



Update on Temporary Emergency Accommodation for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection fleeing the war in Ukraine

Briefing Note: 23 February, 2024

Newhall Accommodation Centre, Naas, Co. Kildare

This briefing note is being provided to you by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to ensure you are informed of developments in your area in relation to emergency accommodation for those fleeing the war in Ukraine (Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection, BOTPs).

Update in relation to Newhall Accommodation Centre, Naas, Co. Kildare:

From the start of March onwards 985 beds will be provided for people fleeing the war in Ukraine in the Newhall Accommodation Centre.

- All statutory requirements relating to the establishment and management of emergency accommodation are being met by the service provider, including health and safety, fire, building regulations and other requirements. The safety and security of the BOTP residents is of paramount importance.
- The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth will manage the arrival of people into this centre.
- The contract with this centre has been signed for a period of 12 months.
- See the Q&A section at the end of this note for answers to a wide range of questions.

A - Context and Overview of Current Accommodation Pressures

Legislation:

Since the outset of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, all EU Member States, including Ireland, agreed the *Temporary Protection Directive*, offering expedited stay, accommodation if required and work status for those fleeing the war. This was the first time that the directive had been invoked since it was agreed in 2001.

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These people have come to Ireland as a direct result and consequence of the war. On arrival in Ireland they make themselves known to relevant authorities who then process their application and begin the process of finding them accommodation, should they require it.

Some choose to source their own accommodation through their own networks and there are a range of organisations, charities, and NGOs specifically helping Ukrainian people. However, the overwhelming majority rely on the State to provide for them wherever it is available.

Context:

- Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Ireland has seen an unprecedented number of people arrive here fleeing the Russian aggression. In addition, there has been a huge increase in people seeking asylum from other countries.
- Since February 2022 to date, the Government is providing **over 76,000 people** seeking refuge **from Ukraine** with state-provided or pledged accommodation and support services, and that number continues to increase.
- Our communities and neighbourhoods have responded with a generosity of spirit, in keeping with both our international reputation and our obligations, that recognises the human plight and trauma that people are experiencing, and their right to seek protection and help from the international community.
- The provision of accommodation, health, education, income and other supports as appropriate, to those fleeing the war in Ukraine and International Protection applicants, is a whole-of-government emergency response.
- A range of departments, agencies, service providers, and local authorities are involved in the accommodation, resettlement, and integration process.
- Given the scale and urgency of the operation to source accommodation for unplanned new arrivals, manage and process them appropriately, and transfer and settle them into homes and communities, there has been a requirement to act at pace, with developments often happening at very short notice.
- We are working to improve how new accommodation is sourced, and how these developments are communicated to local communities. Our aim is to enhance communications and engagement and give communities more access to information and updates on what is happening in their community.

**The pledged accommodation figures represent the total number of BOTPs who have ever been in pledged accommodation, including IRC, Offer a Home scheme and private pledges, rather than the current total.

Accommodation Situation:

- The accommodation of people seeking refuge in Ireland is a demand-led process with applicants arriving in the country and seeking accommodation spontaneously every day.

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- The pressure to accommodate **over 76,000 new** people in such a short period of time led to significant shortages of accommodation at various points since the war began. The Department availed of all suitable offers of accommodation, made through its offer portal on gov.ie, right across the country, in order to meet accommodation needs.
- In response, Government stepped up action to maximise the pace and scale of delivery on its accommodation strategy. The Cross-Government Accommodation Working Group, chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach, consists of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth; the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; and the OPW.
- An expanded programme of work is being undertaken by Government that allows for consideration of commercial properties and sites for development, refurbishment or purchase and the use of alternative modular buildings.
- This work is being undertaken by all of the State bodies working together, as part of the Accommodation Working Group, and a National Coordination Unit, established in the Local Government Management Agency to ensure delivery on the expanded workstream at local level.
- In addition, in December 2023, the Government agreed to amend its support offering for people claiming Temporary Protection as a result of the war in Ukraine to more closely align with supports in other EU Member States and to ensure Ireland can continue to meet its obligations under the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD).
- Under the revised policy, new arrivals from Ukraine (after a certain date) who seek accommodation from the State will be offered a maximum of 90 days in State-supported accommodation in 'designated accommodation centres'.
- It is currently the intention of the Department that the New Hall accommodation centre will be utilised in this way and, as a result, we expect that the people will only have stays of a short duration at this accommodation as they adjust to life in Ireland and prepare to transition to independent accommodation.

