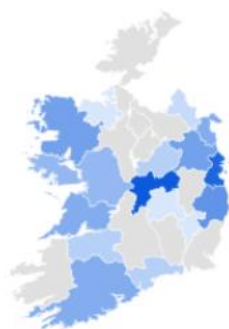
personal interview and 29.4% of respondents were currently involved in the appeals process, through either IPAT or PTR process.

Please select where you are in the IPP process currently:



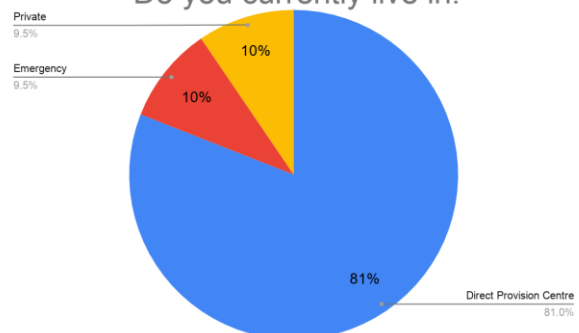
Respondents were spread across 17 counties in Ireland. The top eight counties of Offaly (13), Dublin (12), Wicklow (8), Mayo (7), Meath (7), Louth (6), Clare (6), and Cork (6) represent 76.5% of the respondents. The lowest response rates were from Sligo (1), Leitrim (1), Carlow (1) and Laois (1). The vast majority of respondents (81%) currently live in a Direct Provision Centre.

Location of Participants



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Do you currently live in:

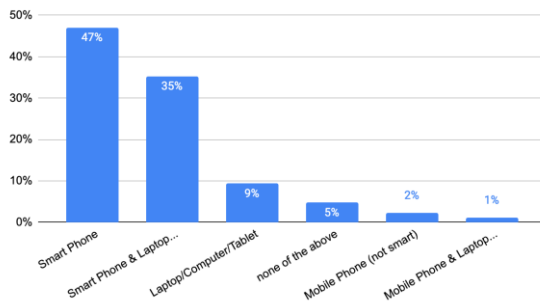


When asked about access to technology, 82% of respondents who completed the survey in its entirety, identified as having either a smartphone or a smartphone and laptop, computer or tablet. Just 7% of respondents had either no access to technology or a (non-smart) mobile phone. Further questioning in 1-1 interviews indicated that deficiencies in shared technology in accommodation centres are common, with many applicants relying on personal devices. Although most participants (76.7%) had regular access to Wifi internet, several interviewees

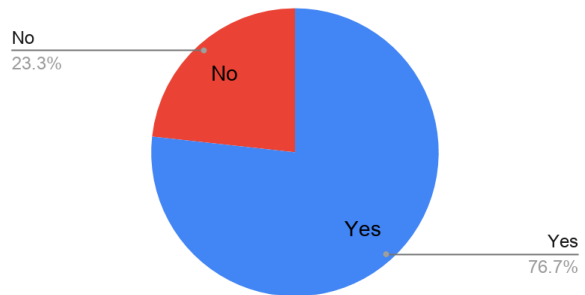


also noted that Wifi in certain accommodation settings was often unreliable and smartphone data is often used instead.

Do you have access to IT Equipment?

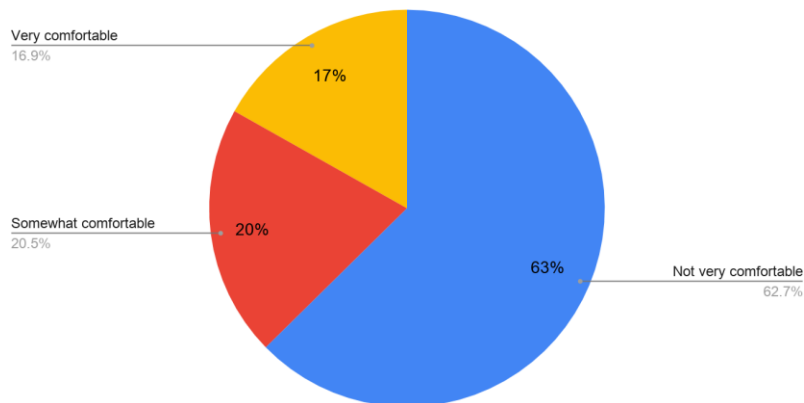


Do you regularly have access to Wifi?



Most respondents (62.7%) were not very comfortable using computers or smartphones to provide information and prefer paper forms. However, a sizable minority of respondents either described themselves as “very comfortable - I prefer submitting things online” (16.9%) or “somewhat comfortable - it depends on how much information I need to provide” (20.5%).

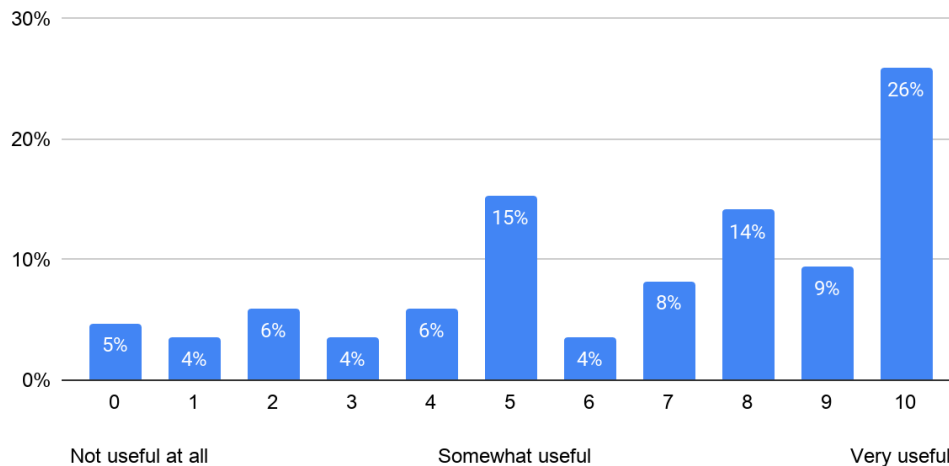
How comfortable are you at using computers / smartphones to provide information?



When asked to rank on a scale of 0-10 how useful it would be to be able to submit the questionnaire or additional papers electronically, the median ranking of respondents was a 7 out of 10, with 49% of respondents ranking between 8 and 10. This result, when viewed in combination with the level of comfort with technology above, indicates that although most respondents describe themselves as not very comfortable with technology, having the option to submit documents electronically is generally welcomed.

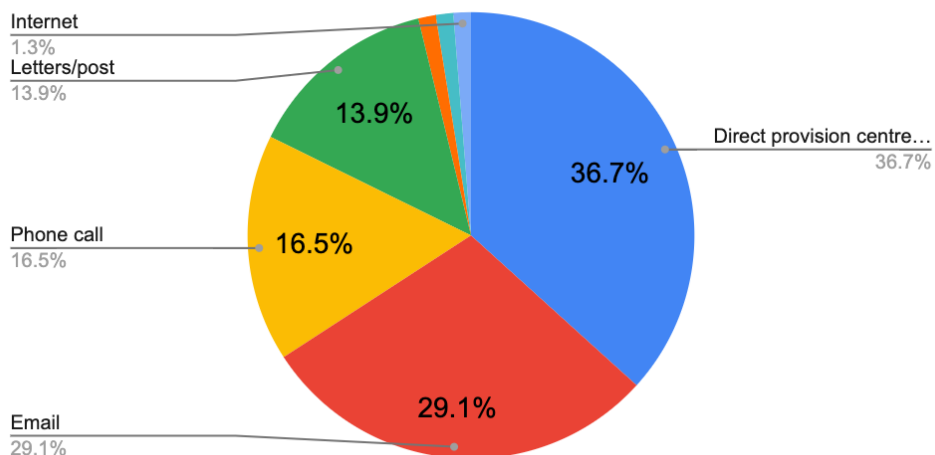


Would submitting any additional papers and the questionnaire electronically be useful to you?



Responses show that there is no one standard way that participants receive information or updates relating to the application process. The plurality of respondents get updates from their direct provision centre manager (36.7%), while a sizable percentage of respondents also get information through email (29.1%), phone calls (16.5%) and letters in the post (13.9%). In depth interviews indicated that letters in the post is perhaps a more common form of communication than indicated in the survey results.

How/where do you normally get information or updates in relation to the application process?





IPP Experience & Feedback

For the purposes of our review and analysis, the stages of the IPP can be grouped into three experience types from an applicant's perspective. First, the initial IPO application, preliminary interview and questionnaire, characterised by initial interactions with the IPP system and submission of applications and documents. Second, the IPO interview and in-person interactions with IPO staff. Finally, the appeals process through both IPAT and PTR. Participants were asked a mix of specific quantifiable and semi-structured open-ended questions in the survey, interviews and focus group to gain more insight into the user experience at each step of the IPP.

While no one applicant experience was the same, certain common feedback themes emerged, some of which were specific to a step of the IPP, while others were continuous across the stages of the IPP.

Common Feedback Themes Across IPP Stages

1. *Lack of timeframe*

No one area of feedback was more common across the entirety of the IPP than that of timeframes and delays. When asked 'Can you tell us about your experiences with the International Protection Office?' timeframes were referenced by 41% of the survey participants. Similarly, 42% referenced lack of timeframes when asked the same question in relation to IPAT. The quotes below, from applicants at varying stages of the process, highlight the frustration felt around the lack of clear timeframes and delays in decision making.

"It is the most stressful waiting period in my life... Waiting for more than one year to get second interview (IPO3) or have a decision on your application despite that... they have to prioritise my application ACT2015." (Respondent 19, IPO 2)

"By any mean available they would rather postpone looking into your case and make your process extremely lengthy without providing you any time frames for their work..." (Respondant 46, IPO 3)

"The problem, however, was that the feeling was exacerbated by the inordinate length of time the process takes..." (Respondent 52, IPO 4)

"The time waiting for an interview was three year, that was very difficult and stressful for my family." (Respondent 52, IPO 5)



"This whole process is super traumatic, having going through our own trauma ... its caused me a lot of stress and depression in the year 2017 and the IPO way of communication is poorly, slowly and unprofessional to some extent. Why because I don't think they need to first keep a person for 3 years, 4 years, 5 years before they can settle them or find out if the person is eligible to stay in the country. The decisions times have been and always too long. In my case its after a year or a year and half before you can get feedback from them and yet every moment an interview is done they always promise 2 weeks which they have never meet up." (Respondent 76, PTR Review 1)

100% of interviewees referred to a lack of timeframes and waiting in their answers to questions regarding their experience with the IPO. Interviewees noted that this time waiting on communications about key dates and decisions had significant impacts on their mental health:

"I'll be really, really honest with you... that is the most torture in life. More than nine months. I was waiting for the letter for the interview." (Interview 4, IPO 3)

"...it takes too long. In this process I have a son ... We are here since ... 2015. The only way to improve the system is to do it in the minimum time. During this process, my son who is with me since 5 years now, he has developed a psychotic disorder and he is under treatment...Since 2017/18. The system is like that. You don't have a role. You don't lead a normal life." (Interview 5, IPO 10)

"it's been really frustrating. Sometimes I wish I could just end my life because it's been like almost 3 years now. I was thinking I know that the coronavirus has made things change but I was thinking that maybe there could be another way like to give us these interviews. You know we are just waiting like I don't even know where I'm going and I don't know when they are going to call..." (Interview 14, IPO 2)

"Like when you do any small action with IPO, you have to wait for a long time to get response" (Interview 10, IPO 2)

"I am in the second stage since one year and two months." (Interview 8, IPO 2)

The feedback surrounding timeframes and delays often overlapped with the matter of communication or lack of communication. In many cases, respondents felt that sufficient updates were not provided from one stage of the process to the next. In addition, it has been



identified that there are delays in communication when information is requested by an individual as noted below:

2. Delays with responses

"...nobody answer your calls or emails from IPO to give any answers." (Respondent 19, IPO 2)

"...they [IPO] took 4 months to inform me with the result of their inquiry that was related to Dublin3 regulation which was not unlawfully based. I submitted my appeal in June 2020 and have not responded to me till today 21 Feb 2021 (8 months).

