Reception - Ireland

Reception system

Overview

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Relevant EU legislation

Ireland is bound by the recast Reception Conditions Directive and has transposed its provisions through S.I. No. 230/2018 - European Communities (Reception Conditions) Regulations 2018.

National legislation

6 July 2018: Ireland transposes the recast Reception Conditions Directive by S.I. No. 230 of 2018 - European Communities (Reception Conditions) Regulations 2018

Competent authority and stakeholders

Authority responsible for reception	Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration (DJHAM)

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Other actors involved	**International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS)** manages the day-to-day operations of the current system through the transition period. **Health Service Executive (HSE)** is responsible for the provision of health services and medical screening. **Department of Social Protection** is responsible for access to employment and provision of social welfare benefits and allowances. ù **Department of Education and Youth** is responsible for the provision of education and vocational training for adults and children. **Child and Family Agency (TUSLA)** is responsible for the initial assessment process upon referral of separated children seeking asylum. Among other responsibilities, TUSLA provides assistance with medical screening and examinations, education assessment and family reunification. **Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)** monitors the quality of permanent accommodation centres for asylum applicants. Reports can be accessed at: Inspection Reports. Emergency reception centres are not covered by HIQA assessments.

Organisational aspects

The International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS), under the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, is the agency responsible for the management of structures and arrangement of accommodation. It works with statutory and non-statutory bodies to coordinate the delivery of a number of services including health, social welfare, food and education for applicants. To meet its objectives, IPAS contracts a range of services to commercial/private contractors in order to manage and operate reception facilities.

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Following the publication of the White Paper on Ending “Direct Provision" in 2020 and the subsequent Comprehensive Accommodation Strategy for IP in March 2024, the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration is in the process of revising the reception system established in 2001 as an emergency measure.

The strategy seeks to address the current accommodation shortfall, while reforming the system over the longer term to ensure that the State will always be able to meet its international commitments.

The multi-strand approach focuses on both increasing State-owned permanent capacity, gradually phasing out from emergency commercial accommodation toward, upgrading of additional contingency accommodation and developing an effective system according to the guiding principles of the White Paper.

Allocation of applicants to geographical areas within the territory

IPAS assigns accommodation to newly-arrived international protection applicants, depending on applicant profiles and availability of spaces.

Staff and training

International Protection Accommodation Centres are run by private service providers under contract to the Department of Justice, Home Affairs, and Migration. Staffing arrangements differ on a site-by-site basis; however, all sites are required to have sufficient management, administrative, maintenance and security staff to operate on a 24-hour/7-day a week basis.

All staff are provided with training on the policies and procedures of International Protection Accommodation Services. Additionally, staff are trained in the areas of Child Safeguarding and Human Trafficking Awareness. Finally, staff are provided access to a dedicated training platform with modules covering content including but not limited to:

- LGBTIQ Awareness and Inclusion
- Intercultural Awareness
- Trauma Awareness
- Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Awareness
- De-escalation and Dealing with Difficult Situations.

Reception phases

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When international protection applicants make an asylum application with the Department of Justice, they are then entitled to the provision of material reception conditions (accommodation and shelter).

International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) has responsibility for the sourcing and provision of appropriate accommodation to all applicants.

Despite intensive efforts by the International Protection Procurement Services (IPPS) to source emergency accommodation, IPAS is currently not in a position to provide accommodation to all international protection applicants (particularly single males) due to a severe shortage of accommodation. Applicants who are not provided with accommodation receive a temporary increase of EUR 75 to their daily expense allowance, which will cease when the applicant is accommodated. Unaccommodated single men are provided with the required documentation to make an application for the higher daily expense allowance with the Department of Social Protection on the day after their asylum application was made. Additional support is also provided by State agencies and NGOs when accommodation is not available to applicants.

A system of vulnerability triage of adult single men takes place at the time of application to ensure that those who are most vulnerable are prioritised for the provision of accommodation.

