

IMPACT REPORT 2024



IRISH LAW AWARDS 2024

WINNER

PRO BONO
PUBLICO/COMMUNITY
LAW FIRM/LAWYER
OF THE YEAR

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HOPE



COURAGE

RESILIENCE

- Our Information and Advocacy Service team providing information to homeless people seeking protection.



FOREWORD

Nick Henderson

CEO

2024 was another challenging year; reception conditions worsened from overcrowded emergency centres to rising street homelessness leaving thousands of people seeking protection without dignity and safety.

In the face of these challenges, the Irish Refugee Council adapted and applied our resources strategically to meet the needs of the people we support.

Apart from direct legal support, we engaged in strategic litigation and casework to secure people's rights and entitlements. We also boldly advocated for humane and urgent responses to the accommodation crisis. We were honoured that our Independent Law Centre's work, including defending the rights of homeless people seeking protection, was recognised with the Pro Bono Publico/Community Law Firm of the Year award.

This Impact Report tells the story of resilience and solidarity. Throughout 2024, our teams worked tirelessly to help people realise their rights and defend human dignity in the face of regressing policies and practice.

We share this report with deep gratitude to our staff, volunteers, funders, and supporters who carry forward our proud tradition of welcome showing courage, compassion, and hope as we work toward a fairer, more welcoming Ireland for everyone who calls it home.

Highlights

3,940 ANSWERED CALLS TO OUR HELPLINES

8,989 EMAILS QUERIES RESOLVED

858 NEWLY ARRIVED PEOPLE EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS SUPPORTED WITH
PROTECTION AND ACCOMMODATION

173 OUTREACH SESSIONS DELIVERED
ACROSS IRELAND

77 TRAININGS DELIVERED ACROSS SERVICES

10 NEW COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP GROUPS
SUPPORTED

238 APPEARANCES AND MENTIONS IN LOCAL,
NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

348 PEOPLE RECEIVED ONGOING LEGAL
REPRESENTATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL
PROTECTION PROCESS, FAMILY REUNIFICATION
APPLICATIONS, AND RECEPTION CONDITIONS
CASES

IRISH LAW AWARDS COMMUNITY LAW
FIRM OF THE YEAR



- Our Information and Advocacy Service staff support homeless people seeking protection during a homelessness clinic.

IMPACT REPORT 2024

SERVICES AND SUPPORT



Information and Advocacy Service

*Providing information and support, for free,
in a timely and confidential manner.*

2,479 *answered calls to our general helpline*

5,700 *email queries responded to*

858 *newly arrived homeless protection applicants,
and re-accommodation cases supported*

314 *new family reunification cases supported*

124 *outreach sessions delivered across Ireland*

“A service user was recently reunited with his wife and minor children after they arrived on family reunification from Afghanistan. The service user’s daughter, who is 6 years old, was prohibited from attending school in Afghanistan. This will be her first time in education. We received the following email expressing the service user’s gratitude for our support and assistance:

‘Dear Hayley, I hope you are well. My children got admission to our local primary school. My children are very happy, especially my daughter, who was not allowed to go to school in Afghanistan. This is all your kindness; we will always be grateful to you. May God keep you safe and happy always. Thank you very much.’

“A service user who has been linked in with our organisation since he arrived in Ireland during the pandemic was recently reunited with his wife and children when they finally arrived from Afghanistan following a successful grant of Family Reunification. The service user’s wife has complex health needs which went untreated for a long period in Afghanistan while the family awaited reunification. The service user and his family are extremely relieved to be finally reunited.”

“An Afghan service user that we assisted with her application for the Afghan Admissions Programme was finally reunited with her minor brothers last week. The siblings’ parents were killed by the Taliban and the boys have been essentially living alone and in hiding since, so a huge relief for them to finally arrive in Ireland and be reunited with their sister.”

“

“A service user who recently received a positive decision in respect of his application for family reunification for his wife and minor children shared the following email having just received visas for his family to travel to Ireland:

‘I am overjoyed to share the wonderful news that I have received my family’s passports with their visas. This moment means the world to me, and I wanted to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to you. From the beginning, when we started filling out the questionnaires, to the final stages of the visa applications, your unwavering support, kindness, and dedication have been a source of immense comfort and strength. Your guidance made this complex process so much easier for me, and I am incredibly grateful for everything you’ve done. Your generosity and compassion will forever hold a special place in my heart. I truly cherish the support you’ve provided, and I will always remember your kindness during this pivotal time in our lives. Thank you, Hayley, for helping to reunite my family and making our dream of being together in Ireland a reality.’”