They almost never provide you any copy of your documents when you ask for them by phone or email (ie: I have asked for a photocopy of my passport and it took 2.5 months to send it and asked for a copy of my driving license since 18 November 2020 and have not received it yet till today the 21 Feb 2021 (3 months and counting))...." (Respondant 46, IPO 3)

Those in the focus group agreed that in the preliminary interview they were told by the IPO interviewer that the date for the interview should be assigned within 6 months. All participants had submitted their questionnaire by February 2020 yet, to date had not received information about their interview. It was acknowledged throughout survey responses, interviews and the focus group that the Covid-19 lockdown has had an impact on the scheduling of interviews. There was a consensus in the focus group that a solution must be identified, such as "zoom or even a well divided room (with glass and microphone) or proper space and mask."

3. Want for computerised system

Throughout surveys and interviews many respondents stated that they found it difficult to fill in the necessary information especially when completing the questionnaire. While there were many reasons for these difficulties, handwriting was cited as one. Many people coming through the system were afraid that their handwriting would be illegible or that they would make spelling mistakes. Some felt that it was unfair that there was only one chance to write the answer, with no review function as you would have on a computerised application.

"Oh, yeah, yeah. I am really good with my computer. It's been a long time. I think it would be more good electronically because you can save a file or you can read/delete again or you can print and you can screen up. " (Interviewee 2)

"Yes, like adding- like adding to the comment. Like for now I have a lot of the comments to add and I didn't add it in the first application because at the time it was short and we are not

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ready, we are not prepared. You need to call home to bring things you know, like bring this passport to bring that thing to bring that thing that specific— anything. Now you want to put it in envelope and add it to IPO. But lockdown and they are closing, and nothing available. What if it is only online? I will copy and send...you know paperwork is bad. Nobody now is using this. You know paperwork is. I'm not a paperwork. I really— I am one of those people who cannot do paperwork, if it is not online because we do that since long time.” (Interviewee 6)

“Yeah, if it's only, if you are able to use the laptop or the computer to access the questionnaire, I don't think it would be a problem, I think it would be okay to let us do it online and answer the questions online.” (Interviewee 11)

“Many unrelated / unclear questions. Lacking support to fill our questionnaire. Typing would have been easier.” (Focus Group)

“Suggestion: application should be on computer/online. Not everyone has great handwriting. When you are typing you can edit and clean it up. I was surprised when I saw the paper” (Focus Group)

Others felt that having an overall computerised system with all uploaded documentation, application and progress tracker in one place would create a more streamlined process.

“Even now, we are here, we are talking, even if it's a lockdown, everything is online now, why must they wait for lockdown to finish?” (Interviewee 3)

“IPO should have a tracking process system where an applicant can check the stage of their application after submitting the questionnaire.” (Response 38)

“In my opinion I think the IPO should make available the application process via any of the online platforms to abreast new applicants of the International protection process. This is because in my case we did not know what to do not until I sent the email.” (Response 24)

“Online application, online interviews and quick decisions” (Response 20)

“Using Internet more, through emails , database, Meetings online and accelerate the process and have a specific time frame for each stage not keep it open and stuck for years in some stage.” (Response 18)

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"I would think to have a online program where you can submit you questionnaire electronically and where you can make changes as needed or as you get more documents from your country." (Response 2)

Others were more skeptical of an online system, highlighting that not everyone is comfortable with using technology, as supported by the survey answer in relation to comfort with technology (62,7% stated not very comfortable).

"So myself I like in electronic. But I don't recommend this thing for everyone. Myself out of hundred I'm ninety five percent I'm OK in electronic." (Interviewee 8)

"I mean. Computer is better, you know, if you go you don't have to write that, I mean yes or no, this that and then give brief things. But in in this form you have to write everything. So I guess both have got their advantages and disadvantages outside you know so. Because the computer, a computer will be only like framework, like specific things, you may have limited options, but when you're writing you can write your full details whatever you want, so." (Interviewee 5)

4. Feeling about key decisions by IPO and IPAT

As noted, everyone who took part in the survey or interview was still part of the process, meaning they had only received a negative decision or no decision at all. Many recounted devastation when they read the news of their negative decision.

"I think it was a tough decision that they made and I will always feel that it wasn't fair. I know that there's nothing that you can do but I will always feel that it wasn't fair...To them everything is their own way of seeing things so even if I tried to explain to them what you know and what's on the ground is different, they have their own thinking towards a 4-star rating in the paper and what they are seeing online so if you tried to tell them no what's happening in the paper and what you're seeing on the ground, they are two different things." (Interviewee 11)

Interviewee 15's mental health has dramatically deteriorated throughout the process and after hearing of the refusal from the IPO.



"It was hard to hear when application got rejected once and then again 2nd time again now I am waiting for final response since July. I am in system almost 5 years." (Response 72)

"I mean we are not living a normal life like, we— and my because my case was already decided first instant, first instant decision was given so I am not allowed permission to work, me and my wife nor my son, so, those are the things, I mean you are just like in a Limbo you like— you are not free to decide your future you decide. Once I made a request to all those people I mentioned earlier that if they gave us a decision, they give us the status, then you can go in the community, you can work, you can earn a normal life. See so this is, in brief, what I am able to explain to you, my concern, my frustration, my disappointment. (Interviewee 5)

Others who had not yet received their decisions spoke or wrote of their fears of the decision what they would mean for themselves and their families.

"Hopefully, this system will be corrected, international protection process in Ireland it is like a huge prison your family and your lives will be stopped and struggle till somehow somebody from IPO get you out from this process and decide about your case at that time your misery and nightmares about suicide will end I think (as I am at this stage now)" (Response 18)

"Can decisions come out for applicants for 2019. It is so frustrating. I have 4 children that I have not mothered for the past 2 years. It pains me as my son is already 17 years and might not qualify for reunification should I be successful. If I should appeal that is if decision is negative there is not much time until he turns 18 years so am on the edge." (Response 45)

Experience Type 1: IPO application, Preliminary Interview and Questionnaire



94% of participants in the IPP User Journey review had submitted at least their IPO questionnaire, thus providing the review with a broad level of feedback on this first experience area within the IPP process. Also, about half of all participants had yet to attend their IPO personal interview, making this experience type the only area of expertise and feedback for this sizable portion of respondents. Descriptions of and feedback from this period of the IPP is divided into the following most frequently referenced themes:

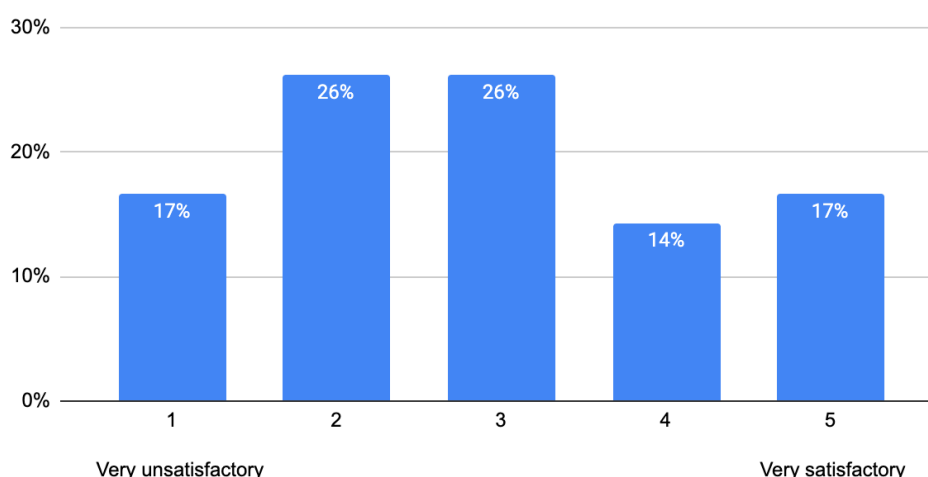
1. Interactions with the IPO Staff
2. Communication and Access to Information
3. Support
4. Provision of documentation/evidence

Interactions with the IPO Staff

Responses to a survey question asking participants to rate their experience interacting with the IPO on a scale of 1-5 (1 being 'very unsatisfactory' and 5 being 'very satisfactory') provides one indication of participant experience with staff, particularly when results are isolated to the respondents currently in the pre-Interview stage only (as in the chart below). The median ranking of 3 among this group matches the median ranking from all participants, with 43% of respondents indicating an unsatisfactory experience by ranking either 1 or 2.

How would you rate your experience dealing with the IPO?

Pre-IPO Interview Respondents



In open ended formats, either through survey questions, the focus group or interviews, descriptions of how participants felt while interacting with the IPO staff was a frequent topic of response. The mixed quality of experiences indicated in the rating above was also



demonstrated in these responses, where a significant minority of respondents refer to their interactions with IPO staff in early stages of the IPP positively:

"My experience in IPO was good... staff was very polite" (Respondent 5, IPO 2)

"They explain well" (Respondent 37, IPO 2)

"The IPO staff were kind and has listening ears towards me" (Respondent 49, IPO 3)

"To be honest, I was welcomed very very well...the lady who interviewed me with that short interview was really friendly with me." (Interviewee 4, IPO 3)

"It was quite Ok for me, I talked to them and they helped me." (Interviewee 9, IPO 3)

Most open ended responses relating to interactions with IPO staff in this early stage, however, were negative, with a number including anecdotes illustrating just how poorly the interactions made them feel:

"...I was in tears because we were sitting at immigration at the airport the whole day and our first person we saw at IPO was the rude security guard." (Interview 6, IPO 2)

"The first day I came to IPO one of the staff behaved me poorly because she said 'no taxi, go on foot.' So I walked from IPO to Baleskin on foot." (Respondent 10, IPO 2)

"For me all the system of IPO is unprofessional." (Respondent 18, IPO2)

"They unnecessarily express their frustration of your legitimate inquiries." (Respondent 46, IPO 3)

"The first word I was hoping to hear from everyone in IPO was 'don't be afraid.' Actually they made me be more afraid ...We will make your life impossible, they make you feel that this is your life now and you owe them everything" (Respondent 56, IPAT 1)

"Well first when I went to ring the building of IPO... I tell them please take me in because I want to claim asylum?... the first welcoming was "why you coming here? In this time? Don't you know it's coronavirus, don't you know its bad to travel? Why you coming



to Ireland?" It's not welcoming, someone is depressed...I told her if you've been through what I've been through you will also travel... So not welcoming, how you welcome an asylum seeker like that." (Interview 7, IPO 2)

Communication & Access to Information

Access to information and communication was a common source of frustration among respondents, and one that was often intertwined with issues of backlogs and Covid-19 delays in the IPP. In the in-depth interviews and focus groups, participants were asked directly if they felt they were given enough information about the process when they first applied. Many felt that information was lacking and these early steps were overwhelming.

"The explanation should be little better...they have to explain the procedures, like a chart, like a chart format which you have sent in the review - even explaining with different languages would be better." (Interview 8, IPO 2)

Given that the survey results show there is no standard way that respondents receive information regarding their application, open ended questions, interviews and the focus group also provided an opportunity to ask participants for further detail about their thoughts on the form of communication and updates they receive regarding their application status.