All single male applicants who present to the International Protection Office (IPO) during this period are assessed by an Assessment Officer contracted by International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS). Those who consent to participate in an assessment, have a number of questions posed to them to determine significant vulnerabilities. When a person indicates that they have a current or ongoing health need, they are referred to an HSE Team in the IPO for an initial review. The HSE will notify the IPAS Assessment Officer if an applicant has indicated that they have an urgent health need. The Assessment Officer will then determine if the applicant requires priority for accommodation and will make a recommendation to have accommodation offered immediately or as soon as it is available.

After submitting their international protection application to the International Protection Office, IPAS endeavours to provide appropriate accommodation that meets international protection applicant profiles. Applicants may be accommodated in the National Reception Centre or in the National Transit Hub (families) (when there is availability). Applicants are provided with information on

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support that is available, and advice is offered on daily life and expected personal behaviour – which facilitates acclimatisation and integration into a new country.

Applicants in the National Reception Centre and the National Transit Hub are dispersed on a regular basis to accommodation centres in various locations around the country. However, given the current limited availability in reception centres and depending on family configuration, applicants may also be accommodated in emergency accommodation in the first instance.

Under the European Communities (Reception Conditions) Regulations 2018, those who have had their application determined by the Department of Justice are no longer entitled to Material Reception Conditions. However, IPAS continues to accommodate those with a protection status until they progress into the community.

As of July 2025, around 5,200 people continue to reside in IPAS accommodation centres after receiving a permission to remain.

Contingency planning

In cases of shortages of accommodation places, applicants may be accommodated in emergency shelters such as tents. If accommodation is not available when an applicant requests it, the applicant receives a temporary increase in their daily expense allowance from the current rate of EUR 38.80 per week to EUR 113.80 a week. Contingency planning has been developed in alignment with the Pact on Migration and Asylum, particularly the recast Reception Conditions Directive. The objective of the plan is to ensure that Ireland’s asylum and reception systems are resilient and responsive to sudden surges or crisis situations.

Facilities

Overview of different types of reception facilities according to national classification

Applicants are primarily hosted in IPAS accommodation centres which are run by contracted private and commercial actors. IPAS, has several centres located throughout the country, consisting of the following:

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- **Reception Centre:** This is the first accommodation provided to asylum seekers after having made an application. Currently there are two collective centres in the Dublin area (Balseskin and Citywest) where applicants reside while waiting for relocation within the country.
- **International Protection Accommodation Centres:** This is considered the second stage of reception. There are 49 IPAS Accommodation Centres located across Ireland.
- **Emergency Accommodation Centres**: These centres were contracted out to increase capacity for the provision of accommodation. Emergency Accommodation includes buildings which have previously been used for a different initial purpose, such as former hotels, guesthouses (B&B) and hostels. In addition, repurposed office buildings, decommissioned Defence Forces barracks and tented accommodation are also being used.
- **Catered Accommodation Centres:** Residents are provided with meals, toiletries and cleaning products directly. In Self-Catered Accommodation Centres, residents are provided with the means to purchase food, toiletries and cleaning products through the provision of points for use in an on-site shop or vouchers for local supermarkets. In such centres residents have facilities available to cook. These can be IPAS centres or emergency centres.

Premises at the border

Name of the reception facility	N/a
Access description	n/a
Management	n/a
Type of applicants accommodated	n/a
Number of centres	n/a
Capacity	n/a
Location of the centres within the country	n/a

Initial reception centres

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Name of the reception facility	Reception centre/transit hub
Regime	Open
Management	Reception facilities are operated by private external service providers which have a contract with IPAS.
Type of applicants accommodated	All applicants, singles males, females, couples and families
Number of centres	2
Capacity	Statistics can be found on the IPAS website
Location of the centres within the country	Balseskin and Citywest (Dublin)

Collective accommodation centres

Name of the reception facility	International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) Accommodation Centres
Regime	Open
Management	IPAS operates both state-owned reception centres and facilities operated by private external service providers who have a contract with IPAS.
Type of applicants accommodated	Singles males, females, couples, families, minors and vulnerable individuals
Number of centres	Varies, statistics can be found on the IPAS website
Capacity	Varies, statistics can be found on the IPAS website
Location of the centres within the country	Different counties around Ireland. Locations can be found on the IPAS website

Individual accommodation centres (such as private houses, flats, hotels)

Name of the reception facility	n/a
Regime	n/a

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Management	n/a
Type of applicants accommodated	n/a
Number of centres	n/a
Capacity	n/a
Location of the centres within the country	n/a

Temporary solutions when housing capacities is temporarily exhausted

Name of the reception facility	Tented accommodation
Regime	Open
Management	Reception facilities are operated by private external service providers which have a contract with IPAS.
Type of applicants accommodated	Single males
Number of centres	3
Capacity	Varies, statistics can be found on the IPAS website
Location of the centres within the country	Information not currently available

Reception facilities for applicants with special needs

Accommodation types are tailored to the needs of vulnerable people and depend on whether the applicant is single or part of a family.