“

“I just wanted to reach out to you to express my gratitude and awe of Monika and Ismay, they are a credit to your service. We have been struggling to support international protecting applications in our communities and we really needed some guidance and support. Monika and Ismay held a session for us earlier this week out of business hours to share their knowledge with our group and answer a plethora of questions. They clearly put a huge amount of work into the presentation, not only did it address all the standard information we needed, but they also tailored it to address our questions in advance.”



Ukraine Response

Linking those fleeing the war in Ukraine with vital information.



- Our Ukraine Response Programme supervisor providing information to people displaced by the war in Ukraine at an outreach.

1,461

incoming calls answered through our Ukraine Language Helpline, providing information in Ukrainian and Russian.

1,010

email queries responded to with guidance on rights, services, and supports

27

targeted outreach sessions reaching 671 individuals in priority locations.

371

people received one-to-one support following outreach sessions to address specific needs.

Member of the core group of the Ukraine Civil Society Forum which meets weekly and the full Forum which meets monthly

Full Circle : Asil's Journey from Survival to Giving Back.



When Asil arrived in Ireland from Gaza to study, she carried dreams of a brighter future, and the promise of new beginnings from an international qualification. But within weeks, everything changed as the war in Gaza started. "Suddenly, my focus shifted from settling into student life to dealing with the fear, grief, and helplessness of watching my home being destroyed and losing contact with loved ones. I was physically safe, but emotionally I felt like I was living two lives, one here, and one constantly worried about my family back home. Since then, Ireland has become not just a place of study, but a place of refuge," said Asil.

At a moment of profound uncertainty, the Irish Refugee Council (IRC) became Asil's anchor. "I came to Ireland to study, but suddenly I found myself in a completely different reality, unable to return home, terrified for my family, and unsure of my future. The early legal advice I received from the IRC was crucial. They helped me understand my options, explained the asylum process clearly, and reassured me that I had rights and a pathway forward. That guidance grounded me at a time when everything felt chaotic," Asil said. She continued, "They listened without judgment, they followed up, and they reminded me that I wasn't navigating this alone. In moments when I felt powerless, their advice and presence gave me back a sense of control and dignity. It was the foundation I needed to start rebuilding my life here."

Developed by IRC's Independent Law Centre in 2011, free Early Legal Advice, also known as "frontloading," is a tailored, intensive form of legal support provided to individuals in the early stage of the international protection process. It helps those who are in the process and those considering whether to apply, make informed decisions and submit comprehensive applications.

Asil now holds a Master's Degree in Business Analytics and works as a Caseworker with IRC, leveraging her lived experience to support refugees and people seeking protection on their rebuilding journeys. "Working for the IRC now feels like a full-circle moment.

It's more than just a job; it's a chance to give back. I especially love meeting people who are new to Ireland and being able to say, with full sincerity, 'I understand'. What I love most is being able to offer not just support, but hope, and to show people that, even in the darkest times, they are not alone. It's powerful to be part of a team that truly advocates for dignity, justice, and humanity."

Irish Refugee Council Independent Law Centre

Our Law Centre, comprising two Solicitors, one Trainee Solicitor and one Legal Officer, provides expert legal advice, representation, and strategic litigation to people fleeing war and persecution.

Over the past year, we have worked to uphold rights, secure protection, and advance systemic change for those seeking safety in Ireland.

348

people received ongoing legal representation in the international protection process, family reunification applications, and reception conditions cases.

26

clients were recognised as refugees, with 10 positive family reunification decisions and 12 successful applications under the Afghan Admissions Programme.

4

High Court judicial review cases were settled, and 1 case was referred to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) as one of the two lead cases concerning international protection applicants experiencing homelessness.

10

clients referred to A&L Goodbody Solicitors and 5 to Arthur Cox for representation in protection and family reunification cases.

77

clients received representation on Reception Conditions issues, supporting their rights to adequate living standards.

53

young people assessed as age-disputed minors supported through age assessment processes.



Irish Refugee Council Independent Law Centre staff accepting the Pro Bono Publico/Community Law Firm of the Year award.

