

PQ Digest | 12.02.18 – 16.02.18

Quick Links

13th February 2018	2
Refugee Data	2
Work Permits Eligibility	2
14th February 2018	3
Citizenship Applications.....	3

13th February 2018

Refugee Data

238. Deputy Eugene Murphy asked the **Minister for Justice and Equality** the status of the emergency reception and orientation centre, Ballaghaderreen, County Roscommon; the number of refugees facilitated to date in the centre; the number expected to be facilitated in 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [6702/18]

Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality (Deputy David Stanton): A number of persons are temporarily accommodated in the Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre (EROC) located in Ballaghaderreen, Co Roscommon, under the relocation strand of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP). As the name suggests, an EROC is largely about reception and orientation for those who are to be subsequently resettled and the majority of persons being relocated to Ireland are fleeing the war in Syria.

The services being provided include education, the services of a General Practitioner, HSE medical screening and access to the services of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. A core part of the job of the IRPP is coordination and ensuring appropriate service delivery and staff of the IRPP hold weekly clinics in the EROC with clients and any service level issues become immediately apparent.

The relevant services are provided locally or at the centre. The mode of service provision is determined on a case by case basis depending on the local situation and the individual circumstances of the asylum seekers. Services such as schooling and English classes are being provided directly to the children and adults at the centre. It should be noted that accommodating persons in EROCs for a period of time is considered to be good practice as it allows for a period of acclimatisation, de-stressing and on-site processing. It is also a process that is supported by the UNHCR as best practice.

Since Ballaghaderreen EROC opened in early last year nearly 300 people have resided there, with the current occupancy at 181.

The IRPP will relocate a further 204 people from Greece in the coming weeks and Government have also pledged to take a 600 refugees from Lebanon in 2018. Some of these refugees will be housed in Ballaghaderreen EROC. The exact numbers being housed there will be dependent on the movement of existing residents to their new homes in communities across the country.

Work Permits Eligibility

276. Deputy Thomas Pringle asked the **Minister for Justice and Equality** if a person who received a first instance decision from ORAC under the Refugee Act 1996 but has since been brought under the single procedure to be re-interviewed and has yet to receive a first instance decision under the International Protection Act 2015 is eligible to apply to the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation for an

employment permit and-or the administrative scheme to provide international protection applicants with permission to be self employed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [7181/18]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): The Deputy will be aware that on Friday last, 9 February, the Supreme Court made a Final Order striking down the prohibition on the right to seek work for protection applicants in the International Protection Act 2015. This effectively means that all applicants in the protection process may now apply for an employment permit from the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation. This is an existing scheme and the same conditions for eligibility are now being applied to international protection applicants as for all other non-EEA nationals. Full details can be found on the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation's website at www.dbei.gov.ie

In addition to the employment permits regime, the Government decided to set up an administrative scheme to provide eligible international protection applicants with access to self employment from 9 February. In this regard, I used my executive power to provide an avenue for qualified applicants to engage in self-employment. International Protection applicants who have not received a first instance decision within 9 months of the date of their application, if the delay is not through their own actions, who have made reasonable efforts to establish their identity, who have cooperated with the protection process and who have registered with the Revenue Commissioners are qualified to apply for a permission to access self employment.

In the situation outlined by the Deputy, the applicant can apply for an employment permit from the Department of Enterprise, Business and Innovation. The applicant would also be eligible to apply for the self-employment scheme operated by my Department in accordance with the conditions outlined above.

The Deputy will be aware that the arrangements outlined above are interim in nature pending Ireland's opt-in to the EU (recast) Reception Conditions Directive as set out in various statements in the Oireachtas and elsewhere. See for example my statement on 9 February available on www.justice.ie.

14th February 2018

Citizenship Applications

147. Deputy Catherine Martin asked the **Minister for Justice and Equality** the reason recognised refugees are being requested to submit original national passports for citizenship applications in view of the fact that as recognised refugees they will no longer be in possession of their national passport but have been issued an Irish travel document; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [7766/18]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan): As the Deputy will appreciate, the granting of Irish citizenship through naturalisation is a privilege and an honour which confers certain rights and entitlements, not only within the State but also at European Union level, and it is important that appropriate procedures are in place to preserve the integrity of the process.

All persons making an application for a certificate of naturalisation are required to provide satisfactory evidence of their identity and nationality. This is usually in the form of a currently valid passport and may

include other original supporting documents, such as a previously held or out of date passport, birth certificate and marriage certificate.

In rare circumstances where an applicant cannot produce their current passport, or a previous passport, birth certificate or other supporting documents the applicant will be required to provide a full explanation. Such explanation should, where possible, be supported by satisfactory evidence that they have attempted to obtain such documentation and correspondence from the relevant authorities or embassy responsible for the issuing of passports and birth certificates in their country, clearly stating the reasons the documentation cannot be provided. The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) will consider the explanation given and, if satisfied it is for reasons genuinely beyond the applicant's control, may suggest alternative means to the person to assist in establishing their identity and nationality.