Unaccompanied minors: All steps of the process for the reception of unaccompanied minors is undertaken by TUSLA. IPAS does not accommodate unaccompanied minors. Unaccompanied minors are placed in the most appropriate option depending on their assessed needs. The most prevalent form of placement is with a foster family, but supported lodgings are also used.

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Those who reach 18 years of age can be transferred to IPAS accommodation. ‘Aged out’ minors deemed to be vulnerable can, at the authority’s discretion, remain within its care. Generally, a transfer from TUSLA care to IPAS accommodation will not take place in the middle of an academic school year

Accompanied minors: According to the legislation, children are accommodated together with their families in International Protection Accommodation Centres managed by IPAS. There are 60 centres that exclusively accommodate families with children; 6 of them accommodate families and single females. Families are otherwise accommodated with the general population.

Victims of human trafficking, torture or other forms of violence: Suspected victims of trafficking are provided with accommodation and support by NGOs during their ‘recovery and reflection’ period.

Since November 2023, an 8-bed accommodation unit was opened, providing support to women who are identified as victims of trafficking. In addition to the support provided by the HSE, each applicant has an assigned case manager providing individualised assessment and support planning. IPAS has a designated social worker who manages the referrals to the accommodation. The service has an oversight and governance committee comprising representatives from the accommodation provider (an approved housing body), IPAS, the HSE, An Garda Síochána and an NGO specialising in support to women victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Women: Accommodation within the system is made available to women who need to relocate away from an abusive or violent relationship. Women who are victims of domestic violence can receive support for Women’s Aid and are eligible for admission to women’s refuges nationally. Men can receive support from Men Overcoming Violent Emotion (MOVE).

Applicants with disabilities and special health needs: If particular vulnerabilities are identified in the vulnerability assessment process, they will be taken into account in identifying suitable accommodation and related support. During the period of suspension of the programme, particular vulnerabilities brought to the attention of IPAS are dealt with in the first instance by the resident welfare team.

Mobility challenges or other disabilities are taken into account when determining the potential accommodation option. Elderly applicants for international protection may also have particular needs.

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For certain physical disabilities, applicants may be assigned to centres with an elevator or accommodated on the ground floor. It is also possible to have adaptations made to the accommodation depending on the disability.

LGBTIQ: Special considerations are made when required for LGBTIQ individuals. IPAS has an action plan in response to the LGBTIQ Ireland report into the experiences of LGBTIQ persons in IPAS accommodation.

Elderly: Any age-related accommodation needs are handled on a case-by-case basis.

Material reception conditions provided in kind and cash

Definition of material reception conditions

S.I. No. 230 of 2018 – European Communities (Reception Conditions) Regulations 2018 define material reception conditions as:

- Housing;
- food and associated in-kind benefits;
- daily expenses allowance;
- financial allowance for clothing.

Material reception conditions provided in kind

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Type and purpose	**Housing:** All applicants are offered accommodation, depending on capacity, if they do not have sufficient means for an adequate standard of living. The location of the centre depends on the family profile and suitable vacancies in centres. **Food and associated in-kind benefits**: In Self-Catered Centres, cooking facilities are available to residents. In some centres where there is an on-site shop, residents are provided with points, allocated based on family makeup, to purchase food, toiletries and cleaning products. Some centres issue vouchers to residents which allows them to purchase items from a local supermarket. In catered centres, residents are provided with meals, toiletries and cleaning products directly by the centre. **Transport:** Applicants are provided with money to cover transport to interviews for their application and to the hospital or other official appointments. **Financial allowance for clothing:** Applicants may make an application to the Department of Social Protection for an Additional Needs Payment to cover the cost of items such as clothing. This discretionary occasional payment is subject to certain rules and policies. Children are entitled to back-to-school clothing and footwear allowances. **Healthcare**: Applicants are entitled to free healthcare on the same basis as an Irish or EU citizen. They receive a medical cards and designated psychological services if needed. Also: • Free laundry facilities; • Regional pre-schools/crèche facilities at larger centres; • Free primary and post-primary education; • Additional resources for schools with special needs in the area of English Language; • Exceptional Needs Payments (made at discretion of the Community Welfare Service); • Other community welfare payments.