Protecting Children Through Legal Advocacy

Fatima's Story

Fatima arrived in Ireland alone at 17, fleeing forced marriage in her home country. Despite her age, she was incorrectly assessed as an adult and placed in inappropriate accommodation, without access to the rights and protections afforded to children.*

The Irish Refugee Council's Independent Law Centre successfully supported Fatima with legal representation during her age reassessment. She was placed in State care, moved to safe, age-appropriate accommodation and could now enjoy her rights as a child in the State, including education, basic care, and the right to family reunification if granted protection status.

Fatima's experience reflects a broader issue. Many unaccompanied minors are wrongly assessed as adults by Tusla and treated accordingly by Irish authorities. The Law Centre provides legal support to these children throughout the age assessment process and in their international protection applications

These young people are among the most vulnerable in the system arriving alone, often traumatised by conflict, exploitation, or displacement. Misidentifying a child's age can have serious consequences: unsafe accommodation, increased risk, and exclusion from education and child-specific services. Legal advocacy is essential to protect their rights and ensure compliance with Irish and international child protection standards.

One ongoing challenge is the inconsistent and flawed nature of age assessments. Authorities often rely on appearance or presentation rather than appropriate, evidence-based methods. Cultural misunderstandings and poorly reasoned decisions further compromise fairness. Additionally, there is no formal process to reassess individuals who turn 18 before a correction is made meaning those who arrived as minors may permanently lose access to vital protections.

Our work is supported by dedicated partnerships with youth organisations, social workers, and migrant rights groups. We are also grateful for the contribution of pro bono legal professionals through the KIND project an initiative adapted from the U.S. to provide free, child-friendly legal support to unaccompanied minors in Europe seeking protection and family reunification.

**Name changed to protect identity.*

Education Programme

Our Education Programme removes barriers to higher and further education for people in the protection process by providing financial support, tailored information, and advocacy. We have helped hundreds of students access learning opportunities and navigate complex education systems.

409 people applied for support from our Education Fund, with 86 students awarded financial grants.

The average grant awarded was €514, helping to cover essential costs such as fees, materials, and transport.

15 students received individual advocacy support to secure university places or state funding.

1,057 new people were supported through email queries, receiving guidance on education options, funding, and application processes.

4 training sessions delivered to practitioners working in education and 1 session provided directly to students and prospective students.



Education as a Pathway to Integration and Stability : *Muyiwa's Story*



When Muyiwa (21) and his family arrived in Ireland in 2023 seeking international protection, his dream of completing university felt painfully out of reach. He had finished secondary school and begun university in his home country, Nigeria, but his studies were cut short when they were forced to flee.

From the beginning, Muyiwa saw education as the key to long-term stability for himself and his family. But reality was harsh: international student fees averaged €10,000 a year, his family's finances were unstable after losing everything when they fled, and most grants required three years of Irish residency.

Still, Muyiwa refused to give up. He searched tirelessly for opportunities until his determination was rewarded with a Sanctuary Scholarship at ATU Donegal. But barriers remained. Living in a remote accommodation centre, the state provided bus schedule clashed with his lectures, and the high cost of alternative transport threatened his ability to continue.

"I don't know how I would have commuted without the funding. It really saved me a lot," Muyiwa said after learning about the Irish Refugee Council Education Fund through Facebook and successfully applying for it.

Now, Muyiwa is a second-year student studying pharmaceutical science. He is on a clear path to meaningful employment and a secure future for his family. Looking ahead, he dreams of establishing a pharmaceutical company and contributing to Ireland's economy and society.

The Irish Refugee Council believes education is crucial for integration. Our Education Programme supports people seeking protection to access higher and tertiary education through providing information, guidance, grants, and advocating for policy change.

Reflecting on his journey, Muyiwa said: "I appreciate your efforts. To others in my situation: keep pushing, keep searching for opportunities, and trust that the Lord will help you."

Name withheld at the individual's request.

Housing Casework and Policy

Our Housing Casework and Policy work supports refugees and people seeking protection as they transition from IPAS accommodation and begin their new lives in communities across Ireland. We provide information, practical assistance, and policy advocacy to help people secure safe, permanent housing.

425

people received information and advice on housing options, rights, and processes.

178

housing applications prepared and submitted to local authorities and housing providers.

