

## IRELAND

**This information sheet outlines key information for people seeking legal help who are impacted by the crisis in Afghanistan.**

This includes people who are currently:

1. In Ireland seeking asylum/protection;
2. In Afghanistan (or another country) and want to relocate to Ireland with family connections in Ireland..

This information is collated by a collective of legal actors to support legal needs arising from the crises in Afghanistan. Should you have any updates or resources you would like included please contact: [grfpledge@pilnet.org](mailto:grfpledge@pilnet.org)

PILnet, APNOR, APRRN, and AMERA are unable to provide direct legal assistance or referrals, but if you are an asylum seeker, refugee or stateless person in need of legal assistance please see the list of local legal aid providers and their contact details [below](#). In addition to this contact information, you can find further details about local legal aid providers in the countries covered on the country pages of [UNHCR Help](#) or AMERA's [Rights in Exile](#) platform.

## PEOPLE ALREADY IN IRELAND

**People who are in Ireland and wish to remain you can find information about the options here:**

### Refugee Status

- In Ireland, applications for refugee status are reviewed by the International Protection Office (IPO). If an application is successful, the Minister for Justice will grant a declaration of refugee status.
- You can apply for refugee status if you are in Ireland and you are unable to return to your home country because you fear persecution.
- You should apply for refugee status at the Irish border as soon as you arrive.
- You can also apply if you are already in Ireland.
- Normally, there are 6 steps to applying for refugee status:
  1. Tell the authorities you want to apply
  2. Do a preliminary interview at the IPO
  3. Complete a questionnaire
  4. Do a personal interview (also called second interview)
  5. Get a recommendation from the IPO
  6. Get a decision from the Ministerial Decisions Unit

- You must be allowed to stay in Ireland while the IPO processes your application.
- For further information about the asylum process please see: Citizens Information, 'Applying for international protection in Ireland', available [here](#).

### Subsidiary Protection

- In Ireland, when you apply for refugee status, you can also apply for a status called Subsidiary Protection.
- If your application for refugee status is refused, your application for Subsidiary Protection will then be considered by the IPO.
- Subsidiary protection status will be granted where you cannot return to your own country because you are at risk of serious harm, but you do not qualify as a refugee.
- For further information about applying for Subsidiary Protection, please see: Citizens Information, 'Applying for international protection in Ireland', available [here](#).

### Permission to Remain

- If you do not qualify for refugee status or for Subsidiary Protection, you may be given permission to stay in Ireland for humanitarian or other reasons.
- This is called Permission to Remain.
- As someone with Permission to Remain you will be given many of the same rights as an Irish citizen.

For help with the application process please see the 'free legal help' section below.

## PEOPLE WISHING TO RELOCATE TO IRELAND WITH **FAMILY LINKS**

### 1. People currently in Afghanistan (or other countries) who have family members in Ireland and want to relocate:

People who are currently in Afghanistan (or other countries) can apply for:

- **Family Reunification**
  - If you have links to a family member who is in Ireland and has refugee status or subsidiary protection status, that family member may be able to apply for you to join them in Ireland.
  - A person with refugee status or subsidiary protection status can apply for the following family members to join them in Ireland:

1. Their husband or wife, once they were married before they applied for refugee status in Ireland
  2. Their civil partner, once they were in a civil partnership before they applied as a refugee in Ireland
  3. Their child, if they are under 18 and not married
  4. If the family member in Ireland is under 18 and not married, then they can apply for their parents and brothers or sisters\*.  
(\*Brothers or sisters must be under 18 and not married).
- The family member who is in Ireland should submit an application to the Family Reunification Unit (FRU).
  - For further information about applying for family reunification, see 'Family reunification of international protection holders', available [here](#).
- **Discretionary Visa**
    - To apply for a discretionary visa, you must have family links to an eligible 'sponsor' in Ireland. This sponsor must fall under one of these categories:
      1. International protection status holder
      2. Irish citizen residing or intending to reside in Ireland
      3. Lawful resident with Stamp 4 permission
    - The sponsor must also generally meet financial criteria (generally requiring an income of €40,000). These criteria may be waived in humanitarian circumstances.
    - To apply for a discretionary visa, people need to complete an online form, available [here](#).
    - You will also need to submit supporting documentation, set out [here](#).
    - You can get help with this application by contacting the Irish Refugee Council, or the Immigrant Council of Ireland.