"It is very difficult to get information or update about your application. Sometimes you have to make several calls and emails before getting the information needed on your application" (Respondent 25, IPO2)

"Process is very slow and we was not informed properly, we did not have [respondent language] leaflets that's why we had known late about the process." (Respondent 32, IPO 2)

"Updates about our application received via Letter. I hope that is the best way for all levels of people, if there can be an Email /Phone alert it should be ok, but I do not recommend this will work with everyone." (Respondent 29, IPO2)

"Getting updates is hard most of the times because no one is talking about the process we are told that they is a pandemic and nothing is moving that's why we don't know what's going on unless I watch the news on updates otherwise it's rare to get news - Word of mouth or emails" (Respondent 35, IPO 2)

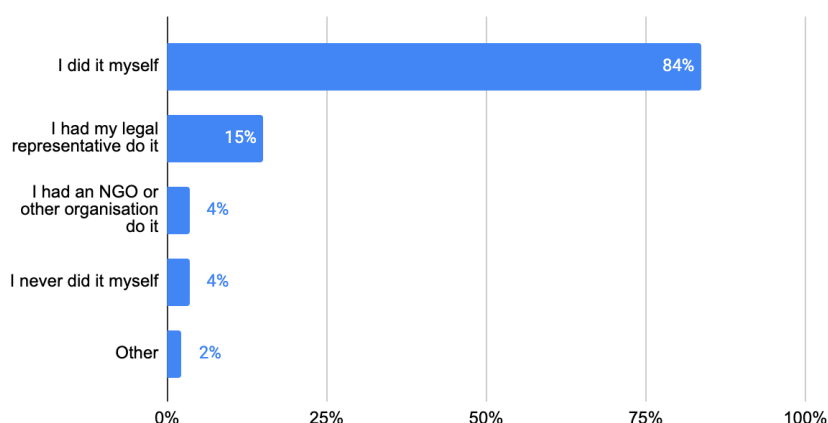


"Nobody updating you, no one. It's like a big black hole...under very huge stress. And why? Because you don't know what's going on. You don't know if something wrong." (Interview 6, IPO 2)

Support

The survey results indicate that the vast majority (84%) of respondents submitted their questionnaire and any supporting documents without any outside support.

When completing or submitting any additional papers (in support of your application) or the questionnaire at any stage in the process...



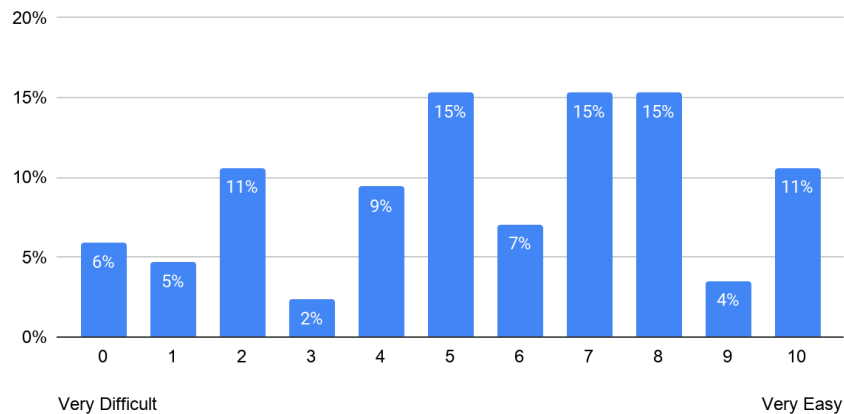
Among those who did receive support, the top reasons for seeking support are ranked in the table below:

1. Uncertainty or confusion regarding the overall process	4. For issues of language accessibility
2. To ensure evidence in support of the application is strong	5. Seeking legal support was recommended
3. To clarify Questionnaire questions	

Several survey responses and interview discussions also highlight that although participants sought legal advice, their solicitors were either unresponsive or unsupportive. Despite 84% of respondents submitting documents and the questionnaire alone, when asked to rank the ease or difficulty of submitting documents, responses were mixed (median ranking of 6 out of 10), with a large minority of respondents ranking the process on the difficult side of the spectrum.



How easy was it to submit the questionnaire and any additional papers in support of your case?



As previously noted in the *About the Participants* section, most respondents react positively to the suggestion of an option to submit additional documents or the questionnaire online (although technology access is not universal). Open responses, interviews and focus groups, however, highlight that technology accessibility is not the only issue impacting the ease of the questionnaire and document submission at this early stage.

Level of support, in several forms, was the most common issue raised among those who found the questionnaire difficult, particularly citing issues relating to: its length and the allowed time to complete it, an overall lack of guidance, confusing wording and translations, and limited access to legal and case worker support.

"The qustineers were given in the most stressful time with no guides, and my hand writing which is not clear or focus without any guide, it's too long time after giving it so what is the use of such short time to submit the application" (Respondent 12, IPO2)

"The application process was a bit difficult...The staff is good in working and finally when going through different parts is stressful, as people like me come from a traumatised background and it's difficult to answer what is being questioned" (Respondent 23, IPO 2)

"The hardest part was getting to meet up with a lawyer to present your reason for applying for international protection...The process is a bit overwhelming especially when you left behind children and you are all alone..." (Respondent 45, IPO 3)

"The questionnaire appears to be somewhat unwieldy and deliberately designed to frustrate the applicant. Information about process was



not adequately available, especially at the initial stages, but then if an applicant was diligent enough to ask questions in relevant places and from the right sources, then s/he would have sufficient information.” (Respondent 51, IPO 4)

“Going through the preliminary interview was not so difficult as I was provided with transport to the offices. However in completing the questionnaire we are advised to get a lawyer to assist in the process, this was very difficult for me as I live in an emergency centre far from Dublin, and could not access the services of a lawyer. I also was not clear on how I could get legal advice, this delayed my completion of the questionnaire and I had to postpone the submission date” (Respondent 70, IPO 3)

- 1. I requested for an interpreter and got none*
- 2. I got no updates until I wrote to my solicitor myself*
- 3. Communication was unsatisfactory*
- 4. Anxious” (Respondent 74, PTR Review 1)*

“Difficult part for me was completing the Questionnaire. Some of the questions I was not able to understand. I had to wait to get a lawyer at the time because of the pandemic things are moving slow...” (Respondent 35, IPO 2)

Interviewee 15 noted that a poor translation of the questionnaire into their native language made it difficult to complete and the tense and dangerous situation their family was in back home added a lot of pressure to answer questions correctly. The following interviewees also described their difficulties with the questionnaire and a feeling that support was lacking:

“To arrive as an asylum seeker, it’s not an easy feeling...they give us one month to fill the application and in one month you need to settle, you need to know where to go, what to do... without any knowledge about that I need to talk to my lawyer about what to write here, what to write there... my handwriting is not clear and the story is upside down and nothing is clear... I’m fluent in Arabic but I cannot understand really what they want... I filled it out only the last night of submission, nobody told me that you had the right to extend it.” (Interview 6, IPO 2)

“...you know the questions are a bit tricky, they look the same ... sometimes you get a question that is asked 3 times in a different way in one questionnaire. So it was really tough to answer the questionnaire.” (Interviewee 11, Final Decision)



"The questionnaire, it was really difficult... you should be helped with someone pro you know?" (Interviewee 7, IPO 2)

"I tried so hard to get legal representer with the legal aid board... the problem is that they never referred me to a legal representer within 15 days - so I emailed them, I filled the forms - application forms for the other representer and I waited for like one week and only one week left to retur...I have to finish alone... and I don't have like legal experience." (Interviewee 7, IPO 2)

Provision of documentation

The following interviewees highlighted that providing supporting documentation for evidence to support their application was difficult. Some suggested that this was an unfair request of those who had fled their country quickly, to escape a dangerous situation.

"And there's something else as well, I just remember, with the, the paperwork, I understand uh, obviously when you have to produce this, some sort of documents that prove of your story back home what happened. But at the same time, it's kind of really hard you know, when you're taking your bag and you're running away, you don't remember to take a certain paper. You don't remember that this, this gonna be needed and stuff because you don't know where you're going but you know that where you go you will get help, with the documents and all those things you know and if you haven't- if you don't have so much it, it could document that says what happened to you, your case is in vain. You know, even that, I think it's unfair." (Interviewee 4)

"I would say maybe not difficult maybe more complicated. So like request, some they ask are you educated, did you go to school, if yes, provide the data, you know, I could not get the data, I could not-OK the date is not much of a problem. It was the certificates and other paperwork." (Interviewee 10)

"I would say wherever you come from it's really hard for you to bring all the evidence at the time that you come and get people to send you the evidence is quite a process. And it is really hard to get all the evidence at one place." (Interviewee 11)

"What is happening and of course when I left my country I couldn't bring any legal documentation because I was a bit risky so I couldn't. So I left my country with nothing, absolutely
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nothing. So when I arrived here, the social worker had asked me to do my research because I know best how to research than you guys, and I so I will be sending everything to him.” (Interviewee 13)

Experience Type 2: IPO Interview

51% of those who completed the survey in its entirety had attended their IPO personal interview, while 47% of the interviewees had completed their IPO interview. There were two open ended questions in the survey focusing on experiences with IPP broadly and IPO specifically, as well as interview discussions which identified the following most frequently referenced themes of feedback relating to the IPO interview:

1. Delays due to covid,
2. Interactions with staff,
3. Objectivity and Transparency

Delays due to Covid-19

It is important to note that Covid -19 has had an impact on the IPO’s ability to host interviews in the last year, which may have also had an impact on conversion rates between completing the questionnaire and being called for an interview. The quotes below highlight that some have had their interview rescheduled many times, due to lockdown.

“...I was among those which there interview has been postponed almost 3 times and still no new dates. I hope to get one soon” (Respondent 32, IPO 2)

“I sent them an email, and they replied me, that all interviews are stopped cause of the lockdown.” (Respondent 37, IPO 2)

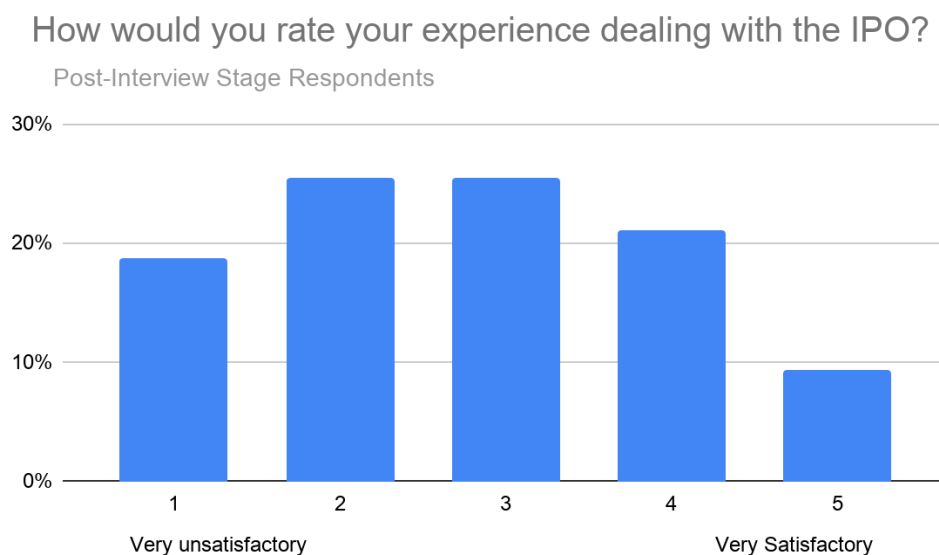
“My interview has been postponed twice and I received a letter with no new date, my solicitor try to get feedback from IPO. Some persons who arrived in Ireland after me and same month with me got their interview” (Respondent 28, IPO 2)

“Unfortunately the time I got the letter it went. It went this the lock down started in the country that long term started yes so I had to. Well, yeah. It had to be cancelled for me and it again it had to be cancelled again.” (Interview 5, IPO 3)



Interactions with IPO Staff

Analysis of the closed ended question relating to experience interacting with the IPO on a scale of 1-5 (1 being 'very unsatisfactory' and 5 being 'very satisfactory') again provides an indication of participant experience with staff. Here, the results are isolated to the respondents currently in the post-Interview stage (as in the chart below). Less than 10% had a very satisfactory experience while 45% had an unsatisfactory experience.