35

families who arrived through family reunification supported upon arrival to help them settle into new homes.

Weekly housing application workshops, Horn of Africa support clinics, and bi-weekly tenancy-finding workshops delivered to build skills and confidence.

35

Befriending Sessions delivered by 24 trained volunteers, providing peer support and community connection.

70

people received dedicated tenancy-finding assistance from volunteers and befrienders.

A Place to Call Home

Our Housing Programme provides safe, secure homes for refugees as they build their new lives in Ireland. By offering stable accommodation, we help people move forward with dignity and hope.

15

properties managed, providing homes for 92 tenants across Ireland.

Finding Homes Through Connection

The Impact of the Housing Befriending Programme

“

Our Housing Befriending Programme supports refugees moving out of Direct Provision and emergency accommodation into independent living. Recognising that housing is more than just shelter, it's the foundation of integration and belonging, the programme pairs people from refugee backgrounds with Trinity College Dublin students who help them to navigate the challenging private rental market.

Meeting weekly, participants have been building more than tenancy applications, they have also been building trust, connections and community. For many, the sessions have made the process less overwhelming. One participant, shared after a session: "I don't feel so alone now."

Student volunteers have been gaining just as much from the programme. "It opened my eyes to the material obstacles facing refugees and asylum seekers," said one, describing the experience as transformative. "I looked forward to meeting participants weekly. Over time, we formed relationships and found solutions together."

An increasing number of people have been supported to leave Direct Provision since its launch in 2023.

Benefits of the Befriending Programme

■ *Increases the capacity of those seeking to move out of emergency accommodation and Direct Provision by empowering them to engage confidently with the private rental sector and stay motivated throughout the housing search.*

■ *Fosters genuine intercultural exchange, offering members of the local community deeper insight into the experiences of people from refugee backgrounds.*

■ *Through pairing with students, many participants can improve their English language and communication skills in a supportive setting.*

■ *Helps reduce feelings of isolation and institutionalisation by building meaningful connections and a sense of belonging.*

Youth Work

Our Youth Work programme, delivered by one Youth Worker position, empowers young people in the international protection process to build resilience, develop skills, and integrate into Irish society. Through group activities, one-to-one support, and leadership opportunities, we help young people thrive.

193 young people engaged through groups, projects, and one-to-one support.

205 young people actively participating in the Irish Refugee Council youth group.

9 young people supported to develop leadership skills through our leadership programme.

144 young people received personalised one-to-one support.

367 email queries responded to, providing advice and information.

43 activities and workshops delivered across multiple youth projects.

5 school and partner organisation visits to raise awareness of our work.

8 training, talk, and outreach sessions delivered to support young people and professionals.

10 collaborations with organisations and experts to provide high-quality youth support.



Employment

Our Employment Programme helps refugees and people seeking protection understand their employment rights, build skills, and access sustainable employment in Ireland. Through training, partnerships, and outreach, we support people to thrive and fulfil their potential.

854

people received LinkedIn training and annual subscriptions to improve their professional networks and job prospects.

8

LinkedIn training sessions delivered to build digital skills and confidence.

6

collaborations with employers resulted in 21 people supported into sustainable employment opportunities.

11

outreach sessions delivered, reaching 414 people with information on employment rights and supports.

197

people engaged in our Employment WhatsApp group, accessing regular updates and guidance.

Over 500 people reached through Irish Refugee Council online information sessions on employment pathways.

A Journey of Grit and Growth :

Persy's Story



Driven by ambition and a desire to contribute to her home country's development, Persy worked hard to earn a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering and began a master's in the same field. But her life took an unexpected turn. She was forced to flee Zimbabwe and seek safety in Ireland in 2022.

In Ireland, her career path took a detour. After receiving her work permit in Ireland, she worked part-time in two jobs; as a money transfer agent and as a relief healthcare assistant. Persy fought hard to keep the hope that she would land a job in her field of study.

"My worry from observing most people who would come to Ireland seeking asylum, they would maybe end up in healthcare system, kitchen porter. I kind of felt like there's not much variety. So, I was like, am I also going to be stuck there? I don't really want to be stuck there, when I went to school, and I studied."

