
County Roscommon

SUMMARY

MIS

Migrant Integration Strategy 2023-2028



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County Roscommon Migrant Integration Strategy 2023-2028

Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	1
Formulation of the Strategy	2
Context.....	3
Supporting Principles.....	4
Priorities	5
Delivering the Migrant Integration Strategy.....	5
Migrant Integration Strategic Themes.....	6
<i>Theme 1: Employment and Economic Activity</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Theme 2: Education and Training</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Theme 3: Active Civic Participation</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Theme 4: Social Inclusion</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Theme 5: Health and Wellbeing.....</i>	<i>12</i>

County Roscommon Migrant Integration Strategy Working Group Partners



Foreword

The population of County Roscommon is becoming increasingly multicultural in line with the whole of Ireland. This process has been accelerated further over the past year following the impact of the conflict in Ukraine. There is now a need for a focus on integration to enable County Roscommon to harness the benefits of diversity. Effective integration will require ongoing engagement by migrants, public services, businesses, and communities. To achieve this, everyone needs to play a part.



I welcome the publication of this Migrant Integration Strategy for Roscommon, which sets out our commitment to promoting migrant integration as a principle for the county. In delivering this strategy, the stakeholders' overarching objective is to promote social inclusion by reducing poverty and alleviating disadvantage, ensuring that all individuals living in County Roscommon feel included, valued and respected. This Migrant Integration Strategy will work towards achieving this objective.

In 2017, the Department of Justice and Equality published Ireland's '*Migrant Integration Strategy - a Blueprint for the Future*'. This provides a framework for local authorities, among other public bodies, to devise locally based strategies that give effect to national policy while also responding to local conditions and needs. The Roscommon Migrant Integration Strategy (2023-2028) represents a collective and considered application of Ireland's national policy on integration. In addition, it provides a framework and sets out recommendations, which the County Council, other agencies, service providers and local organisations can incorporate into their work programmes at a local level.

The Migrant Integration Strategy for Roscommon outlines a flexible structure to encourage integration. In doing this, the existing barriers to integration are identified.

County Roscommon Migrant Integration Strategy 2023-2028

We are at the start of a journey towards ensuring that all migrants and those of migrant origin can play active roles in communities, workplaces, and politics.

This strategy will build on the many successful initiatives and activities to support the migrant community in County Roscommon and increase community involvement. It will: -

- Provide a structured integration framework with tangible themed actions
- Promote the encouragement and development of a culture of respect for human rights, equality, and intercultural understanding in county Roscommon.
- Encourage good practice in intercultural relations to promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity in the county and respect for the freedom and dignity of each person.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the collaborative lead partner agencies of Roscommon LEADER Partnership, Roscommon County Council, and Roscommon Children and Young People's Services for making this strategy a reality. I also wish to acknowledge and thank the members of the Migrant Integration Working Committee for their work in developing the strategy. I ask that all our partner agencies work with us to implement the necessary strategic actions to achieve the ambitious targets in the Strategy. Collaborative and partnership approaches will be essential to the success of this Strategy.

We look forward to the new opportunities and relationships the implementation of the Roscommon Migrant Integration Strategy will bring to our county.

Shane Tiernan

Chief Executive Roscommon County Council and Chairperson County Roscommon Local Community Development Committee.

Introduction

Over the past twenty years, Roscommon has become more diverse in ethnicity, nationality, language and culture like the rest of Ireland. In addition, county Roscommon has seen a significant influx of migrants displaced by the war in Ukraine.

In 2016, the population of County Roscommon was 64,436 (+0.6% since 2011). Of this, 16% of the population of County Roscommon were non-Irish by birthplace, and 11% were non-Irish by nationality. It should be noted that the 2022 population of Roscommon is 69,000+; however, we do not have a comparable breakdown of this figure.