Drawing from experiences detailed in these open ended questions and interviews, a common theme of negative interaction with IPO staff emerged.

"IPO employees are incompetent and not fully aware about the law and how to apply it. They do not want to work, they do not listen to you and they do not care in spite of the sensitivity of their position being in control of the lives of others." (Respondent 47, IPO 3) (Que 2)

"I felt as though the staff of the IPO didn't really believe my reason for applying for asylum. I felt as though my main interview was rushed and that I wasn't asked enough questions." (Respondent 64, IPAT 1)

"My interviewers were not nice at all. They force words out of my mouth and fear made to accept things that way." (Respondent 72, IPAT 4) (Que 2)

Objectivity and Transparency

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Concerns around the objectivity of the IPO staff were raised by both interviewees and respondents of the open ended survey questions. Respondent 76 describes the interview as an interrogation rather than an interview, which echoes the feeling of Interviewee 5. Also, Interviewee 9 recalled a similar interrogation style encounter during his initial interview with the IPO.

"First it took the IPO 1 year plus to call me for interview, on the interview I was interrogated not interviewed. My lawyer having requested me to be interviewed by a lady the IPO didn't adhere to that, they instead gave me a male interviewer who instead have me questioned for 8 hours which I think is unlawful, he, the interviewer went deeply into my personal life than my case. When my lawyer wrote back to IPO highlighting his mistakes they said they can do nothing much since I had already appealed. Imagine someone quoting that I provided a whole documentary of certificates, comments like such an intelligent and educated lady you are." (Respondent 76, PTR Review)

Interviewee 15 (IPAT 1), repeatedly raised criticism that they felt the IPO did not conduct proper research into their case, particularly regarding evidence documents they submitted, such as ransom letters from a terror group to their family. This interviewee proceeded to say that if a child of theirs unfortunately died in their home country before they could be reunited in Ireland, they would hold the IPO and their limited research partially responsible. This perception of the IPO conducting limited research was echoed by other interviewees, such as Interviewee 11 (Final Decision).

"If he really doesn't understand the story, it will be hard for you to please him... sometimes to them, they want what they believe, not what you are telling them... they have their own thinking and what they are seeing online, so if you tried to tell them what you're seeing on the ground, they are two different things"

Interviewee 5 recounted thoughts of anxiety and fear as they believed there was animosity between themselves and the interviewer.

"at the same time for me I had a very much mixed emotions for me because what I experience with the lady who was interviewing me....I thought she's just gonna press me no matter what, she's just gonna press me. For me it went with three hours because the message she was busy trying to to press to me, she was busy telling me, my country is a safe country. I didn't see it as it felt to me when I'm running away needing help."

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Further suggestions of bias were made by respondent 76 as detailed below:.

"The interviewer would specifically limit you answer she wanted you to give. She will never allow you to explain what you're saying. I wish I knew the best way to describe IPO interviewer. If you're labelled by DP centre management as a troublesome person, your case will never be honoured as a true case. Every word from you will be twisted or rewritten. Since you're not given a 2nd chance to peruse your documents. Your utterances or statement are adulterated. I am very confident, I saw this with IPO on my case. I can show a proof. All the relevant documents that I presented were never used. The digital audio provided as a proof were never used as a proof. Only at IPAT, the Justice Rep, apologized.

I must confess, they IPO are never sincere. They lack merits. They are lack conscience and they are not neutral. My name can be displayed. I am not afraid. It is about my conscience. I have proofs in saying what I am saying. Imaging DP centre management has a decision to influence your case positively or negatively! Very shocking. IPO lacks merit. And in the course of survey, many truths will be revealed to you. This is the first time, I am voicing out." (Response 76)

Some people used words like 'interrogation' and 'judged' when describing their interview.

"Not to judge us , i was asked more questions about our sex life with my partner . They never believe that it is a taboo to date some of your same sex in Zimbabwe" (Respoense 55)

When asked 'What would improve your experience of applying for International Protection in Ireland?' a commonly made point was a change in the 1-1 nature of the interview. It was thought that this change would in turn result in a more objective and transparent decision process.

"...Mainly its a one on one. That's so poorly arranged or organised. I understand the area of privacy but a third person as a witness here I mean when the IPO interviewer makes mistakes let say your lawyer is with you there she can be just taking notes which can be highlighted and sent immediately than waiting 1year plus to get back to both of you ,you and your lawyer and you are given 15 days to appeal.if your lawyer is with you in the interview room it gives a person confidence to speak. You may not however in any case speak your lawyer or if so you can to polish things and make the work

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easier for the IPO but seeking advise thats on your break time. The one to one interviews are so traumatic.” (Respondent 76, PTR Review)

“Cameras should be made available during interviews and interviewers should be well trained to know what to say because they most times make applicants more traumatized.” (Respondent 82, IPAT 4)

“IPO at the interview stage should have NGOs to be part of the process...Not to speak but to record and observe the transparency.” (Respondent 77, PTR Review)

Positive Experience

A contrasting point in relation to experience with IPO interviewers, was made by only 2% of all participants. One individual was told by a friend that the interview experience would depend on the actual interviewer. They heard many stories of interviews which lasted 2 to 4 hours, however, Interviewee 12 recalled a short and pleasant interview with a friendly staff member.

“When I go to the interview luckily I meet the right person...she was so good to me...like seriously. She asked me the question about my story, I was repeating the same questions. Fortunately she said we are finished and we are done. I wondered why my interview was only 30/40 minutes...for me I was so happy.” (Interviewee 12, IPO 3)

In addition, only one of the survey respondents described the interview as positive.

“I would evaluate the interview positively. But I am disappointed to refuse. Because I provided all the information, everything is true.” (Respondent 84, IPO 4)

None of those who had participated in the focus group had attended their IPO interview, however they could provide their perceptions around what the interview may be like, based on word of mouth.

“I would like a lawyer for interview. Because of long wait, instead of focusing on IPP now I have other issues ... new issue not only the story or case. Things are now mixed up. I want to talk about human rights during the interview now.” (Focus Group Participant 3, IPO 2).

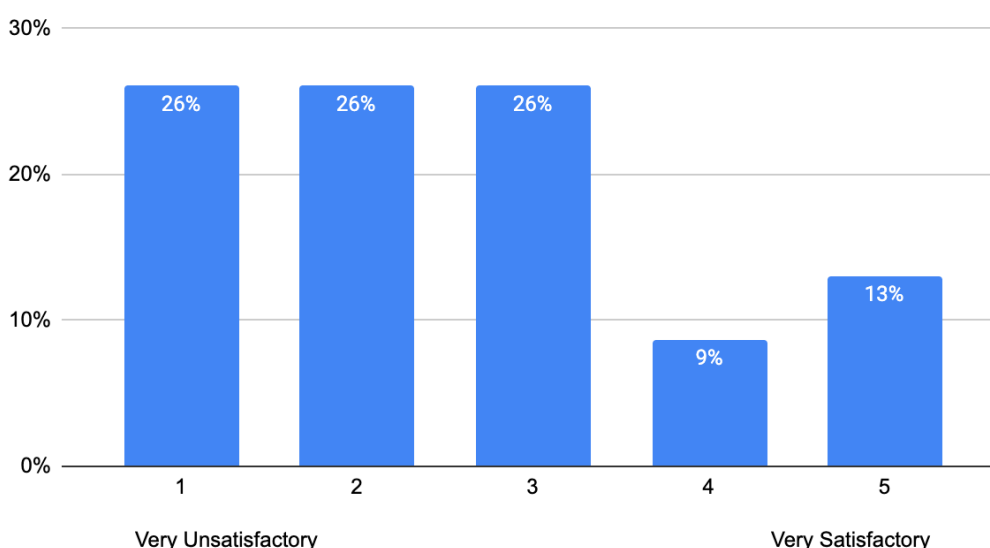


Experience Type 3: Appeals Processes

The final grouping of IPP experience types is made up of the two forms of appeal, either through IPAT or (following a negative IPAT response) through Permission To Remain (PTR).

Firstly, survey respondents who are involved in an appeal were asked to rate their experience dealing the IPAT from 1 (very unsatisfactory) to 5 (very satisfactory). The median ranking was a 2, with the majority of respondents considering their experience unsatisfactory.

How would you rate your experience dealing with the IPAT?



An open ended survey question asked participants who had lodged an appeal: “can you tell us about your experiences with the International Protection appeals Tribunal (IPAT)?” As was common in participant feedback across stages, wait times was once again the most common subject of responses.

“I have done my hearing last two years ago. All together I’m here for over 5 years but no response. I’m 35 now they should understand I have to make my future, but still I don’t have any savings, and u won’t believe they allow me to work from July 2020. I think the tribunal doesn’t care about people life ... please I’m here for long enough” (Respondent 81, PTR)

“Very poor. It took 3 years to reply to my appeal.” (Respondent 64, IPAT 4)



Participants currently in appeals processes who completed interviews also centered many of their responses on the length of time appeals have taken:

*"The process must be expedited...14 months for one outcome?"
(Interview 1, PTR Review 1)*

"I think it takes a lot of time to make decisions...Through this pandemic, I can't say anything because I never received anything from Justice." (Interview 10, Final Decision)

Apart from the theme of waiting times, most responses again raised critical feedback, relating to the environment of the IPAT Hearing, the objectiveness (or perceived lack thereof) of appeal decisions and lacking legal or other support.

IPAT Hearing & Intimidation or Treatment

"They made me accept their thoughts." (Respondent 71, IPAT 4)

"The attitude of the tribunal members was intimidating, I was attended to in a discriminatory manner and that led to a lot of error in the decision I was issued." (Respondent 74, PTR Review 1)

"...the interviewer or hearing Officer repeated himself with the same statement that how can a such intelligent well educated person like you says you never heard of asylum?? Really. And he seemed to me he was there to fulfil his attendance not hearing me out.." (Respondent 75, PTR Review 1)

"Was so intimidating." (Respondent 67, Final Decision)

"First experience was bad with IPAT, lady was harsh to me and my family." (Respondent 5, Final Decision)

IPAT Decisions & Objectiveness

"...they believed my story credibility is consistent, but my country is classified as safe. But it's not. We have been victims. I have proven in 5years that my country is unsafe for us to go back to" (Respondent 73, PTR Review 1)

"The judge gathered the world's report by UN, Unicef and so many international and is asking to make comments of every report seriously? Why couldn't she focus on the situation at hand in my country and deeply investigate about my case not on international

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reports. Because international bodies will do reports accordingly yearly or a certain period of time and then publishes them. If she had focused on my case or on international report. This is a person experience not international experience.” (Respondent 75, PTR Review 1)

“A decision not understood” (Respondent 80, Final Decision)

“...there is a big bias, because... what they want is what they see on the news or what they see on the papers, no physically what is happening on the ground. So as much as you want to explain to them, they have their own way of doing things” (Interview 11, Final Decision).