B – Overall Figures – as of **14 February 2024**

Those fleeing the war in Ukraine	
76,302	The number of people fleeing the war in Ukraine in Ireland, known as Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTPs) who are being

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	provided with accommodation by the State or through pledges (<i>not all seek state-provided accommodation</i>).
104,297	The total number of people fleeing the war in Ukraine who have arrived in Ireland since the start of the war. (<i>This includes those who have sourced their own accommodation.</i>)

Those seeking International Protection

27,255	The total number of International Protection applicants (IPAs) who are currently being accommodated by the State.
2,242	The number of IP applicants who have arrived in Ireland seeking refuge in 2024 to date.
15,014	The total number of IP applicants who arrived in Ireland in 2023.

C – Questions and Responses

1. How many people are intended to be accommodated in the Newhall Accommodation Centre? What will the resident breakdown be at the building?

The maximum capacity in this centre is for **985 people**. The residency will be entirely made up of Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection fleeing the war in Ukraine. The profile of arrivals from the war in Ukraine to date is mainly women and children.

2. How long can people expect to stay there? What is the duration of the contract?

The term of the contract for the facility is one year.

It is expected that residents will only stay for a number of weeks as they adjust to living in Ireland and prepare to transition to their own independent accommodation.

3. What are the conditions at the site – what are the sleeping arrangements, toilets, showers, etc.? What are the catering arrangements for the building?

There will be 387 en-suite own door sleeping cabins at the facility, to accommodate families of 2-6 people. The winter-ready sleeping cabins will be connected via covered tracked walkways. There will be a designated heated dining marquee which will operate on a staggered basis, with times allocated to avoid over-crowding. All meals and tea/coffee making facilities will be provided, and will take account of cultural and religious issues as well as flexibility around lunches for students/workers etc. There will be separate recreational marquees for adults and children. There will also be tables outside as well, along with play areas for children. The laundry facilities are communal and located within the centre.

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4. Who are the owners and who are operating on site? What experience do they have?

The property is leased and operated by Pastures New Ltd. The company will be employing a centre manager directly with experience in facilities management and also contracting additional assistance in this area. Pastures New have previous experience of setting up and operating accommodation centres of this size.

5. How many staff are on site? Is there a presence there 24/7? What are the security arrangements for the building?

The facility will be staffed with a rostered team to include the facility manager, duty managers, night managers, security teams, food service staff and cleaners. Security personnel will be on-site 24/7, 365 days a year and the manager on duty will be contactable at all times.

6. Is the building fire cert in place?

The facility is fully fire safety compliant, including the provision and maintenance of adequate firefighting equipment e.g. sufficient number of fire extinguishers. A fire risk assessment has been conducted for the overall facility, and fire safety certificates have been granted for the communal and dining marquees.

7. Will residents retain a degree of privacy in this accommodation?

As above, residents will be accommodated in own door en-suite sleeping cabins which are private.

8. How will BOTP applicants be provided with PPS numbers? Are some of them eligible to work?

BOTP applicants are provided with full medical checks, medical cards and PPS numbers on arrival into the Citywest before transport to their accommodation. They are then eligible to seek work and many people have done so and are making a positive contribution to the local and national economies particularly in areas where there are skills shortages.

9. What health supports are available to BOTP Applicants?

BOTP applicants are provided with full medical checks and medical cards on arrival into Citywest. A full list of HSE supports is attached to this briefing note at Appendix A.

As part of this communication and engagement process, the national HSE lead has been notified of this centre opening and they have activated local services.

10. What about school places?

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Due to the short term nature of this accommodation facility, children will only be in residence for short durations. It is likely that families will await securing their own independent accommodation before settling children in schools. The provider, Pastures New, can provide and facilitate various educational classes and recreational activities, and will liaise with relevant external bodies where appropriate.