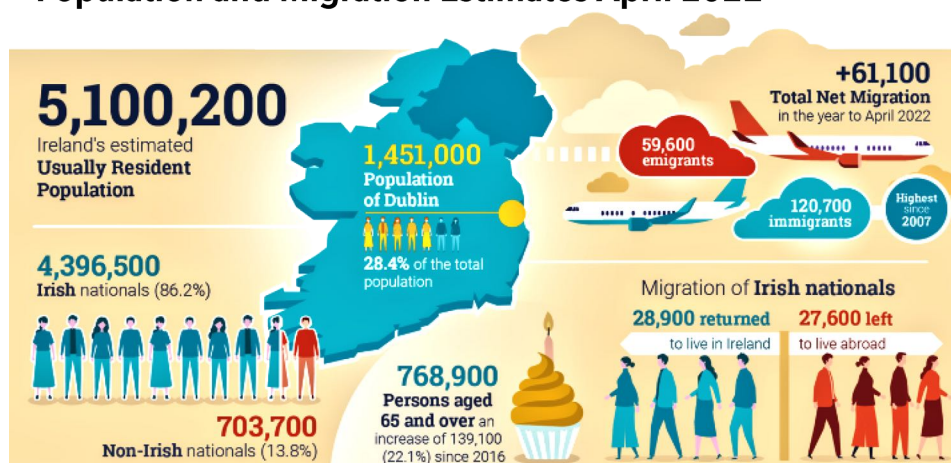
needs and wishes in all of the major components of society, without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity'.

Societies change as a consequence of migration. Life changes for migrants, and the receiving/host society is also affected. Therefore, integration is a two-way process. It involves both migrants and the host society. An inclusive approach - involving migrants and Irish people - ensures that the benefits of greater diversity can be more fully realised.

A Blueprint for the Future, Ireland's first National Migrant Integration Strategy, was launched in February 2017.

In addition to enabling, encouraging and guiding local government, public bodies

Population and Migration Estimates April 2022



Source: CSO

This increased diversity brings opportunities, challenges and responsibilities. Integration involves harnessing opportunities and overcoming challenges. In current Irish policy, it is defined as *'the ability to participate to the extent that a person*

and the wider civil society, government policy it also places particular obligations on public bodies and those in receipt of public funds. These obligations are set out in the 2014 Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) Act, which requires agencies to: -

- eliminate discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity and treatment for staff and persons to whom it provides services; and
- protect the human rights of staff and service users.

Formulation of the Strategy

The Strategy was prepared by Roscommon County Council, Roscommon LEADER Partnership and Roscommon Children and Young People's Services Committee. Members of the Migrant Steering Group consisted of Roscommon County Council, Roscommon LEADER Partnership, Children and Young People's Services Committee, Roscommon Sports Partnership, An Garda Síochána, Health Services Executive, Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board, Roscommon Women's Network, Foróige and the Family Resource Centres. All partners committed to the range of actions included.

Consultation sessions were held with representative migrant community groups, supporting agencies, and organisations.

The structures responsible for governing aspects of asylum and immigration policy in Ireland were explored, and the key agencies and organisations that have undertaken considerable integration work over an extended period in the county responsible for implementing the policy were identified.

A summary profile of migrants currently residing in the county was compiled. However, this is limited by the lack of comprehensive official data.



This is an summary of the Roscommon Migrant Integration Strategy, which has been developed by the County Roscommon Migrant Integration Working Group, endorsed by the LCDC and Roscommon County Council, and is supported by statutory bodies and several local organisations.

The Migrant Integration Strategy for County Roscommon considers the following: -

- The needs of the migrant.
- The needs of their host communities.
- The gaps in existing provisions.

The strategy's focus is to engage, review and evaluate the needs of these groups. The strategy will adopt an agile and adaptive response to facilitate greater social inclusion for the county's established and new minority communities. It provides for: -

- The establishment of migrant-targeted measures to facilitate the initial stages of integration.

- The implementation of coordination measures to harmonise and streamline integration.
- The provision of support for the delivery of key actions.