Legal and Other Supports

“In my own case, my legal aid lawyer couldn't say anything. The commissioner was the one compelling my lawyer to draw up legal argument in support of my claims. I was even shocked! I have never seen such a representative like that in my life.” (Respondent 76, PTR Review 1)

“Would not accommodate my husband and I when we have a breastfed baby and autistic son. Our review went ahead without us because no children are allowed into tribunal and we couldn't leave them with anyone” (Respondent 65, PTR Review 1)

“You won't be getting any support from IPAT, you're doing it alone. There's zero support.” (Interview 11, Final Decision).

Reflection

The themes identified throughout this report which are summarized below, have devastating impacts on physical and mental health for people who are going through the International Protection Process.

- Delays in appointment making and decision making
- Lack of guidance and support
- Lack of communication
- Lack of transparency
- Limited access to technology
- Limited interactions with staff



A combination of these issues has the effect of reducing the capacity of a person to integrate into society. This results in isolation of the applicant which has severe consequences on mental health.

In addition, the lack of updates throughout the process and the lack of a transparent and realistic timeline means that expectations are constantly not being met. This can lead to a range of emotions from frustration, disappointment and possibly resentment toward the system. Many people who come through the International Protection Process have a family located elsewhere and their ultimate goal is to reunite with their families. These delays in turnaround of applications and decisions have far reaching consequences for these people. Separation from family (especially when the family may be in danger) can cause stress and as a result, physical health problems.

The issues above can also cause applicants to over-think their application, on whether they filled the application correctly or if their story is being believed. Constant questioning in one's own ability has negative impacts on mental health.

Conclusion

Connect the Dots is grateful to the 100 current or recent IPP applicants who shared their experiences with us in confidence as part of this engagement process. Their responses were thorough, varied and often involved significant emotional labour to recount quite difficult experiences. The content included in this report outlines detailed information about IPP applicants and their experience, which we hope will be utilised in ongoing reviews and improvements to the Protection Process.

Of course, there were limitations to our outreach. Potential improvements to achieve higher response rates and more diverse representation include additional translation of outreach materials, financially compensating participants, and of course, in-person engagement. Future research of this kind must target those who have experience with the IPAT as our interaction with this group was limited. However, in spite of these limitations, we are confident that the results outlined in this report provide a thorough and broadly representative summary of participant feedback on the IPP. An additional recommendation in relation to eliciting a response on people's experiences of the IPO and IPAT would be to create a feedback form for everyone who engages with both bodies - framed as a 'How did we do?' and it can be as brief and largely quantitative in style as a survey you might do after any service/customer feedback form.

The central areas for improvement in the IPP that participants repeatedly raised include: timelines & delays, interactions with staff, communication and access to information,



technical and legal support and transparency and objectivity in decisions. The problems and potential solutions identified by applicants in each are summarised below:

Timelines & Delays

PROBLEM:

- An already lengthy process has been backlogged by interview and appeals delays during Covid-19, causing far reaching impacts outlined by respondents in areas such as mental health, family reunification and costs to the state.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Invest in IPO capacity.
- Conduct interviews and hearings with proper distance and PPE or over Zoom.
- Provide more regular updates and check-ins with applicants.
- Create more application tracks to fast track certain clear case types.

Interactions with Staff

PROBLEMS:

- Sometimes demeaning or intimidating interactions with IPO or IPAT staff, especially upon first arrival and in interviews.
- Perceived lack of understanding of trauma that participants have faced (or are facing).

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Improved training of all staff in direct contact with applicants , including an aspect of cultural and trauma sensitivity (CTD's own suggestion).
- Improved social or case worker capacity to meet applicants immediately upon arrival to recognise potential unique service needs.
- Implement new staff behaviour and ethics standards in interviews and hearings.

Communication & Access to Information

PROBLEMS:

- Limited information provided about the whole IPP upon arrival
- Unstandardised and infrequent communication regarding application status
- Staff unresponsive or inaccessible to applicants
- Legal support often also unresponsive and inaccessible between steps in the IPP



- Limited use of technology to facilitate certain forms of applicant access to information

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Improved IPO, IPAT and Legal Aid capacity
- Expanded forms and frequency of communication to all applicants
- Expand IT accessibility and training for applicant updates and submissions

Legal and Technical Supports

PROBLEMS:

- Especially in completing the questionnaire, support is either underutilised, not known about, or limited in capacity
- The questionnaire is often described as lengthy, confusing, lacking written or human guidance, and inaccessible following submission
- Technology access and options are limited

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Guidance document alongside questionnaire, explaining each question in full
- A revision of the questionnaire to remove any complicated repetition of questions
- A requirement that a legal representative must look at the questionnaire before submission
- Provide information at the outset on the ability to extend the deadline for completion if needed

Transparency & Objectivity in Decisions

PROBLEM:

- Participants feel that the decision making process is not transparent and that research conducted by IPO & IPAT is lacking.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Neutral third party observers present in all interviews or hearings, with recordings made in each to be accessible by the applicant.
- Written rationales for each decision should be made available to each applicant.



Appendices

Appendix 1:
Promotion and Outreach



User Journey Review of the International Protection Process (Seeking Asylum)

Can you tell us about your experience dealing with the IPO & IPAT?

Deadline 22nd Feb 2021.
Translations can be made available

*Please note by getting involved in this review your application will not be affected in any way.

Connect the Dots
If you require assistance in any way please feel free to email us info@connectthedots.ie

Appendix 2

Survey Questions answered by all 112:

1. Consent
2. How would you prefer to provide us with your insights into the review process?
 - a. - Individually over the phone/zoom in English
 - b. - Individually over a zoom call with translator
 - c. - In a group online session in English (with translation capabilities)
 - d. - Via this online survey (more questions further on)
 - e. - Other
3. If you require translation please let us know what language
4. Name
5. Contact Method
6. In which county are you located?
7. Please select where you are on the process currently:
8. Do you want to continue to give your insights on the process through this survey instead of any of the other means mentioned previously?

Questions answered through the online survey:

1. What year did you apply for International Protection (asylum)?
2. How/where do you normally get information or updates in relation to the application process?
 - a. email
 - b. phone call

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- c. Direct provision centre manager
 - d. Other
3. How would you rate your experience dealing with the IPO?
0 1 2 3 4
 4. How would you rate your experience dealing with IPAT?
0 1 2 3 4
 5. Can you tell us about your experiences with the International Protection Office (IPO)?
 6. Can you tell us about your experiences with the International Protection appeals Tribunal (IPAT)?
 7. Do you currently live in :
 - a. Accommodation centre (aka. Direct Provision)
 - b. Private accommodation
 - c. Emergency accommodation
 - d. Other ____
 8. What would improve your experience of applying for International Protection in Ireland?
Please think specifically about the application and appeals processes (IPO and IPAT)
 9. Is there anything else you would like to share with us in relation to?
 10. Do you have access to IT Equipment
 - a. Smart phone
 - b. Mobile phone (not a smart phone)
 - c. Laptop/computer/tablet
 - d. I have none of the above
 - e. Other
 11. Do you regularly have access to Wifi?
 12. How comfortable are you at using computers/smart phone to provide information
 - a. Very comfortable – I prefer this
 - b. Somewhat comfortable – It depends on how much information I need to provide.
 - c. Not very comfortable – I prefer paper forms
 13. When completing or submitting any additional papers (in support of your application) or the questionnaire at any stage in the process...
 - a. I did it myself
 - b. I never did it myself
 - c. I had my legal representative do it
 - d. I had an NGO or other organisation do it
 - e. Other
 14. If relevant to your case, please tell us why you had support in completing and submitting any additional papers or the questionnaire?
 15. How easy was it to submit the questionnaire and any additional papers in support of your case?
0-10



16. Would submitting any additional papers and the questionnaire electronically be useful to you?
0-10
17. Is there anything else you would like to share with us in relation to the International Protection Process?

Appendix 3

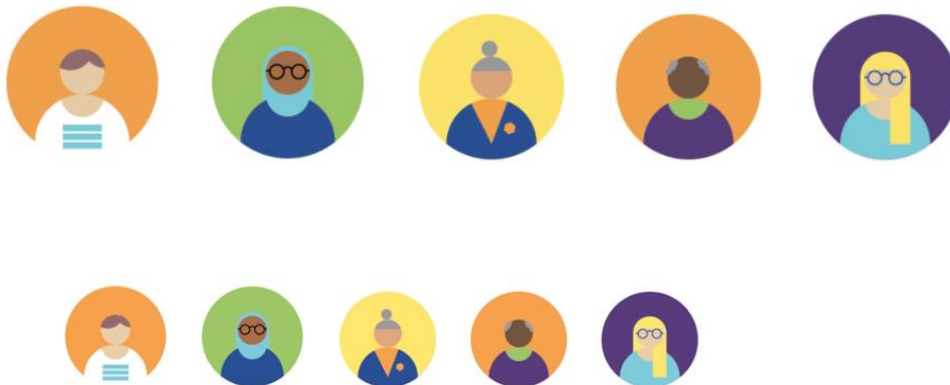
" Privacy Policy

1. The information that you share will be used to inform the recommendations report following from this end to end review of the process.
 2. Your details **will not be provided to any other parties** and will solely be gathered and stored by Connect the Dots.
 3. **Anonymised** data will be shared with the Department of Justice for their final report and **will not in any way affect your application process.**
 4. Any Personally Identifiable Information will be **permanently deleted once the consultation phase has been completed.**
 5. Unless you request to be consulted or kept informed about the review you will not be contacted.
- See <http://connectthedots.ie/privacy-policy> for more details.



Appendix 4

Interview Script:



Script and Questions

Script for 1 to 1 phone calls in English and 1 to 1 zoom calls in English and with a translator

Introduction

- Name
- Calling in relation to the International Protection Process review
- Work for Connect the Dots.
 - Connect the Dots supports organisations in engaging with their stakeholders and the public. Following an independent competition, the Department of Justice appointed us to engage with people who are or have recently been in the international protection process.
- Is now a good time (or a time has been set)
- If on zoom and non-English speaking we will introduce the translator

About:

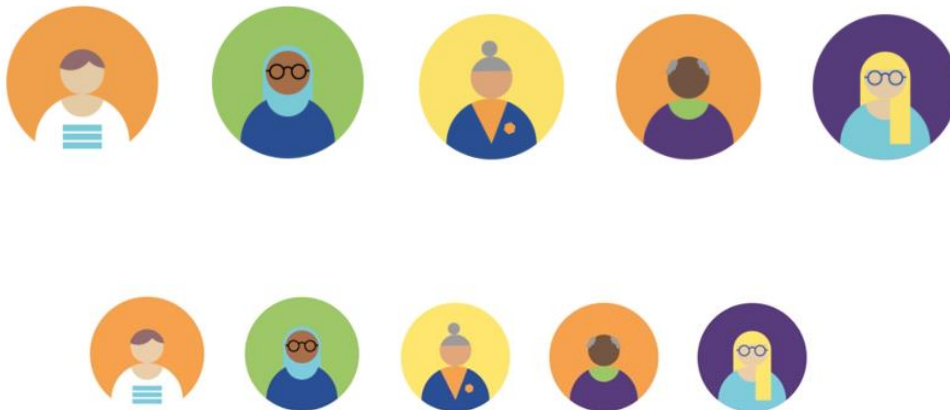
- **As you know this is part of a review of the process from beginning to end that is being carried out to see how the recommendations can be achieved.** We want you to tell us about your journey through the process, what you think could be improved and how. Your thoughts and ideas will help the IPO and IPAT improve their processes, and how they engage with people at all stages of the process.
- This will take between 30-60 min depending on where you are in the process etc.
- We will treat your contribution with strict confidence.
- No personal information will be shared with the Department of Justice, the IPO or the IPAT and your participation will have no impact on your international protection application or appeal.
- We will give you a letter to acknowledge and thank you for your participation
- We will also share with you the report on the survey and focus groups.
- **Do you have any questions to start?**