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Duration and recurrence	Accommodation is in principle provided for the whole duration of the asylum procedure. Under certain situations, applicants may also be permitted to stay after they are granted protection or the right to remain.

Financial allowances and vouchers

Type and purpose	Each person in IPAS accommodation receives a daily expenses allowance paid by Community Welfare Officers (CWO). It can be used as supplement for incidentals and it is not index-linked.
Duration and recurrence	A daily expenses allowance is paid weekly for the duration of the asylum procedure.
Calculation and amount	The daily expenses allowance weekly rate is EUR 29.80 for children and EUR 38.80 for adults. International protection applicants who are on the waiting list for accommodation receive a temporary increase from the current rate of EUR 38.80 per week to EUR 113.80 a week.
Applicants granted allowance	The entitlement to reception conditions is subject to two requirements: • The recipient complies with the house rules of the accommodation centre. • Material reception conditions are made available only at a designated accommodation centre or reception centre. This means that applicants using their own accommodation or staying with relatives or friends are not entitled to material reception conditions or State social welfare support. If an applicant takes up employment or has other means, their daily expense allowance will be reduced according to the means testing system.

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Modalities of provision	Material reception conditions are made available only at a designated accommodation centre or reception centre. This means that applicants using their own accommodation or staying with relatives or friends are not entitled to material reception conditions or State social welfare support. They are, however, still entitled to medical care.

Material reception conditions for vulnerable persons

Social care and integration support are provided to vulnerable applicants and families. All asylum applicants are entitled to a vulnerability assessment, in line with the requirements of the European Communities (Reception Conditions) Regulations. This is a voluntary process.

When an applicant states that they, or their child, has a vulnerability, during the assessment the person will be flagged to relevant services and support. Where appropriate, the applicant will be provided with information on how to make a self-referral or directly access relevant service or support. This information is also used by IPAS to provide material reception conditions to applicants and appropriately accommodate people. Transport to medical appointments and services is provided.

Most persons seeking international protection are entitled to a medical card and their treatment is provided in the same manner as for Irish citizens. Waiting times for certain treatments and assessments apply.

Where a vulnerability emerges or is advised to IPAS after a person or family has been accommodated and they require accessible or more suitable accommodation in a particular location on medical grounds, they are asked to submit a referral form in accordance with the IPAS Protocol for Medical Transfer. The referral enables the person’s medical professionals to outline the accommodation requirements, including mobility, proximity to hospital or other service which are then used by IPAS to identify the most suitable accommodation available within its portfolio.

Information on local supports is available within most IPAS accommodation centres through the centre notice board or by speaking with centre managers. IPAS have also compiled a booklet with information on a range of services nationwide that is available to access on the IPAS website.

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Rights and obligations during reception

Provision of information and counselling

Modalities of information provision on benefits and obligations related to reception conditions	Applicants who accept an offer of accommodation by IPAS receive copies of the IPAS House Rules and the Reception Conditions Regulations on their arrival at their assigned accommodation centre. Any adult single males for whom accommodation is not immediately available are provided with information at the time of their application outlining State and NGO support that is available to them. Information on benefits and obligations related to reception conditions are available on the IPAS website (https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/d9f43-international-protection-accommodation-services-ipas), including IPAS House Rules, IPAS Policies and IPAS Customer Service details. Comprehensive information on the international protection process is made available to all applicants.
Provision of legal assistance on the reception conditions available	The Legal Aid Board can provide help with asylum claims, advice on access to the labour market and material reception conditions. Applicants may need to pay a contribution fee of EUR 10 for help with their application. Means-tested contributions can also apply.