Regardless, Persy fought hard to keep the hope that she would land a job in her field of study alive. Persy joined Sanctuary Runners which is an initiative that brings refugees, people seeking protection, and Irish residents together through exercise. Through this group, Persy met someone who informed her about the refugee programme delivered by Pfizer in collaboration with the Irish Refugee Council.

Like Persy, many refugees and people seeking protection face significant barriers in having their prior education and professional experience recognised, often resulting in employment in fields unrelated to their prior career paths. The Supporting Refugees in Ireland initiative addresses this challenge by helping participants pursue roles at Pfizer Grange Castle through immersive mentoring and upskilling workshops.

"Those few weeks where you prepare for the internship, she (IRC Employment Officer Mavis Ramazani) came to make sure to give that support, to make sure that we are okay". Persy excelled in her six-week internship and then moved into the Pfizer graduate programme.

"That's how I transitioned from doing things that were outside of my educational experience into what would actually make me use my degree".

Through it all, she never lost sight of her dream. "I am a Christian, so I had faith. I had faith that something would happen. I didn't know how, but we have to believe and keep going."

Persy plans to continue her role as a graduate automation engineer, before moving into the role of assistant engineer. She then hopes to take on a managerial role following her advancement in the field.

"I believe there are many people out there who need this (employment programme) to be their hope or their steppingstone to get through the door, and they figure their way out in there".

Community Sponsorship :

Our Community Sponsorship programme, delivered by two staff members, supports local groups across Ireland to welcome and integrate refugees into their communities. We provide training, guidance, and ongoing support to ensure a warm and successful welcome.

10

new community sponsorship groups supported and trained to welcome resettled refugees directly into their communities.

29

people welcomed to Ireland through community sponsorship initiatives.

50

training and information sessions delivered to communities across Ireland to build capacity and awareness.

Community Sponsorship :

How The Dara Group Helped a Family Start Again



"It was August 2021 and like everyone I was watching the news and seeing the dreadful images of the chaos in Kabul airport and families trying to flee following the fall of the country to the Taliban. I remember thinking what would it be like if this happened to me and my family." That thought planted the desire to help in Ann Kelleher-she just wasn't sure what exactly.

Around the same time her husband sent a radio clip of Rory O'Neill (IRC Community Sponsorship Manager) speaking about how another community was making a difference. Ann reached out to him. "I just really liked the idea of a group welcoming a family into their community and felt this was a really practical project that could make a difference to one family."

Soon after, the Dara Group, which Ann leads, was formed bringing together nine dedicated individuals whose diverse skills have proven invaluable to the work. IRC supported the Dara Group by offering online and in-person training and facilitating peer learning. They provided governance templates, organised Garda vetting, and gave detailed feedback on the group's preparation plan to help anticipate the family's needs.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, the group found creative ways to fundraise. Their first major initiative, a sea swim, "Dip for Dara," raised significant funds and brought the team closer. "We swam in Killiney one Saturday morning, it was a fantastic day. Although we had been up and running for a few months, in some ways it felt like the start of the project and was a bonding moment for the group." Corporate donations, support from personal networks and their community helped them raise €25,000 in total.

Securing a home proved challenging until a local religious order stepped forward with a derelict lodge. With the help of a group member with property management skills, the home was renovated and ready by December 2022. That's when the group met the Shahab family Farid, Sweeta, and their young son, Aria for the first time. "When we got to the new kitchen, Sweeta turned to me and hugged me, and we were both very emotional. I knew that the (Emergency Reception and Orientation) centre had been a challenging place to be, and it was clear this was a momentous day for the family".

Since then, the group has supported the family in every step of their new life in Ireland—from English lessons, to helping with healthcare appointments and celebrating milestones. "We were all so excited when we saw a picture of Aria (age 3) in his uniform starting Montessori last October. It really felt like such a huge step for the family and for Aria on their integration journey."

For Ann and the group, the impact has been profound. "We all feel we have learnt so much. About Afghanistan, about what it means to be a refugee, about the challenges of integration."

To others thinking about getting involved, her advice is: "There is a bit of work involved but I found it hugely rewarding and lots of fun! I would certainly recommend it as an initiative to get involved in without any hesitation."

Resettlement

Our Resettlement programme, delivered by one Resettlement Officer, supports Syrian and Afghan refugees as they rebuild their lives in Ireland, providing vital information, protection, and cultural orientation to help them settle and integrate.