The Roscommon Migrant Integration Working Group will oversee this strategy. This group brings together representatives from public bodies, service providers and community organisations and the Migrant Integration Forum. Therefore, a diverse range of stakeholders will be involved in delivering it - collectively and with others - over the coming six years.

Context

The UN Migration Agency's definition of a migrant is *'any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from their habitual place of residence, regardless of: -*

- The person's legal status.*
- Whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary.*
- What the causes of the movement are.*
- What the length of the stay is.'*

This integration strategy for County Roscommon (2023 - 2028) takes a broad and inclusive approach, as it encompasses the following: -

- Migrants;
- Refugees;
- Asylum seekers and persons in direct provision;
- Second-generation Irish;
- Persons of dual nationality.

Migrants living in County Roscommon have achieved the following: -

- Positive living and friendly relations in their local communities.
- Significant levels of successful business activity.
- Access to employment and skills progression directly from improved language skills.

Most young migrants engage in education, sports, clubs, and community activities. Young migrants have the same aspirations as the rest of the community and see their future here.

Many migrants clearly expressed that they enjoyed living in County Roscommon.



Advocacy is essential to bridge the transition into Roscommon life. Integration requires understanding from both the host and migrant Communities. This can be assisted by: -

- Encouraging formal and informal connections involving local communities and the migrant community.
- Improved accessibility for the migrant community to employment, education, housing, health, and social services.
- Improved involvement by the migrant communities in local political and community structures.

Supporting Principles

Emerging from our analysis of the challenges facing migrant communities, our Strategy recognises the need to encourage supporting groups and activities at county and community levels through positive interaction. Building trust, respect and empathy is crucial for positive engagement.



- Positive Interaction is the core of the County Roscommon Migrant Integration Strategy 2023-2028 and will: -

- Create diverse, improved opportunities for cross-community understanding.
- Develop improved skills for interaction across all communities.
- Introduce improved processes to support positive integration.
- Promote recognition of migrants' positive contribution to the social and economic life of County Roscommon.
- Inform policymakers of the challenges and unmet needs of migrant communities.
- Positive Interaction will provide a common platform supporting all positive community interest groups across various activities.

Five tools can be used to achieve this, including: -

1. **Training** through sports activities and community volunteering.
2. **Creativity** through the visual and performing arts.
3. **Celebration and play** through sharing customs, important holidays, and recreation.
4. **Discovery** through nature and cultural trips and other outdoor activities.
5. **Learning and discussing** through mentorship programmes.

Our strategy packages these tools within five strategic themes: -

- Employment and Economic Activity.
- Education and Training.
- Active Civic Participation.
- Social Inclusion.
- Health and Welfare.

The five strategic themes will be implemented from 2023 to 2028 through a suite of integrated actions.

Priorities

In line with the requirements of the National Migrant Integration Strategy, the Roscommon Migrant Integration Strategy will: -

- Establish and maintain a Migrant Integration Working Group (MIWG) with representation from relevant agencies and groups to address issues.
- Work with the Public Participation Network, where Migrant Groups can engage with Roscommon County Council, Agencies, and Public Bodies on issues of concern.
- Ensure appropriate migrant participation on county and community level representative bodies.

The Strategy is designed to reinforce linked actions undertaken by others, including the Local Community Development Committee's Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2018-2023, and includes: -

Integration Support Workers: County Roscommon CYPSC, LCDC SICAP, Family Resource Centres and Roscommon Youth Services have funded support workers positions from migrant communities to act as 'liaison' between the communities and the services.

Intercultural Training: The current SICAP Plan provides for intercultural training to

improve opportunities for migrants. Within this provision, quality, in-depth, accredited training is fundamental to the positive interaction model.

Activities: The current SICAP Plan supports communities engaged in local events, occasions, and festivals with a cross-cultural dimension.

Delivering the Migrant Integration Strategy

The Roscommon Migrant Integration Strategy includes 36 actions, as agreed by the various stakeholders, which will be implemented over the lifetime of the strategy.