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House rules	IPAS officers provide information on rights and obligations in reception and accommodation through the House Rules and Procedures, a document which is provided in each reception centre. The booklet, updated in 2024, is available in 11 languages on the authority's website. It covers: • the services provided by the centre; • the rules that applicant must follow; • fire safety information; • information on the complaints procedure and how to report issues.

Freedom of movement within the territory

Assignment of a particular area of residence to applicants	Applicants in IPAS accommodation centres can freely move within the territory of Ireland. They are required to inform the authority of the centre if they wish to spend the night outside the facility. After the period in the Initial Reception Centre, asylum seekers are offered an accommodation in IPAS centres. In principle, applicants are required to stay in the assigned facility in order to be entitled to allowance and material reception provisions, however in certain exceptional circumstances an asylum seeker may be allowed to transfer from one accommodation centre to another.

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Reporting obligations	In terms of the Department of Justice's role in the management of an IPA's application journey in the State, asylum seekers from certain countries may be required to report at specified intervals to an immigration officer or persons authorised by the Minister for Justice or a member of An Garda Síochána. Failure of an asylum seeker to comply with this requirement will have significant consequences on their application for international protection and: • Shall be an offence with a penalty as specified in Section 16(5) of the International Protection Act 2015; and • May result in their application for international protection being deemed to be withdrawn and refused. In certain cases, reporting and residence requirements may be placed on individual asylum seekers by the Garda National Immigration Bureau.

Employment and vocational training

Time limit to access the labour market	After the case of N.H.V. vs Minister for Justice and Equality, Ireland transposed the EU Reception Condition Directive in national legislation. Applicants for international protection are eligible to apply for access to the labour market 6 months from the date when an application for international is lodged, if an applicant has not received a first instance recommendation from the International Protection Office (IPO).

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Criteria to access the labour market	Applications for an employment permit by asylum applicants are subject to the same criteria as for all other non-EEA applicants. Applications for an employment permit are submitted to the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment. Permission to access the labour market is issued by the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, is valid for 12 months and may be renewable provided the applicant has not withdrawn the application or received a final decision on the application. The Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration also set up an Administrative Scheme to allow access to self employment for eligible applicants. An applicant has permission to be self-employed or to be employed in most sectors of the economy, with an absolute ban on employment in public bodies, such as the civil service, local authorities or companies/entities which are majority owned by the government or established by way of legislation.
Employment support for applicants	Applicants are entitled to employment support, however the support available varies from region to region and information barriers can make it difficult for beneficiaries to navigate the system.
Adults' access to vocational training	Once labour market access has been granted, applicants can attend continued education and training courses to help in upskilling, like the Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses, which fees has been waived for protection applicants who have labour market access.

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Access to tertiary education	Asylum seekers are not eligible for free third-level education. This means that they are required to pay tuition fees. However, they can apply for a Student Grant Scheme for Asylum Seekers through The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. In order to be eligible to apply for this support, the following criteria must be met: • have been resident in Ireland for a combined period of 3 years in the preceding 5 years; • be in the protection system or at the leave to remain (but not deportation order) stage; • enrolling in an approved Post Leaving Certificate Course (PLC) or undergraduate course. Full details and application forms for the Student Grant Scheme can be found by visiting the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science website.

Healthcare

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Medical screening	In the context of reception, medical screening is offered to all applicants for international protection on a voluntary and strictly confidential basis when they arrive in Ireland. Screening covers Hepatitis, TB, HIV, immunisation status and any other ailments or conditions that the medical officers deem to require further investigation or treatment. Arrangements are in place in various parts of the country to offer this service to those who cannot commute to Dublin. With the new system foreseen by the White Paper on Ending Direct Provision, health screening and assessments will be offered to all new applicants for international protection in Phase 1. The assessment includes essential infectious diseases screening (with vaccination needs) as well as identification of priority medical needs. The Initial Health Assessment will aim to: • Detect medical conditions of public health importance and public safety; • Detect other medical conditions that require urgent referral and follow-up; • Transmit medical information in a timely manner to the GP or community health and mental health practitioner to enable ongoing care and treatment and the proper preparations for reception in Phase 2 of international protection accommodation and continuity of care; • Initiate urgent HIV and other treatments, including stabilisation treatment, if necessary. Health screening and assessments will be offered within 4-6 weeks of arrival in a Reception and Integration Centre. The health assessment/screening will include diagnosis, referral, onward preparation of records for transition to Phase 2 and coordination with relevant HSE / primary care or hospital staff. Requirements for additional health service resources in any proposed regional centres need to be considered further.