Prep:

- Each person will have given us details on where they are living and what stage in the process they are so we will prepare in advance the level of questions we will have based on that. For example someone who has gone all the way through to the end and received a positive response will have more to say potentially than someone who is just at the start. Or someone who has been in the country longer may have more to say about the process.
- **TBC - can you take a look at both questions lists and see if we should just stick to the typeform questions or where we should be adding additional questions per stage of the process? We can then combine and finalise the list and also add or edit if you need support**

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Suggested flow:

- a. Opening script as you've laid out above. Important to know what stage the person is at so that specific questions can be lined up
- b. Opening warm up questions could be questions similar to the survey on:
 - i. IT and technology – fears/concerns/availability/preferences
 - ii. Information and communications
 - iii. Buildings/offices -
- c. There are then probably a general set of experience type questions along the lines of:
 - i. What stands out for you (+ve or –ve) about your experience so far?
 - ii. How could that have been better?
 - iii. What were your overall feelings while going through the process?
- d. Then depending on where someone is in the process, the other attachment gives a list of additional probing questions that could be asked. This will obviously depend on timings and how the interview flows. Perhaps worth developing a couple of parallel scripts based on these?
- e. **If the person has done an interview we really want you to focus in on that.**
We have very limited info and insights on this currently. Key things to ask:
 - i. Tell us about the day itself and your planning for it – timings, travel, family/childcare arrangements
 - ii. Information provided in advance
 - iii. Experience of arriving for the interview and interactions with staff

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Optional extra questions used in interview

1. What year did you apply for International Protection (asylum)?
2. How/where do you normally get information or updates in relation to the application process?
 - a. email
 - b. phone call
 - c. Direct provision centre manager
 - d. Other ____
3. Can you tell us about your experiences with the International Protection Office (IPO)
4. Can you tell us about your experiences with the International Protection appeals Tribunal (IPAT)?
5. Do you currently live in :
 - a. Accommodation centre (aka. Direct Provision)
 - b. Private accommodation
 - c. Other ____
6. Is there anything else you would like to share with us in relation to?
7. Do you have access to IT Equipment
 - a. If Yes, please specify – Smart phone / laptop / Computer
8. Do you regularly have access to Wifi
9. How comfortable are you at using computers/smart phone to provide information
 - a. Very comfortable – I prefer this
 - b. Somewhat comfortable – It depends on how much information I need to provide.
 - c. Not very comfortable – I prefer paper forms
10. Have you completed and submitted documents in support of your protection application?
 - a. Yes I did it myself / no / Yes, my legal rep / NGO helped me submit papers.
11. How easy was it to submit documents in support of your case.
 - i. Very easy to Difficult range
12. Would you prefer to submit your documents including your questionnaire electronically

General Questions

- Do applicant contact the customer service in the IPO, throughout their application? What things would they contact them about?
- Has an applicants has their details (name & DOB) incorrectly recorded by the IPO? When did they get it corrected, did anything stop them from getting it corrected as soon as possible?
- Have applicants experienced difficulties with updating their address / contact details? What would make it easier for them?
- What do applicants do with all the letters we send? Where do they keep them?
- Do applicants get notified/ are they aware if Judicial review impacts their case
- Do applicant know to send in documents for PTR while awaiting on a recommendation? Why? What in their opinion would help?
- In general what are applicants opinions on the communication from the IPO / IPAT and they information provided to applicants



IPO – Application to IPO

- How much do applicants generally know about the process before presenting at the IPO? If a person has knowledge of the IPO & process where did they find out the information from
- How do they know where to go? How do they get there?
- What was the experience of attending the IPO for the first time like? What was good/bad, what stands out in their mind. How did they feel?
- Was the applicant given information about the process? Was the process explained to them? Did they understand the information that was given to them?

IPO 2 - Questionnaire

- What was completing the questionnaire like?
- Was there anything difficult or easy about completing and returning the questionnaire?
- Did they get help completing it? Who helped them
- Did they complete and return it in 3 weeks? If not what happened? What did the person do?
- Did the applicant get legal advice? What influenced their decision to get it/ not get it?

IPO 3 - Interview

- What did the applicant experience when they received their notification of interview date?
- What are their thoughts/feelings about how they were notified/ the notification itself?
- Did their interview have to be rescheduled, why?
- If an applicant had to travel to the IPO and or stay overnight, can they tell us about what they did and how they found out that information?
- What was the experience of attending the IPO for their interview like? What was good/bad, what stands out in their mind. How did they feel?
- Did you get breaks, what did you do on them? Did you bring lunch with you?
- If any applicants have children and had to travel to the IPO, was child care an issue? What did they do?
- Did any applicant miss their interview? - what happened
- In the applicants opinion what would, make this more straight forward form them, e.g. not have to reschedule, childcare easier, travel accommodation?

IPO 4 - Recommendation

- What did the applicant experience when they received their recommendation? How did they feel, do they have comments on the recommendation or waiting for the recommendation
- If refused RS & SP did the applicant understand what they needed to do to appeal from their letter or did they seek advice and from whom?
- Was they applicant in contact with their solicitor or IPO while waiting on their recommendation?
- If an applicant chooses not to appeal a negative decision on RS & SP but are granted PRT. Why have they chosen not to appeal? Do they know the difference between PTR and RS and SP

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IPAT 1 -Appeal

- What was completing the appeal form like?
- Was there anything difficult or easy about completing and returning the appeal form?
- Did they get help completing it? Who helped them
- Did they complete and return it in 15 day time limit? If not what happened? What did the person do?
- Did the applicant get legal advice? What influenced their decision to get it/ not get it? Could they get it and submit the form in the 15 day time frame?
- Did the applicant request an oral hearing? What influenced their decision to request not request one? `

IPAT 2

- What did the applicant experience when they received their notification of hearing date?
- What are their thoughts/feelings about how they were notified/ the notification itself?
- Did their hearing have to be rescheduled, why?
- If an applicant had to travel to the IPAT and or stay overnight, can they tell us about what they did and how they found out that information?

IPAT 3

- What was the experience of attending the IPAT for their hearing like? What was good/bad, what stands out in their mind. How did they feel?
- How long is the hearing and is it very formal? How does it differ from the original interview? Did you get breaks, what did you do on them? Did you bring lunch with you?
- If any applicants have children and had to travel to the IPAT, was child care an issue? What did they do?
- Did any applicant miss their hearing - what happened
- In the applicants opinion what would, make this more straight forward form them, e.g. not have to reschedule, childcare easier, travel accommodation?

IPAT 4 - Appeal Decision

- Was the applicant in contact with their solicitor or IPAT while waiting on a decision?
- What did the applicant experience when they received their decision how did they feel, do they have comments on the correspondence they received or waiting on it?

12 -PTR Review (If a person requested PRT Review)

- How do applicants find the 5 day timeframe that they have, to submit PTR request?
- Did the decision from PRT first instance help them know what to send in?
- Did the applicant go to IPAT because they had to in order to get a PTR review?

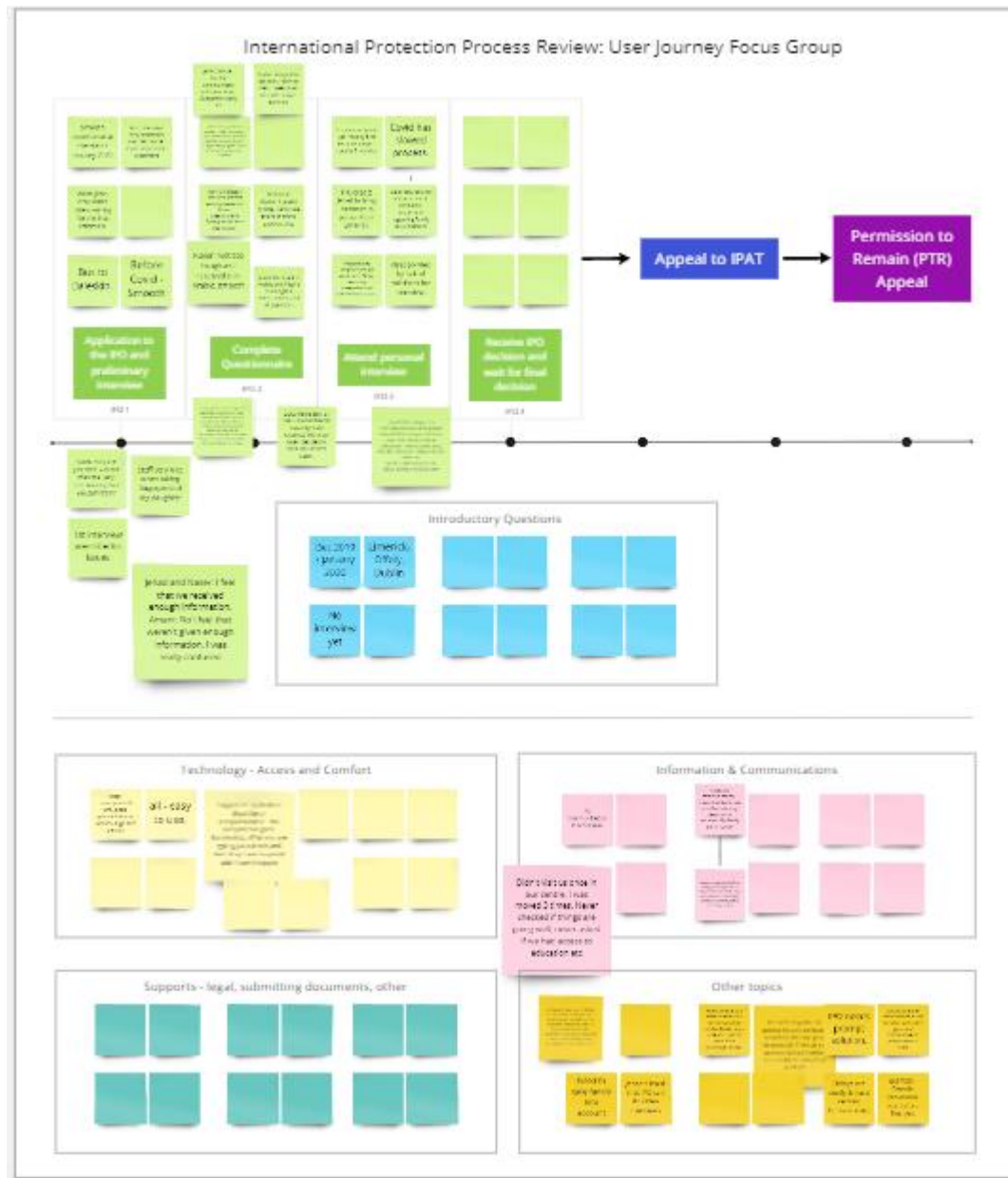
Final Decision



- What did the applicant experience when they received their decision. How did they feel, do they have comments on the correspondence they received or waiting on it?

Appendix 5 (Group session questions and Copy of Miro)

https://miro.com/app/board/o9JlQyUP1I=



Read Interview Script then ask for permission to record

1. What year did you apply for International Protection?

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2. Where in Ireland are you based?
3. Has anyone had their IPO interview yet?
4. What was your first experience with the IPO like?
5. Do you feel like you were given enough information at this point?
6. What information were you given when you left the IPO on the first day?