Stakeholders advocate a human rights-based approach giving effect to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The effectiveness of this strategy is contingent on the following: -

- Systematically listening to and involving migrant communities;
- Meeting the specific needs of women and children (gender- and child-proofing); and
- Fully involving Irish people.

Delivering this strategy will require civil leadership, investment and commitment. As integration is multi-faceted, all agencies, organisations and communities have roles to play. This strategy is not the preserve of any single agency. Everybody shares it, and all can and should contribute to it.

Migrant Integration Strategic Themes

Theme 1: Employment and Economic Activity

The six actions under *Theme 1: Employment and Economic Activity*, are designed to improved employment equality and employment opportunities for migrant communities to engage in entrepreneurial activity.

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline
1.1 Coordinate and facilitate events where information on employment supports and local enterprise supports can be promoted, ensuring access to relevant interpreters and all information is available in the appropriate language.	CIS	Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG	2023-2028
1.2 Coordinate the delivery of pre-social enterprise training specifically for the migrant community to encourage them to explore social enterprise as a model to meet local needs and provide employment opportunities.	Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG	Roscommon County Council Public Participation Network	2023-2028
1.3 Coordinate the delivery of pre-self-employment taster initiatives for members of migrant communities in the county.	Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG	Department of Social Protection	2023-2028
1.4 Promote the 'Business Development Programme' and other training programmes among our new Communities.	Roscommon Local Enterprise Office	All	2023
1.5 Facilitate awareness sessions on entitlements to our new Communities.	All		2023-2028
1.6 Support employers and workplaces in being more inclusive and supportive of migrant workers and their career progression.	GRETB	Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG	2023-2024

Theme 2: Education and Training

The outcomes of the consultation process confirm that access to education and training is universally acknowledged as a critical enabler of integration for migrant communities. The six actions under *Theme 2: Education and Training*, are designed to facilitate access to existing and new targeted services.

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline
2.1 Promote the formal and informal adult education programmes delivered throughout the county and support access.	Galway Roscommon Education Training Board	Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG Family Resource Centres Local Learning Network	2023-2028
2.2 Support foreign qualification recognition services provided by Quality and Qualifications Ireland and recognition with professional bodies and associations to support education and employment opportunities.	Galway Roscommon Education Training Board	Family Resource Centres	2023-2028
2.3 Promote the availability of training and funding streams in diversity and intercultural awareness; to all organisations and groups.	Roscommon County Council Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG	All	2023-2024
2.4 Use existing outreach channels to disseminate information	Public Participation Network Roscommon County Council Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG	Family Resource Centres Roscommon Women's Network	2023-2028
2.5 Research the training needs of the migrant communities.	Public Participation Network Roscommon County Council Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG	Family Resource Centres Roscommon Women's Network	2023-2028

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County Roscommon Migrant Integration Strategy 2023-2028

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Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline
2.6 Conduct a needs analysis/training requirement audit to see what training parents from new communities require in parenting, i.e. Parenting Classes/Workshops, National Childcare Schemes etc.	TUSLA Family Resource Centres Public Health Nurses	Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG Galway Roscommon Education Training Board	2023-2028
2.7 Assist migrants wishing to re-train to navigate the education and training options available.	Galway Roscommon Education Training Board	All	2023-2028

Theme 3: Active Civic Participation

Effective electoral participation, individual volunteerism, and activism are the components of *Theme 3: Active Civic Participation*. The seven actions are designed to assist migrant communities to positively contribute to civil society in their locality. The actions will also help local communities to understand the needs and aspirations of migrant communities.