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Level of healthcare	Community healthcare services are provided to applicants for international protection on the same basis as Irish nationals, including eligibility for the provision of a medical card. Those with a medical card have access to: • General Practitioner (GP) services; • a home nursing service; • prescribed drugs and medicines; • all in-patient and out-patient public hospital services (including consultant services, dental, ophthalmic and aural services and appliances, certain maternity services); • the Counselling in Primary Care Service and termination of pregnancy services. Services such as allied healthcare professional services may also be available to medical card holders.
Access to healthcare	A person seeking international protection is entitled to apply for and be assessed for a medical card. However, whilst this principle is universally agreed, there are a number of barriers in accessing medical services, including lack of knowledge and understanding of the system, language barriers, etc. Most asylum applicants in an accommodation centre use the General Medical Card scheme. It is not an automatic entitlement for asylum applicants as means are assessed. Applicants will also have access to the public hospital system, whether medical card holders or not. Asylum applicants who hold medical cards are not required to pay a contribution towards medication prescriptions. Asylum applicants without a medical card need to pay for general practitioner services or medication on the same basis as an Irish national who does not qualify to hold a medical card. Public hospital services to which the protection applicant is entitled are covered by the state.

Education for minors

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Depending on the age, children will be allocated places in pre-school or primary school. Most children start school at 4 years of age, but the law does not set a specific timeframe.

The Department of Education provides school places for children.

All children and young people, including young asylum seekers, are entitled to free pre-school, primary and post primary education. All children are required to attend full time education from 6-16 years or until they have completed 3 years of post-primary education. In practice, the majority of children spend longer than this in education.

Children are entitled to 2 free years of pre-school before starting primary school. Children must be at least 3 years old to attend pre-school. Most children start school at 5 years of age and continue through primary school until they are approximately 12 years old. On completing primary education, students then transfer to post-primary or second-level education (commonly called secondary education). They join the junior cycle of secondary education, which lasts 3 years. At the end of this cycle, students present themselves for the Junior Certificate Examination. Students then continue into the senior cycle, which lasts two or three years and leads to students presenting for the Leaving Certificate Examination.

The Minister for Education and Youth ensures that a minor asylum seeker is provided with support services and language support that are necessary to facilitate the recipient's access to, and participation in, education. Children may have free access to mother tongue support.

While no preparatory classes are foreseen countrywide, the Department of Education and Youth provides additional educational resources for pupils who are learning English as an additional language (EAL) in primary and post-primary schools.

Residents also have access to the free pre-school scheme, the Early Childhood Care and Education programme.

A number of initiatives are offered for the support and integration of foreign minors through the CDU's Refugee Access Programme, which aims to prepare newly-arrived separated children seeking asylum and other young people from refugee backgrounds for mainstream school and life in Ireland.

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Socio-cultural orientation and language learning

Access to socio-cultural orientation	In addition to induction information that is provided by IPAS, the Integration Division are currently progressing an online web resource in partnership with the Citizen Information Board. The resource will contain up to date information under 3 main headers: • the international protection process, • living in an accommodation centre and • life in Ireland. The website is currently under testing and is expected to go live in Q4 2025. The Local Integration Model is made up of Community Integration Forums and Local Authority Integration Teams in each local authority area. The Community Integration Forums brings together Government and voluntary organisations to coordinate a community-led response to support people seeking international protection or fleeing war in Ukraine. The purpose of the Local Authority Integration Teams (LAITs) is to provide ongoing integration supports, information, advice and guidance (including on the ground supports to be provided by ISWs) to IP applicants, refugees and Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. This primarily involves linking these new arrivals with mainstream support services, ensuring their basic needs are met, and facilitating independent living. The work of the teams complements mainstream service provision by supporting new arrivals to access services appropriate to their needs.