114 queries on family reunification, travel documents, and citizenship responded to.

4,750 interactions with 1,300 people supported via phone, email, and WhatsApp throughout 2022.

8 outreach sessions delivered across Ireland to connect with communities.

13 cultural orientation sessions held both online and in person to assist with integration.

3 trainings delivered for resettlement workers in Ireland, including two in-person sessions.

11 trainings provided to strategic organisations on interpreting and language services.

"I am thrilled to share some wonderful news with you all! One of our clients has been successfully reunited with her husband after a long and challenging journey.

'I just want to inform you that my husband safely arrived to Ireland last Thursday. I would like to thank you both and your former colleague Ann, and your organisation as well for assisting and supporting for my family reunification process all these years. I can't thank you enough for your help and wishing you all success in your impactful work."

"Two very happy and relieved Afghan families were reunited with their family this evening after a very eventful journey and long wait in Iran, waiting on airspace to open up. All possible through Community Sponsorship."

"I'm so happy to share that a family from Afghanistan has just arrived at Dublin Airport through community sponsorship! One family member is pregnant and just made it in time to be allowed to fly (Sunday was the cut-off date). Thankfully, everything went smoothly, and they're now off to the west of Ireland to reunite with their sister, who arrived here after the fall of Kabul in 2021."

"Hi all, I'm sharing some good news on a Friday. An IRC-supported community sponsorship group welcomed an Afghan human rights defender to Dublin last night. We expect two more arrivals in the next few weeks—one from Lebanon and one from Afghanistan."

Policy and Advocacy

Our Policy team of two Policy Officers advocates for fair procedures, best practices, and the rights of people seeking international protection in Ireland. We work to influence legislation, raise awareness, and empower activists to create lasting change.

Launched the report 'If I don't do this then it won't be done', documenting the experiences of volunteers supporting homeless people seeking protection in Dublin.

interactions with 1,300 people supported via phone, email, and WhatsApp throughout 2022.

Participated in and chaired meetings of the NGO Pact Coalition to coordinate advocacy on the transposition of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Submitted detailed submission to the Department of Justice on the proposed designation of countries as safe.

Led the production of a Civil Society Joint Election Manifesto to guide and influence political party manifestos ahead of the 2025 General Election.

Delivered 8 workshops training new and experienced activists to advocate for refugee rights.

Hosted 4 Asylum Support Network meetings and delivered one training session.

Convened a joint press conference addressing homelessness among international protection applicants.

Part of a delegation that met with EU representatives in Brussels to discuss the Pact on migration and asylum.



- Speakers addressing journalists at a press conference on homelessness we organised in May 2024.

“

*“Some good news for a woman I was working with who was being transferred next week but wanted to finish her placement and exams in children's nursing. It's just being paused she will still be transferred but she will get her certificate first. I had raised the case with *a government minister* so I think that would have played a role. Nice message from her:*

'It was not easy, and it was beginning to affect my health, but I am doing my placement now. I read the message during my break I screamed with joy. My Wish to finish the course has been granted. As I stated in our conversation transfer for me it's not a problem my request was to finish my course. I am highly grateful for IPAS in accommodating me and also giving a chance to complete my course and be equipped to give back to the community. Above all I give many thanks to the Refugee Council for the support.'

"We have received confirmation that a very problematic manager with multiple accusations and reports has been removed from a centre by private security and later returned with Garda escort to collect his things.

A fantastic outcome after targeted joint advocacy involving a few organisations. Residents sending messages of relief and thanks- they are feeling stronger, safer and empowered."



- People touring our *Saol Nua: The Refugee Experience in Ireland* exhibition produced to mark World Refugee Day 2024.

Communications

Our Communications Officer delivers strategic messaging to promote the dignity, rights, and stories of people in the international protection process. Through media engagement, campaigns, and our social media platforms, we raise awareness and influence public attitudes.

Produced and launched 'Saol Nua: The Refugee Experience in Ireland' exhibition to mark World Refugee Day 2024.

Achieved 238 appearances and mentions in local, national, and international media.

Released 12 press statements highlighting key issues and positive developments in international protection.

Supported the promotion and visibility of the Refugee Week Ireland initiative.

Launched the 'Refugees Don't Need More Barriers' campaign to highlight government failures in providing safe spaces for unaccommodated international protection applicants.