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline
3.1 Support the capacity of local community groups to seek new funding opportunities that support the ethos of the Migrant Integration Strategy.	Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG Public Participation Network	Roscommon County Council Family Resource Centres Galway Roscommon Education Training Board	2023-2028
3.2 Enhance the capacity of the already established Community Champions further to cement their role in the Migrant Integration Process.	All	All	2023-2028
3.3 Support initiatives that promote integration and team-building among young migrant and refugee groups.	Foróige	Comhairle na nOg Family Resource Centres Young Carers	2023-2028
3.4 Develop initiatives to promote and celebrate Roscommon's diverse communities and actively encourage intercultural exchange.	Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG Roscommon County Council	Arts Office Arts Centre Public Participation Network Family Resource Centres Galway Roscommon Education Training Board	2023-2028

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County Roscommon Migrant Integration Strategy 2023-2028

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Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline
3.5 Promote and raise awareness of available volunteer opportunities to encourage and train migrant volunteers.	Roscommon Volunteer Centre	Family Resource Centres	2023-2028
3.6 Include migrant representation on the Roscommon County Council Joint Policing Committee.	Roscommon Joint Policing Committee.	AGS Roscommon County Council	2023
3.7 Develop a voter registration campaign to raise awareness within the migrant communities about the entitlement to vote; A 'How to Register & How to Vote' Campaign	Roscommon County Council	Citizen's Information Centre Public Participation Network Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG	2023-2024
3.8 Extend the membership of the Migrant Integration Working Group including new members from our new communities	All		2023-2028

Theme 4: Social Inclusion

Positive social inclusion ensures that those at risk of being excluded can access the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in the county's economic, social, political, and cultural life. In the case of migrant communities, social inclusion will ensure that people equitably participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline
4.1 Expand existing library service initiatives to encourage intercultural activities, promote a ' <i>sense of place</i> ' and belonging for all communities, and ensure information and books are available in as many languages as possible.	Roscommon County Libraries	All	2023-2028
4.2 Facilitate migrant groups in finding suitable meeting spaces.	All	Branch Libraries	2023-2028
4.3 Compile an accredited list of interpretation and translation services available within Roscommon to ensure information is accessible by migrants and ensure funding is available for services to avail of these translation services.	Roscommon County Libraries		2023-2028
4.4 Continue to explore all possible funding opportunities for integration work, projects, and initiatives.	Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG CIS	Roscommon County Council	2023-2028
4.5 Develop Drop-in Clinics with interpretation services that offer a variety of support to migrant's communities	MIWG	All	2023-2024
4.6 Develop initiatives to promote and celebrate the county's diverse communities and actively encourage intercultural exchanges.	Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG	TUSLA Family Resource Centres Youth Services SafeLink	2023-2024
4.7 Advocate for additional Local Link services and routes.	MIWG	Local Link	2023-2028

Theme 5: Health and Wellbeing

The Healthy Roscommon Plan 2018-2021 notes that 'a Healthy Roscommon, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.' The actions of Theme 5: Health and Wellbeing, are designed to ensure that members of migrant communities are positively encouraged to realise physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline
5.1 Provide awareness-raising on the topic of Human Trafficking.	AGS	Roscommon Joint Policing Committee and SafeLink	2023-2028
5.2 Promote awareness of national health and wellbeing campaigns to migrant communities.	Healthy Ireland Coordinator	Health Service Executive Roscommon Children and Young People's Services Committee	2023-2028
5.3 Develop sports interventions targeting members of our new communities.	Roscommon Sports Partnership	Roscommon County Council Public Participation Network	2023-2028
5.4 Develop intercultural dialogue and celebrate cultural diversity through the Arts.	Arts Office Arts Centre	All	2023-2028
5.5 Ensure provision of Domestic Abuse support and information to our new communities.	SafeLink	Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG Roscommon County Council TUSLA	2023-2028
5.6 Ensure our new communities know the mental health services available to all age groups.	Health Service Executive	Mental Health Ireland - Roscommon	2023-2028
5.7 Upskill translators to provide a more professional service in the Health Care Sector.	Health Service Executive		2023-2028
5.8 Promote awareness of the LGBTQ+ supports available in the county to the migrant community.	Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG	Roscommon Youth Service	2023-2028