11. What integration supports are available to provide day-to-day activities to the BOTP Applicants?

As Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection Ukrainian people receive housing assistance, health, education and other supports.

The local Community Forum has also been informed of this opening and will engage with the new arrivals to involve them in community activity and offer a wide range of supports and activities.

There are administrative facilities on site to facilitate the above.

12. Is any assessment provided to BOTP Applicants to ascertain their needs or vulnerabilities?

All BOTP arrivals are given a full medical and health check on arrival to assess their needs.

13. Is Newhall the only area considered for this type of accommodation, or have other areas in the city/country been examined? How many other centres like this are in operation?

A similar centre is already open in Stradbally, Co. Laois.

There are also many other large-scale accommodation centres already in place across the country.

14. Who should public representatives contact with follow-on queries or concerns?

The Community Engagement Team is working across Government to ensure a more co-ordinated approach. Queries on this specific location can be directed to community@equality.gov.

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Appendix A

Department of Health supports

BOTP = Beneficiary of Temporary Protection

IP = International Protection

Communications and Resources:

- The HSE has set up a webpage 'Healthcare services for Ukrainian nationals in Ireland' <https://www2.hse.ie/services/healthcare-in-ireland/ukrainian-refugees.html>, available in both Ukrainian and Russian. The website provides comprehensive detail on health services available to Ukrainian refugees and how to access health services in Ireland.
- For general information about health services, the HSE's contact centre (HSE Live) has a team that speak Ukrainian, available from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. The HSE live phone lines are 1800 700 700 and 00 353 1 240 8787.
- Enhanced translation services have been put in place for all HSE services. · The National Screening Service has made leaflets and info videos available for the different screening programmes. This information is now available in Ukrainian and Russian.
- Easy Read COVID-19 Isolation Guidance has been translated into Ukrainian and Russian. Available at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/covid-19-resources-and-translations/translated-covid19-information/> · My Health, My Language ([hse.ie/myhealthmylanguage](https://www.hse.ie/myhealthmylanguage)), a video series on health topics in 17 languages, including Ukrainian, is now live.
- HSE has activated social media links across Pinterest, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram which direct people to Ukraine specific health page. A Google paid search is in place which directs people looking for information on the Irish Health Services to Ukraine specific health page.

Supports and Services:

- The mental health supports available to Ukrainians (both adults and children) in Ireland as a result of the on-going conflict reflect the layered care approach to mental health support for the wider population.
- These range from self-help and education to GP support and onward referral to specialist mental health services where necessary. Details of services and pathways to support are on the 'Getting Healthcare In Ireland' HSE webpage dedicated to Ukrainians.
- The HSE mental health workstream is continuing to promote the MyMind free counselling service for UKR refugees through ICGP and National Counselling service. MyMind staff now meet with UKRs at the National Transit Centre in Citywest to inform them of the services available.

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GP Services:

- Demand for GP services amongst Migrant population is increasing in line with increased demand from existing population. Scaling up temporary sessional clinics across the country in 2023 is a HSE priority.
- The HSE, in consultation with the IMO, has prepared a range of bespoke options for those accommodated in hotels and other settings. The exact model for each site varies depending on numbers and geographical distribution, however all have access to GP Out of Hours services. On-site clinics or urgent assessments are available across many sites and there are offsite clinics available through SafetyNet in Dublin (23 clinics weekly) and Out-of-Hours Providers.
- The HSE has issued an updated GP Framework which includes guidance on maternity and infant care and the Primary Childhood Immunisation Programme. It also provides greater clarity on the options for those in emergency accommodation across the country.

Medical Cards:

- There is a simplified and streamlined process to apply for and receive a medical card. Ukrainian refugee applicants will automatically qualify for a medical card. Having a GP is not a requirement for applying for the card, as one can be assigned afterwards.
- Existing UKR medical card holders will now be subject to a standard means test assessment after 12 months. Incoming UKR arrivals will continue to have access to a simplified (non-means assessed) medical card application process during their first year.
- Those staying in private accommodation (family/friends/pledged accommodation) can register with local GPs in the normal way under the GMS.