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Language classes	In order for Ireland to fulfil its obligations for the upcoming Pact on Migration and Asylum and in line with the 2025 Programme for Government concerning effective integration and social cohesion, the provision of language support to international protection applicants has been identified as a key requirement. Currently, adult asylum seekers may avail of free access to adult literacy and English language tuition: these are provided by the Educational Training Boards (ETBs). The local ETBs provide English language classes using local tutors. Even if English language programmes are available, access often depends on the location of the centre and childcare. A pilot scale language support project will be trialed in conjunction with the Educational Train Boards in Galway, Roscommon, Mayo, Sligo Leitrim and Donegal, which will assess the effectiveness of targeted provision of support to international protection applicants. This programme intends to ensure that asylum applicants can integrate quickly and effectively into life in Ireland. The project is expected to commence in Q4 2025.

Sufficient means

Arrangement of private accommodation

Applicants may stay in private accommodation if they have the means to do so. If they chose this option, they are no longer entitled to material reception conditions

Contribution to reception and healthcare costs

If an applicant has permission to access the labour market and has been working for a period of 12 weeks, they will be required to pay a contribution towards the cost of material reception conditions if the daily expenses allowance has been

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withdrawn (according to the means testing system). The amount to pay depends on the applicant's level of income. However, this is not applied in practice.

Sufficient means test

When making an application, asylum seekers are required to sign a declaration stating that they do not have sufficient independent means to maintain an adequate standard of living in order to access the IPAS accommodation.

The Department of Social Protection manages the provision of the daily expense allowance. When a person is receives EUR 125 or more per week, the payment will be suspended. If a person's income is above EUR 60 and below EUR 125, the rate of the daily expenses allowance is reduced based on the earnings. Schedule 1 of SI 230/2018 outlines the thresholds. This provision was included in law but only applied as of 2024.

The Reception Conditions Regulations empower the Minister to serve notice in writing of a requirement to refund all or a part of the cost of material reception conditions, with the possibility of recovering the amount as a simple contract debt in any court of competent jurisdiction.

Sanction regimes, reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions

Circumstances for reducing or withdrawing material reception conditions

According to Article 6 of the Reception Conditions Regulation 2018, the Minister of Justice may decide to reduce or withdraw material reception conditions, only in exceptional cases and when there is no other action that can be taken to address the conduct of the applicant, where the applicant:

- Has not cooperated with the authorities during the protection application (fails to make reasonable efforts to establish identity, causes delay to the processing of applications without reasonable excuse or voluntarily fails to comply with an obligation relating to the asylum application) and this lead to the failure to take a first instance decision;

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- without reasonable excuse, is failing, or has failed to comply with an obligation under an enactment relating to the application;
- has committed, or is committing, a serious breach of the house rules of the place of accommodation;
- Has engaged in seriously violent behaviour.

In addition, the Minister for Social Protection may decide to reduce or withdraw the daily expenses allowance on the same grounds.

When deciding to reduce or withdraw material reception conditions, the minister takes individual circumstances into account, in particular if the applicant is vulnerable.

Material reception conditions may also be reduced or withdrawn if the applicant has sufficient means to support themselves. An applicant's means may be re-evaluated after 12 weeks of employment.

Possible sanctions and procedure

The law states that relevant reception conditions provided to an applicant and the allowances can be reduced or withdrawn by authorities. When a decision is taken to reduce or withdraw reception conditions, the minister must ensure that the applicant has access to healthcare and a standard of living, where the person does not have means to provide for themselves.

After a breach of the house rules, IPAS may send out a warning letter to the applicant, which refers to allegations of a breach. The resident has a right of reply to the warning letter. When multiple breaches of the house rules have occurred or when a breach is of a serious nature, IPAS can request the minister to take a decision on the reception of the applicant.

Review of the sanction decision

Decisions reducing or withdrawing reception conditions can be challenged before the Minister for Justice or the Minister for Employment Affairs (in case of reduction or withdrawal of the daily expenses allowance) within 10 working days. The outcome of this challenge can then be appealed before IPAT within 10 working days. IPAT has 15 working days to decide on the appeal.

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