Gained 4,788 new followers across our social media platforms, expanding our digital reach and engagement.

Delivered a media training under the Activists and Advocates workshop series supporting people with lived experience to use media in influencing



Partnerships :

From Uncertainty to Empowerment Hellen's Journey with Know Your Rights



Hellen arrived in Ireland from Zambia in April 2023, bringing with her the confidence and resilience built over 18 years working in the finance sector. Yet, navigating life in Ireland's international protection system quickly proved challenging—even when it came to the most basic needs.

"The struggle was mainly not knowing what my children and I were entitled to and how to access services and advocate for myself. We went months without a GP (General Practitioner)," said Hellen.

That's when she joined the Know Your Rights programme, a free, eight-week legal education initiative delivered by DLA Piper Ireland in partnership with the Irish Refugee Council. The programme is designed to empower people seeking protection in Ireland to understand their rights and advocate for themselves.

Participants explore a wide range of topics, including an introduction to the Irish legal system, data and cyber-security, consumer rights, housing law, employment rights, accessing the labour market, interview skills, public speaking, and access to healthcare.

For Hellen, that practical information was transformative.

She recalls, "Immediately after the last session, I had the confidence to write to them (Department of Social Protection, Medical Cards team) telling them I couldn't find a GP in my area willing to take me on... a few weeks later I was registered with a GP, and our medical cards arrived. That really helped a lot."

Beyond the facts and figures, Know Your Rights delivers what participants need most: clarity, confidence and community. "I felt a strong sense of belonging ... I'm not alone. There are supports, people are helpful, they are friendly," she says.

That sense of empowerment has rippled through her life — giving her the assurance to pursue other rights and opportunities. Today, she works as a social care worker while studying for a degree in Social Policy and Sociology at UCD.



Beacon of Hope: The Irish Refugee Council

By Khalid Ibrahim Dahir

*In the heart of Ireland, where hope takes flight,
The Irish Refugee Council shines its light.
For those who wander, lost and alone,
It offers support, a welcoming home.
Through corridors of uncertainty and fear,
Their voices whisper, "You are welcome here."
With open arms and hearts so wide,
They stand by refugees, side by side.
In a land of green, where dreams take root,
They nurture hope, they follow through.
With every case, they pave the way,
For brighter tomorrows, a safer day.
They navigate the labyrinth of fate,
With patience, kindness, never late.*

*In every story, a life reclaimed,
In every face, a heart renamed.
Through trials tough and nights so long,
They offer solace, and make the weary strong.
Documents, hearings, and endless queues,
They guide with grace, through daunting news.
To the children seeking places to play,
To the mothers with prayers, they say,
To the fathers with dreams held tight,
They offer a beacon in the darkest night.
So here's to The Council, steadfast and true,
In Ireland's embrace, they renew.
For every life they touch and mend,
The Irish Refugee Council, a true friend.*



Thank You

In these turbulent times, the support of our donors and partners has truly sustained the work of the Irish Refugee Council. Not only allowing us to fund services and staff, but also as a reminder to us of the many people and organisations that continue to believe in the work that we do. We truly thank you all.

We hope that as you read over the pages of this report, you realised the lasting impact that your support has had on the lives of so many people. From a helping someone to start their working life in Ireland, to supporting those men the state has left homeless, you have been right there on the journey with them. We are a small independent charity that relies on donations and funders, and as the demand for our services continues to grow, in a sadly increasing hostile environment, we need that support more than ever, thank you.

Thank you for all that you, no matter in what way you supported us in 2024, we could not do the work without you.

2024 Funders

- Apple
- A & L Goodbody
- Arthur Cox
- Department of Justice
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth
- Pobal: Scheme for Support to National Organisations
- Mount Street Club Trust
- Musgrave Trust
- Erasmus
- Community Foundation Ireland
- Kids in Need of Defence
- Rethink Ireland
- Maynooth University Ireland
- St Stephens Green Trust
- ESB
- The Wheel
- Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
- Deloitte
- ICMC Europe
- IKEA
- The One Foundation
- The Ireland Funds
- Irish Youth Foundation
- National Youth Council
- Department of Tourism
- Dublin City Council
- LinkedIn
- ECRC
- Inner City Organisation Network
- Dropbox
- Quinn Family Foundation
- TK Maxx
- Tesco



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