For help with the application process please see the 'free legal help' section below.

There may be other ways to relocate to Ireland if you have a profession or in demand skill or occupation. **Critical Skills Working Permits** exist for those who have been offered a job which qualifies as eligible employment.

You would need to have a job offer from an organisation with a sponsor licence to apply. For more details see [here](#). These permits have application requirements such as English language proficiency and professional qualifications and there will be fees to apply.

There is an organisation linking Afghans in skilled occupations with employers in different countries called Talent Beyond Boundaries. For more information see [here](#).

## FREE LEGAL HELP

The following organizations or legal service providers can support with free legal help:

- **Immigrant Council of Ireland**
  - **Types of services or specialization:** providing information and advice on all immigration related issues via a phone helpline; providing legal services and representation through the ICI Law Centre.
  - **Website:** <https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/>
  - **Email:** admin@immigrantcouncil.ie
  - **Contact number:** 00 353 1 674-0200
  - **Hours:** Helpline hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 10am-1pm  
Tuesday: 7pm-9pm
- **Irish Refugee Council**
  - **Types of services or specialization:** free drop-in centre (currently via phone and email) providing advice on the asylum process, direct provision and family reunification; providing legal services and representation through the IRC Law Centre.
  - **Website:** <https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/>
  - **Email:** [info@irishrefugeecouncil.ie](mailto:info@irishrefugeecouncil.ie)
  - **Contact number:** 00 353 1 764 5854
  - **Hours:** Drop-in Centre hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 10am – 4pm
- **Legal Aid Board**
  - **Types of services or specialization:** The Legal Aid Board are the body charged with providing legal aid in Ireland. They operate the Refugee Legal Service which provides confidential and independent legal services to persons applying for asylum in Ireland. Legal aid can help you if you cannot afford to pay a solicitor privately, by providing legal advice and representation in court.
  - **Website:** <http://www.legalaidboard.ie/en/>
  - **Email:** [info@legalaidboard.ie](mailto:info@legalaidboard.ie)
  - **Contact number:** 066 947 1000 / 1890 615 200
  - **Hours:** Monday – Friday: 9am – 5pm.

## OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

- **Citizens Information**
  - The website of Citizens Information provides comprehensive information on public services and processes, including asylum matters.
  - **Website:** [https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/about\\_citizens\\_information.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/about_citizens_information.html)

- **FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres)**
  - FLAC is an independent, voluntary organisation that helps people to understand and access their legal rights. FLAC offers some basic legal assistance for free and in confidence. You can get help from FLAC in three ways:
    1. Telephone information and referral line: Call the telephone information line for basic legal information, for details of your local FLAC advice centre or for a suitable referral. Call 01 - 906 10 10.
    2. Legal advice clinics: receive free advice from a volunteer lawyer.
    3. Online information
  - **Website:** <https://www.flac.ie/help/>
  
- **Cross Care**
  - Crosscare Information & Advocacy Service works to provide increased stability and quality of life for vulnerable and marginalised people, including people with low or no income, Irish emigrants and migrants, refugees and asylum seekers living in Ireland.
  - **Website:** <https://crosscare.ie/>
  
- **NASC**
  - Nasc works to link migrants and ethnic minorities to their rights through protecting human rights, promoting integration and campaigning for change as well as providing a free legal service. NASC is based in Cork and so provides support mainly to those based in the South of the country.
  - **Website:** <http://www.nascireland.org/>
  
- **Migrant Rights Centre Ireland**
  - Migrant Rights Centre Ireland is a national organisation working to promote justice, empowerment and equality for migrants and their families.
  - **Website:** <http://www.mrci.ie/>
  
- **Doras**
  - Doras is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation working to promote and protect the rights of people from a migrant background in Ireland.
  - **Website:** <https://doras.org/about-us/>

## DISCLAIMER

This information sheet outlines key information on Irish asylum and immigration law and does neither intend to provide a comprehensive overview nor replace legal advice in the individual case.

Please note the draft was prepared by Arthur Cox on 3 January 2023 Last updated: January 2023.