7. Questionnaire:

What was your experience like completing the questionnaire?

Did you complete this alone?

Did you get legal advice?

Did you have enough time to complete it?

8. Interview:

What was the interview experience like?

How were you notified about the interview?

Did you have to travel?

How would you improve the interview process?

Expectations:

What do you expect the interview to be like?



Appendix 6

Interview Analysis

	IPP Step	County	IPO 1: application & prelim interview	IPO 4: decision	IPO 2: questionnaire	IPO 3: interview	IPAT (5-8)	PTR (9-10)	Other
Interviewee		9 Wicklow	Recounted difficult experience at the airport where they were detained for 9 hours. Asked to sign form that they did not understand and they asked for legal representative. Felt that they were treated as a criminal or terror suspect, given very little information. Applied to prioritise their asylum case.			Interview was more of an interrogation. Interviewer had a predetermined mindset about who they were. Coming from a traumatised experience and away from partner and children, yet interviewer questioned their marriage. Recommends the IPO interview process be reformed - specifically with a neutral 3rd party observer, like an NGO. Also felt like the IPO interviewer and DP manager in communication - their complaints about the direct provision centre impacted consideration by IPO.			
Interviewee		3 Galway	Applied Sept 2018. No complaints about information given at start. Things translated well. A little bit scared first time going to IPO. Very comfortable with technology. Currently receives updates mostly through email with lawyer. Lived in a hostel for a while, but now back in DP.		No difficulty with questionnaire. Translation fine. No problem submitting documents. Took 2 days to complete questionnaire. No legal advice when completing questionnaire. Would prefer electronic, especially to be able to save a file or go back to read / delete things. It's been so long since submission, they now forget what they originally wrote down including important dates etc.	Waiting 2 years for interview.			
Interviewee		2 Tipperary	No prior knowledge of the IPP didn't know what she was supposed to do /say. The first interview was not bad, the lady asked some brief questions. Sent with 4 kids with no instructions on where the bus to the accommodation was. They did not ensure that she would have a fare to pay for the bus.		Received questionnaire with no guidance on how to fill it out. Questionnaire was very long with a lot of unnecessary repetition. This was very confusing. Filled it out along an took it to a lawyer who signed it, but did not contribute. Knew that if she could not complete within 3 weeks that you let IPO know to get an extension for another 2 weeks.	WAITING: 18 Months in Ireland. Placed in a small village with no transport. Feels like she is under constant supervision. "just sitting and waiting and waiting, that anxiety is killing us! You know, you don't even know you could stay for 2 years and then get a rejection after that."			
Interviewee		3 Wicklow	Very welcomed. Staff were friendly. The paperwork was fine. Organised transport.	Interview was in November: was told that she would hear within 2 months. She has not heard anything.	Questionnaire was difficult due to language barrier (completed in English). Scared that when the questions repeated themselves that she wrote a slightly different answer due to language barrier. Felt that the questions surrounding specific dates were unfair as she didn't take note of these traumatic experiences. Also felt it was unfair to ask for documentation as she fled her country in a rush. She was told that she could extend and did so.	Waiting: more than 9 months, felt like torture. Interview experience was not good. Felt that there was tension from the interviewer who was due to country of origin. Felt that this emotion was mixed up in the interview. Interview lasted 3 hours with interviewer pressing her, telling her that her country was a safe country.			
Interviewee		10 Mayo	Terrible first experience. IPO staff shouted at them and told them they shouldn't have come there, eventually accepted application. Since then, other IPO staff have been helpful. Initial information provided about the process was good and legal aid was very helpful.		First applied before the longer new questionnaire, since then their partner was asked to fill out longer questionnaire after the partner's decision was delayed. Received help to fill it in from solicitors. Fairly comfortable with technology but recognise that it has its advantages and disadvantages.	IPO interview a much more comfortable environment than the IPAT. They feel unlucky that IPO agreed to certain arguments that they made and disagreed with others, leading to a total refusal. The fact that they spend a lot of time in UK before applying seems to have hurt application. Now living 18 years out of their country in total, still fighting for status. "I don't have word enough to express myself on that issue." Feels like what can you do? Bad luck and fate - "I am suffering"	Central complaints involve communication and delays. Feel that once you've been refused in IPO, they stop communicating with you during appeal. Only news you get is refusal. Length of time has had broad set of detrimental impacts - mental health of their son has deteriorated, applicant and partner now have variety of health issues and take many tablets. Applicant was once a professional with a comfortable life, but now feels like years lost means their skills are rusty and depleting. Complaint about no longer being eligible for blue temporary resident card while appealing. Recommends that entire process with appeals should take no longer than 2 years. Transport from Mayo to hearing was fine - put up in overnight accommodation.	Feels completely dejected. Going on 6 years in the process. Application should take very little effort to review - read documents and take a decision. But it's been 2 years. He needs to know where he stands and move on. Recently wrote to local TD to ask to look into the application.	

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IPP Step	County	IPO 1: application & prelim interview	IPO 4: decision	IPO 2: questionnaire	IPO 3: interview	IPAT (5-8)	PTR (9-10)	Other
Interviewee	2 Dublin	Everything went well when first arrived. Children treated well. In retrospect feels like they weren't given enough information at the start. It was a very confusing moment.		Time frame very short. Would have much preferred an electronic version. Had no idea that they could ask for legal support with the questionnaire or could request to have the deadline extended. It was assumed that they wanted an Arabic translated questionnaire, when English would have actually been easier. The boxes for responses were often too small. Concerned that their hand writing is poor, and they got confused about many of the questions. The pressure of the moment may have also led to not providing the best responses. Wish it was electronic and easy to access now to know what they wrote down. It has been years now and worries that they have been unable to check and edit responses. Lawyer was unresponsive and gave them no help with questionnaire.	Waiting 2 years for interview. Doesn't understand why interviews can't continue either at a distance or with glass between. Applicant knows people applying in Canada who continued interviews with glass through Covid-19. Extended wait has caused physical and mental stress. Daughter stopped eating because of stress and treatment by manager in DP - daughter asks parents why they didn't go to Canada or US instead of Ireland. Concerned that adult children haven't been able to continue education and move forward with their lives. Very critical of private management of DP. Food and treatment terrible (especially halal options). No support from IPO generally or for specific things like getting medical care for child. Very little checking in with applicants during Covid. Very bad experience with legal aid lawyer - completely unresponsive.			
Interviewee	2 Meath	Treated like a liar from the beginning. Preliminary interview with 2 people. Wasn't aware that he could delay the preliminary interview. Regrets not having a lawyer present.	Decision to be transferred despite the country he was being transferred to was not the last country that he was in. Given 10 days to respond. Called many organisations seeking legal aid. When he finally got legal aid, 3 days before response was due, the lawyer told him that they were never given the actual date that the questionnaire was due. Lawyer told him that Dublin Regulation requires that he should have been transferred to the last country he was in rather than the country he was being transferred to. Lawyer asked for interviewee's papers but IPO mistakenly sent interviewee's partner's papers/data to lawyer. Lawyer sent response in Jan, no communication back. Living in rural area, with limited internet and no transport, can't integrate into community.	Initially got the questionnaire in Arabic then asked for it in English (given an extra 15 days when he received the English copy). Had issues securing a legal representative- finished questionnaire alone, was not aware that he could extend time.				Since Covid PPS card has not been issued. This causes problem when collected allowance. Need ID to collect. Passport taken off me at IPO. Blue card given by IPO is not accepted as a form of ID. Face difficulties also opening bank account and so can't work. It's opposite what's happening in UK because in UK when you claim asylum you will get directly an identity card because in UK when they take in your fingerprint and your picture this is considered enough to decide that you will be given an ID, because the police and home office of UK they have your biometrics, but in Ireland, they are also doing same, they have your biometrics, they have your hand ID, like your fingerprints, which is considered an ID, but they have different policy, that since he's an asylum seeker his name can be lying, so they're not giving you an ID. I hope that will be corrected because they already getting biometrics on this person, his fingerprints and pictures, it's like UK so what's the difference why in UK you're getting an ID and in Ireland you're not getting an ID understand?
Interviewee	2 Offaly	Applied for asylum immediately upon arrival, but knew little about the process. Feels that initial information could be improved, especially with a chart like we used in the survey. Arrived with partner and 3yo child. Chose legal options over illegal options. Recommends that the prelim interview should be faster and used to direct asylum seekers into different categories (more than just 2), some that will be fast tracked - similar to Garda vetting process. Communicates with IPO through letters in post. Has contacted them through customer care. Blue card is expired because of delays.		Would be comfortable using electronic form. Some questions are easy, but some are technical and difficult. Received support from NGO & solicitor, but finds legal aid lawyer not very helpful or communicative.	Took 1 year to have interview scheduled, cancelled because of pandemic. Postponed 3 times in total. Frustrated that asylum seeker interviews is not considered an "essential service." Ok for a delay at first, but frustrated that still no alternative approach (with sanitised room etc) after 1 year. Recommends that process be changed with more fast-tracked pathways for clear cases. When thinking about transport to the interview, thinks that management of DP should arrange transport, because of familiarity with taxis. Told emotional story about fleeing home country when children were sleeping in bed, yet is here 25 months and can't start own life again. They need to increase staff in the IPO or something to solve delays. Is a person who "won't even cross the road without the green light" but feels that legal process doesn't work.			
Interviewee	3 Offaly	Fine,	Moved accommodation while waiting. Called last month and was told there was no answer right now. Has been here 1 year now.	It was OK but understands why others would need help.	Interview was fine, friendly interviewer. Lasted 30/40 mins.			

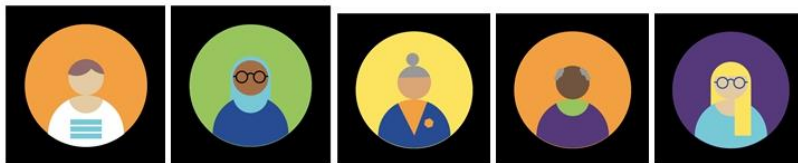


	IPP Step	County	IPO 1: application & prelim interview	IPO 4: decision	IPO 2: questionnaire	IPO 3: interview	IPAT (5-8)	PTR (9-10)	Other
Interviewee		2 Westmeath	Heavily pregnant with twins when first came to Ireland so all memory is blurred. Experience was fine but she doesn't remember any consideration being taken of the fact that she was heavily pregnant.	Decision to be transferred to UK which was then removed. She was in the middle of appealing with the IPAT when Dublin regulation decision came through not to transfer.	Was in discomfort, completed it alone. Would be happy to be given a 2nd chance now that mind is clearer. Difficulty providing evidence (documentation in support of her story).	5th step in Process for interviewee 10: she is now waiting as the decision to transfer was dropped in Jan. Been in Ireland 4 years (2017)	There was not much difference in dealing with the IPAT and IPO. Not difficult. Went to High Court to appeal decision to be transferred. She then received a letter to present before Garda National Immigration Bureau. Date for December was then moved to March because of Covid. In Jan the case to be transferred was dropped so she did not have to present to the GNIB.		
Interviewee		10 Dublin	Very difficult meeting IPO for the first time. Little to say here.	Felt that decision was unfair. They have their own way of seeing things and read what is online about your country, not what you are seeing on the ground - not what is happening physically.	Feels that it is very difficult to gather the evidence that is required (contacting people in home country and asking to send evidence). The Questionnaire questions all look the same, sometimes asking the same thing in 3 ways. Did not have support filling it out - seems to think that you had to fill it out alone. Did not have access to IT at the time, beyond smart phone. Would prefer an electronic form.	Feels that interviewer does not believe you and has their own preconceived ideas. Again, difficulty submitting necessary evidence. Finds transport to the IPO difficult with Bus transfers.	Legal Aid solicitor typed up appeal form. Again feels that there is big bias and more concerned with what is in the news rather than what you have experienced on the ground. They have their own way of doing things. The length of the hearing and breaks were ok. Feels that there is little support given throughout process.	Throughout this process during pandemic, has received very little communication. Can't even say if communication has been good or bad, because there hasn't been any.	Biggest problem is that you need a PPS number to have a bank account etc. You need the correct information to get that. They didn't explain to me where to get this information. I learned this from people in the accommodation. Citizen information helped. Also provision hasn't been made to provide him with a family room at the accommodation, his daughter left to live with mother during Covid, IPO will not allow his daughter to stay with him now. He also doesn't understand why some cases are dealt with a lot faster than others.
Interviewee		2 Wexford	Nov 2019 - at airport - taken to emergency centre. Had small interview 1 month later - given blue card		In Arabic - easy - filled out alone - wne to IPO and handed it back	Waiting: Sent email last month - no interview scheduled			
Interviewee 13			First experience in airport (Oct 2019), he was being refused entry into Ireland, he had to explain that his daughter's mother had lived in Ireland for 6 years. Interviewed for 2 hours (questioned). Officers then asked if he would like to apply for asylum (wasn't first intention). Waiting in airport for 12 hours had to ask officers for food/water for daughter. They were put in a small room with many people not just asylum seekers. Eventually took fingerprints & small interview in terminal 2 etc. Staff were nice. Taxi organised to hotel, given letters and told that he had an IPO interview in morning. He had to wait 2-3 hours in office (not good for child). Given a copy of the interview in Spanish but there was no interpreter		Noone told him that he should have kept a copy of his questionnaire. He filled it out alone. Completed it within 3 weeks, knew that he could extend but chose not to. Eventually acquired a private lawyer who helped pro bono. Couldn't bring any documentation from his home country	Waiting in rural area with sporadic transport to main town. Scheduled for June 2020, then cancelled 2/3 days prior and wasn't rescheduled. Had one email and one postal letter which states that the interview had been cancelled and that is all. IPO assigned social worker after interview was cancelled. Communicate with IPO via email regarding his daughter and visitation. Interview cancelled 3 times now. Very frustrated by the wait. Gets updates from case worker. Lawyer very busy and unresponsive. Mental health very poor because of the long process. Mentioned suicidal thoughts several times during interview - directly tied to length of wait. Doesn't know where they are going or when they will receive a call about their case. Wishes there was a way to do the interview.			
Interviewee		2 Offaly	First applied in late 2019. Everything went ok. Lawyer and case worker were supportive. Very new to technology. Frustrated by lack of contact / updates from IPO.		Questionnaire very difficult. Information wasn't very fresh in memory about life situation. It really weighed them down. Eventually they received help from case worker in human trafficking - told case worker the story and received help.				
Interviewee		5 Wicklow	No particular issues referenced at the start of the process. Legal support has been lacking all along. Very little communication. Only two meetings with solicitor, at the start and after being refused.	Mental health rapidly deteriorated since receiving refusal, including suicidal thoughts. Can't understand how evidence was disregarded (including proof of kidnapping and activity of sectarian group in home country). Emphasises that they had a nice life in home country, risked everything to flee and come to Ireland. Now seems like it was not worth it, because of poor research by IPO and wrong perception. Applicant said that if a child or family member dies because of delay in application and family reunification, the Irish government is somewhat responsible.	Completed largely alone, but later received some help from a person at the Irish Refugee Council. The precariousness of family situation back home added a lot of pressure in filling out questionnaire (rush to complete and start family reunification). Some questions were very difficult to understand. The translation of the questionnaire was poor, with many confusing mistakes. Finds paper questionnaire easier than using the computer.	Very unhappy with the IPO overall. Feels that the evidence that was submitted and the general situation in home country was not properly researched. Again, precariousness of family situation in home country added a lot of pressure. Worried that simple mistakes in documents or proof led to entire case being discounted. Length of process is a major factor. While waiting for this process, family members back home have been killed and kidnapped.	Just recently received refusal and met with solicitor to submit appeal. Not very much knowledge or experience of IPAT just yet.		

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Appendix 7



To whom it may concern,

This letter confirms the participation of _____ in the User Journey Review of the International Protection Process (Seeking Asylum) on ____ at ____.

Last year, the Irish Government published the Report of Catherine Day and her Expert Advisory Group. This Report made recommendations on how the international protection process can be improved. A review of the process from beginning to end was carried out to see how the recommendations can be achieved.

The review sought to gain feedback from people currently in the protection (asylum) process or those who had recently completed the process (within the last 18 months). The aim was to understand people's experience of the process, the IPO and IPAT, what could be improved and how.

The international protection process is when the International Protection Office (IPO) examines your claim, and also when the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT) hears appeals against negative IPO decisions.

Online workshops, direct calls and a survey were all held in order to get people's input.

_____i provided information on their journey giving details on what they thought could be improved and how. Their important input and the time they gave to the process fed into the overall findings and subsequent recommendations report for the Minister for Justice.

Kind Regards

Naomi Murphy

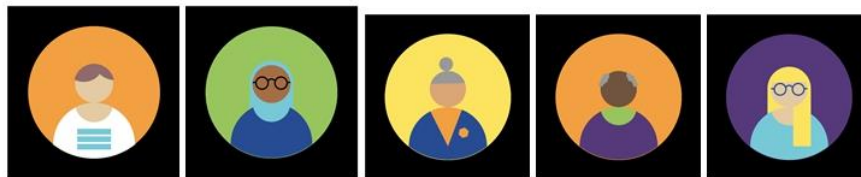
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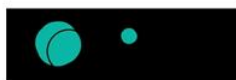




Who we are:

We are Connect the Dots and we support organisations in engaging with their stakeholders and the public. You can find out more about us on our website (www.connectthedots.ie).

Following an independent competition, the Department of Justice appointed us to engage with people who are or have recently been in the international protection process.



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Appendix 8

Support & Guidance links



Support and Guidance

We have provided a list of helpful NGOs, charities and where to find information on government sites.

NGOs focused on helping migrants

Irish Refugee Council: www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie

IRC provide services and support for people seeking protection and people recognised as refugees in Ireland and advocate for humane and dignified protection procedures and responses to people fleeing persecution.

IRC work with people who have to flee their home country, as it is no longer safe for them to be there. The most visible example of this is people fleeing war or conflict. However, persecution is not always born of war or conflict.

IRC also work with people who face persecution that is less visible. People who have experienced torture, death threats, and violence because of aspects of their identity or their actions – persecution based on their sexual identity, their religious beliefs, their political stance, for protesting, for being female or for being an ethnic minority.

Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland: <https://www.masi.ie/>

MASI is an independent platform for asylum seekers to join together in unity and purpose. The collective seeks justice, freedom and dignity for all asylum seekers.

New Communities Partnership (NCP): www.newcommunities.ie

New Communities Partnership (NCP) is an independent national network of more than 100+ immigrant-led groups comprising 65 nationalities.

FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres): www.flac.ie

This non-governmental organisation campaigns for full and equal access to justice for all and promotes and operates a range of services to meet the legal needs of those living in poverty.

NASC (immigrant support centre): www.nascireland.org

Nasc, the Irish word for 'link', empowers migrants to realise and fulfil their rights. Nasc works with migrants and refugees to advocate and lead for change within Ireland's immigration and protection systems, to ensure fairness, access to justice and the protection of human rights. Our goal is to realise the rights of all migrants and refugees within Irish society.

Doras Luimni: www.dorasluimni.org

Doras is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation working to promote and protect the rights of people from a migrant background in Ireland.

AKIDWA (network of African and migrant women): www.akidwa.ie

Akina Dada wa Africa, or AkiDwA for short, is a national network of migrant women living in Ireland. Akina Dada wa Africa means sisterhood in Swahili. Over two decades, AkiDwA has



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gained recognition as a leading NGO highlighting the issues faced by migrant women in Ireland.

Immigrant Council of Ireland: www.immigrantcouncil.ie

At the Immigrant Council of Ireland, an Independent Law Centre, we have been working to provide assistance to people from a migrant background, improving and protecting their rights since our establishment in 2001.

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI): www.mrci.ie

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland is a national organisation working for justice, empowerment and equality for migrants and their families.

Red Cross Information for Asylum Seekers:

<https://www.redcross.ie/information-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/>

Services and NGOs for Mental Health

Black Therapist Ireland: <https://www.blacktherapistsireland.ie/>

Email: support@blacktherapistsireland.ie

Black therapists Ireland aims to make it easy to access mental health services that supports diversity and uphold cultural values by bringing together therapists with black heritage.

SPIRASI: www.spirasi.ie

Phone Number: 01-8389664

Email: info@spirasi.ie

Supporting Victims of Torture to rebuild their lives in Ireland. Through our models of care, training programmes and alliances, Spirasi leads in rehabilitating Asylum Seekers and Refugees who are victims of torture.

Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy: <https://iacp.ie/page>

Number: 01 230 35 36

NGOS and Links for Integration

Directory of National Voluntary Organisations (Comhairle) - <http://www.cidb.ie/comhairlevcs.nsf>

Comhairle's Directory of National Voluntary Organisations and other agencies gives details of over 550 organisations in Ireland.

Integration of African Children in Ireland - <http://www.iaciyouth.org>

Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS) - <http://www.mabs.ie/>

MABS provides free and confidential advice, assistance and support to people experiencing financial difficulty.



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NANI - Nigeria Association Network Ireland - <http://www.nigeria.ie>

NANI is a representative national organisation championing the Nigerian cause and Nigeria Associations in Ireland with chapters in Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Galway

The Wheel - <http://www.wheel.ie/>

Networked movement of groups and individuals working in the community and voluntary sector in Ireland.

Volunteering Ireland - <http://www.volunteeringireland.com/>

Promotes high quality voluntary activity, by encouraging organisations which involve volunteers to adopt good policy and practice, and by acting as a link between such organisations and individuals who wish to undertake meaningful voluntary work.

NGOS and links for education

Aontas - <http://www.aontas.com/>

The National Association of Adult Education - independent national organisation representing all aspects of adult education.

National Adult Literacy Agency - <http://www.nala.ie/>

Priorities include training, research and continued emphasis on the need for well-run and adequately funded adult literacy provision throughout the country.

The Local Development Training Institute of Ireland (LDTI) - <http://www.ldti.ie/>

Provides relevant workshop training for individuals and groups involved in local development.

Services and NGOs for Youth

Youth Information Services - <http://www.youthinformation.ie/>

Youth Information Centres (YICS) provide a free, confidential information service to young people and those who work with them on a wide range of subjects.

Governmental Information

- o Citizen's Information: www.citizensinformation.ie
- o Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Service (INIS): www.inis.gov.ie
- o Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC): www.orac.ie
- o Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB): www.orac.ie
- o Department of Social Protection: www.welfare.ie
- o Reception & Integration Agency (RIA): www.ria.gov.ie
- o Refugee Legal Service (RLS): www.legalaiddboard.ie
- o Refugee Appeals Tribunal (RAT): www.refappeal.ie



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- Office for Social Inclusion - <http://www.socialinclusion.ie/>
- The Office for Social Inclusion is the Irish Government Office with overall responsibility for developing, co-ordinating and driving Ireland's National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion.
- Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration - <http://www.integration.ie>



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